Becoming a Primary School Principal in Ireland:

Deputy-Principalship as Preparation

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Abstract

This thesis investigated influences on primary school deputy-principals' motivations to apply for principalship in the early twenty-first century in the Irish Republic. This required the exploration of both principals' and deputy-principals' roles in management and leadership to discover how better to prepare deputies to continue to the principalship. The research approach sat firmly within the qualitative paradigm, using semi-structured interviews with twelve primary deputy-principals exploring their construction of deputyship and principalship from their professional socialisation experiences. Findings revealed the complex relationship which exists between both roles and the extent to which the pervading school culture determines how much meaningful leadership opportunity is distributed beyond the principal. A major outcome of the study is a constructed knowledge of the nature and culture of Irish primary deputyship. Three new typologies of deputy-principalship provide a new perspective on the deputyship role, concluding that the gap in experiences and knowledge between deputyship and principalship is so great that energy should flow into the formation of formal, planned and structured preparation for a deputyship transition into principalship.

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Abbreviations

BERA   British Educational Research Association

DCSF   Department for Children, Schools and Families

DES   Department of Education and Skills

DfES   Department for Education and Skills

ICT   Information and Communications Technology

INTO   Irish National Teachers' Organisation

ITC   Irish Teaching Council

IPPN   Irish Primary Principals' Network

LDS   Leadership Development in Schools Initiative

NFER   National Foundation for Educational Research

NPM   New Public Management

NPQH   National Professional Qualification for Headship

OECD   Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PISA   Programme for International Student Assessment

SSE   School Self-Evaluation

TTA   Teacher Training Agency

UK   United Kingdom

USA   United States of America

WSE   Whole School Evaluations

Chapter One: Exploring the research dilemma and its rationale

Prologue

The focus of this research enquiry is on formulating an understanding of the deputy-principal role, how it relates to principalship and the perceived willingness of deputy-principals (deputies) to advance their careers vertically to the principalship. This study addresses part of the knowledge gap by seeking to open dialogue about our collective knowledge of this unique role in Irish primary schools and how best to create a pipeline for principalship amongst its cohort. While this study is essentially focused on the deputyship, it is located in the wider debate of school leadership; this is why there is also an exploration, albeit a lesser one, of the principalship role and its ability to attract potential aspirants from the rank of deputy-principal. I hope to ascertain how the conceptualisation of the principalship with regard to contemporary school leadership may impact either positively or negatively on the career motivation and preparedness of deputy-principals in primary schools to apply for and take on this pivotal leadership role in the Irish education system. This research looks at deputyship in the context of a career trajectory which may or may not involve moving into principalship, with the aim of bridging a significant gap in the extant literature. Much of what is already known is based upon the British, American and Australian contexts, with practice in the Republic of Ireland largely unexplored to the same extent.

This chapter provides a brief overview of emerging school leadership and its significance. It then sets the stage for considering the principal's and deputy-principal's roles and responsibilities within Irish schools in the advent of

performance initiatives such as School Self-Evaluation. The chapter then considers the rationale and research contextual factors. It outlines the aims and research questions which frame the study then focuses on the willingness of deputy-principals to make the vertical transition to principalship. The chapter concludes by looking at the philosophical approach taken to the research along with a personal narrative about my interest in this research area.

This thesis has at its core the generally accepted belief that quality school leadership is of pivotal importance in determining school success. This point of view is commonly held by the research community and increasingly acknowledged in the twenty-first century (Bush, 2011). House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman and Gupta (2004, 15) define leadership as 'the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organisations of which they are members'. Hallinger and Snidvongs (2005) refer to research conducted over the past twenty years which indicates that school-level leadership makes a difference in the school climate and in the outcomes of schooling. 'Good leadership is at the heart of every good school,' according to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2005, 99). Much of the discourse highlights that leadership influences how well students perform in school and therefore impacts on their future prospects in life. The quality of school leaders is of central concern as they need to be good leaders as well as effective managers. While principals' influence on student learning may be indirect, nonetheless the literature shows that their influence on the learning environment is significant (Southworth, 2004).

Aims and research design of the study

The purpose of this enquiry is to explore the current role of the deputy-principalship in Irish primary schools and how its incumbents may be encouraged to progress their professional careers to principalship. It is set within paradigms of distributed leadership and role theory hence the exploration has been widened to include discussions of principals' roles. The research uses perceptions from a sample of Ireland's primary deputy-principals to explore through the research questions:

- Role definitions of deputy-principalship;

- Role definitions of principalship;

- Features which might attract or dissuade deputies from proceeding further in their careers to principalship;

- Forms of principalship preparation to best encourage deputies to become principals.

The specific research questions of the study are:

1. How do deputy-principals view their role and the role of deputy-principalship?

2. How do deputy-principals view the role of principalship?

3. What factors influence deputy-principals' career motivation to apply for a principalship?

    a. What aspects of the principalship role are attractive?

    b. What aspects of the principalship role are unattractive?

4. What form of leadership and management preparation could encourage career preparedness and career motivation amongst deputy-principals for a future principalship role?

The concept of role theory provides a framework to examine the role. Katz and Kahn (1966) provide a conceptualisation of employee's role-adoption and role-enactment

behaviours. Specifically role theory focuses on the roles that individuals enact in social systems that are pre-planned, task-orientated and hierarchical, and therefore form a vital function in the achievement of organisational goals (Biddle, 1986). It describes the systems by which individuals in an organisation are socialised to assume roles within society in order to promote order and stability. This theory assumes that individuals assume a variety of social roles associated with specific behaviours and attitudes. Role occupants endorse behavioural expectations for the individual and also describe how the expectations of those occupying reciprocal roles can impact on the individual (Jackson, 1998). The experiences of the role of deputy-principal in a school may affect the willingness of the role occupier to consciously seek out a principalship.

Through role theory the study seeks to establish if deputies feel supported or prepared for the principalship by their principals. Consensus and conformity are central concepts in role theory. School leaders have been subjected to the normative values, ideals and behaviours of that school organisation, which may place a great value on conformity and social integration, but conflict may impede this integration due to incompatible expectations of behaviour (Jackson, 1998). This occurs where 'roles can vary from those dominated by organisational expectations to those in which there is a great deal of room to express their personalities' (Gaynor, 1998, 58). The school impacts on an individual's professional mobility (career path) with 'its particular history, particular norms and accepted as well as contested, balances of power between principal, teachers, students, and external stakeholders' (Moos, Krejsler, Kofod, and Jensen in Day and Leithwood, 2007, 105).

This research adopts an interpretive qualitative approach. This theoretical perspective provides a context for the research process and a basis for its logic and its criteria. The reality of the social world emerges as a direct result of the processes by which respondents negotiate within it. This research seeks to give respondents agency so that they can meaningfully engage in reflection about themselves and their personal context in the social world. The semi-structured interview was chosen because of its correspondence with my epistemological commitments, enabling me to understand the social reality in which respondents exist. There is a concern for the individual and the need to focus social inquiry on the meanings and values of people and their social actions. The interviews with deputy-principals provide valuable evidence about the current lived realities of Irish primary school leadership. These realities were experienced subjectively, interactively and under structural constraints. Participants' experiences and understandings are powerfully influenced by their unique school context and prevailing culture. I acknowledge my own biases, as a former deputy-principal and current principal, along with subjectivities of the respondents in their particular school settings.

From my time as an undergraduate in Trinity College, Dublin, studying Education Administration, I was very interested in discovering why primary school teachers chose or declined to become school principals as part of their career trajectory. I was appointed as principal at the age of twenty-six, although this was not part of my initial career plan. Before this I was quite content and comfortable as a deputy-principal in a large urban school; the reasons why I made the transition from deputy-principal to principal were personal and involved a change in geographical location. I was not influenced by the prospect of further advancing my professional career.

The range of responsibilities I undertook as deputy-principal contributed to an extent in my preparation for principalship, undertaking a role expected of me in the operation of the school. However, some form of professional leadership and management preparation may have left me better prepared for the challenging role of a teaching principalship and helped me to identify better with my new professional role. My own leadership journey, first as deputy and then as principal, has shown me the significant need for effective leadership and management along with the need for a clear role and professional identity.

The research involves twelve primary school deputy-principals, purposefully chosen because of their vernacular knowledge (McLaughlin, 1996) of the primary principalship and as potential principal aspirants. The study seeks to give authentic voice to deputy-principals in order to allow the wider educational community to view Irish school leadership through a different lens – the eyes of deputy-principals. While this is not a large enough sample to be representative of all Irish primary schools, many of the issues and views explored in depth are similar for many primary deputy-principals. The respondents, all deputy-principals, come from primary schools, six with a teaching principal and six with an administrative principal. Respondents all come from the midland counties of Ireland, from both urban and rural schools ranging in size from fifty-six up to three hundred and ninety-eight pupils. Therefore, none of the respondents involved are deputy-principals in large city schools, instead coming mainly from rural areas or large provincial towns.

The concept of distributed leadership

'Distributed leadership' attracts a range of meanings and is associated with a variety of practices. A number of different usages of the term have emerged (Mayrowetz, 2008). This thesis is underpinned by the current generally held belief that distributed leadership is central to the success of school management (Gronn and Rawlings-Sanaei, 2003; Hallinger and Heck, 1998). Several studies have found distributed leadership to be effective in improving pupil learning (Day et al., 2010; Wahlstrom and Louis, 2008; McKenzie et al., 2007) as the traditional patterns by which leadership is organised have come under the spotlight.

Distributed leadership itself is not in question in this thesis, only the particular form it embodied in the deputy-principalship. The role of the deputy-principal needs to be set in the context of the twenty-first century popularity of distributed leadership. As schools have undergone considerable reform and change, such as school-based management, research has mainly focused on the impact of these changes on the principalship. A substantial body of literature is concerned with the role of the principal, and consequently evidence concerning school leadership has come mainly from the perspective of the principalship (Muijs and Harris, 2003). This traditional view of school leadership, focusing solely on the principal, has come in for much criticism, and research now claims that successful leadership involves a distribution of the leadership role leading to a more team-orientated approach. Hence for many educational researchers, such as Leithwood and Riehl (2003) and Gronn (2003a), distributed leadership plays a significant role in modelling what contemporary school leadership should look like. It is their preferred public model for school leadership by developing a sense of responsibility in others apart from the principal. It develops

a strong culture of staff collaboration and cohesion. Evidence from the leadership and school improvement fields suggests that distributed forms of leadership have both the power and potential to transform schools for the better (Harris and Townsend, 2007) by removing the burden for improvement upon the principal as the single strong instructional leader in the school system. Distributed leadership is a popular strategy for reducing principal workload (Spillane, 2006). A number of studies have highlighted the need for leadership to be distributed throughout organisations and the possible advantages in terms of school improvement and better pupil learning outcomes (Mulford, 2008; OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development], 2008; LDS, 2007).

The deputy-principalship has evolved in response to the recognised need to distribute leadership more widely to achieve improved learning outcomes for pupils (Harris, 2002). Distributed leadership has 'become the normatively preferred leadership model in the twenty-first century' (Bush, 2011, 88), allowing deputy-principals to interact and engage with school management, giving openness to the boundaries of leadership and the use of a variety of expertise – not just the principal's. It has the potential to establish the deputy-principal as a critical partner in leading a successful school community. It is generally agreed that the deputy-principalship role is vital for school success (Marshall and Hooley, 2006; Armstrong, 2005), and through distributed leadership there is a paradigm shift in the way that leadership and management in a school are organised, away from hierarchy to a horizontal collegiate structure where the deputy can exercise leadership: 'It's not just possible any longer to "figure it out" from the top, and have everyone else following the orders of the grand "strategist"' (Senge in Jossey-Bass Reader on Educational

Leadership, 14, 2000). This is why Hartley (in Bush, 2011, 88) 'argues that its popularity may be pragmatic: to ease the burden of overworked headteachers'. There needs to be a fully collaborative culture which draws upon the full range of professional skills and expertise to be found among the members of the organisation (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1996).

Rationale

In trying to understand how effective school leaders function, the general tendency has been to focus on the school principal to the detriment of the deputy-principal: 'Whilst shelves groan under the weight of books and papers concerned with headship in primary schools, there are few which address the issues which are of direct concern to deputy heads' (Day, Hall, Gammage and Coles, 1993, ix). But the volume of research into the role of deputyship is increasing, thanks to researchers such as Ashley Oleszewski, Alan Shoho and Bruce Barnett (2012) of the University of Texas at San Antonio. It must however be acknowledged that it is still an under-represented role in the professional literature in comparison to principalship. Thus, an important feature of this research is the deliberate focus on the deputy-principalship and the central issue of how this cohort can be better prepared for principalship. The deputy-principalship is an important area of inquiry and deserves attention (Tripkin, 2006; Weller and Weller, 2002).

For many years, there has been an underlying assumption in many western countries that career implied advancement, creating positive references towards career aspirations, promotion and development. Employees have been propelled to seek vertical mobility (Hall, 2002; Greenhaus and Callanan, 1994). In line with this

popular thinking, much literature on the barriers to principalship is based on assumptions about teachers' career motivation. Hierarchical career progression is presented as being normal and desirable, and the implication is that if deputy-principals are not progressing to principalships of their own, then this must be due to identifiable impediments. Evidence from the literature shows that the most commonly cited personal factors relate to gender and ethnic orientation.

Deciding to change role from deputy to principal is a life-changing decision, as it involves becoming someone different. Deputy-principals need to be able to see themselves in the position of principal and to 'identify' themselves as a principal (Thomson, 2009), and in doing so make a successful transition into the role. 'Transitions' occur through a firm resolve to act on the basis of the mental, emotional and physical experiences of a related turning point (Duncan, 1995). People will only choose to change roles if the expected satisfaction from doing so exceeds that associated with their current position (Boskin, 1974) and if they receive support and encouragement from their colleagues – particularly the principal, who has first-hand experience of the role. Their prior work experience and other elements such as age and family commitments are also considerable factors in their decision to move from deputyship to principalship.

To date by far the largest majority of educational leadership studies have been about the practices of principals or heads (Day and Leithwood, 2007; McEwan, 2003; Reeves, 2006). In order to focus on the preparedness and willingness of deputy-principals for a transition to principalship, there needs to be an exploration of their current role. This research will assess their current experiences as an effective

training and stepping stone to principalship (Winter, 2002). Deputy-principals as a group have not been subject to the same substantial number of formal research studies (Sutter, 1996), and even with what research has been undertaken there is still the need to carry out additional research in the areas of training, professional development, and the transition to principalship (Oleszewski, Shoho and Barnett, 2012). Thankfully, the role of deputy-principal has moved into the spotlight due to reports of an impending shortage of principal aspirants in educational literature from the first decade of the twenty-first century (Thomson, 2009).

The deputy-principalship has the potential to be a very important role, yet with all the emphasis on distributive leadership there is still not enough reference in policy or research to the role of deputy-principal (Fullan, 2006 in Máirtín (ed.), 2007). The deputy-principalship offers huge potential in alleviating some of the demands of principalship brought about by the tremendous pressure for schools to be more publicly accountable. The role is often considered to be of pivotal importance in a school's organisational structure, but not considered to be one of leadership (Ruwoldt, 2006), resulting in missed opportunities for dual-functioning potential. Presently no particular qualification apart from registration with the Irish Teaching Council (ITC) is needed to be appointed as a deputy-principal in an Irish school. This research hopes to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the deputyship role from an Irish perspective with particular relevance to the primary sector. It will explore the challenges, shortfalls and successes of the deputyship as they provide meaningful support to their principal, and how these dimensions contribute to preparation for principalship.

While a considerable body of research exists about school leadership, very little is from the Irish context (Crowley, 2006) and this is at a time 'when governments and foundations round the world are developing unparalleled resources to the development of aspiring leaders, as well as those already in the role' (Day and Leithwood, 2007, 1). Irish school leadership has benefitted from the establishment of the Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) in 2000, while the Leadership Development for Schools initiative (LDS) set up in 2002 has up-skilled and promoted good leadership practice amongst Irish school leaders. The IPPN organises an annual conference for Irish primary deputy-principals in the hope of promoting the profile of deputies. In 2012 the theme of the conference was 'Two Heads are Better than One'. The Department of Education and Skills (DES) provides no financial assistance or substitute cover for deputies attending this event, though deputyship is the position from which the overwhelming majority of principals are drawn (Denmark and Davis, 2001). It comes at a time when Irish school management is under considerable strain due to cuts in teacher numbers for primary schools along with the implementation of budgetary measures.

There is concern and debate over a leadership supply problem in schools in many countries and some doubts regarding the willingness of deputy-principals to seek promotion to a principalship (Shaw, 2006 in Rhodes and Brundrett, 2009; Barty, Thomson, Blackmore, and Sachs, 2005; Hayes, 2005; Brooking et al., 2003; Dorman and d'Arbon 2003a, 2003b; Draper and McMichael, 2003; Thomson et al., 2003; Earley et al., 2002; James and Whiting, 1998). According to Thomson, however, the shortage of applications is not universal and there is 'no problem of supply *per se*' (2009, 12). John Howson, Education Data Surveys predicted in 2009 that schools in

America may find it difficult to find principal replacements in 2010 and 2011 because of the large number of principal retirements (Maddern, 2009).

Significantly in Ireland, the IPPN has observed that since 2004 there appears to be an increase in the number of applicants for vacant principal posts, and the predominant view is that there is no prevailing supply problem. The following figures supplied by Pat Goff, IPPN president 2009–2011, seem to suggest that the current economic downturn may be having a positive influence on the recruitment of principals to Irish primary schools. In 2010 there were on average 6.3 applicants for each vacant post, 4.2 applicants in 2008, 3.7 in 2006 , 2.7 in 2004 , 2.1 in 2002 , and 1.9 in 2001. With each year that passes the level of applications for vacant primary school principalships is increasing. This indicates a greater level of vertical mobility amongst primary teachers in seeking out a principalship, and may help to alleviate fears about the future recruitment of qualified personnel to vacant principalships. It may be the impact of a significantly altered labour market that has increased the applicant pool for school principals. However, this information does not reveal who the applications are from and how prepared for principalship they are. Quality of applicants is a key issue, not just quantity. Adequate preparation for principalship is vitally important. Existing data fails to acknowledge if there is upward motivation amongst deputy-principals in Ireland or if principal applicants are mainly front-line teachers without any prior experience of school leadership or management.

The perception of principalship amongst deputies is an important factor in addressing their desire for vertical mobility. This research hopes to establish the perception of principalship amongst deputies at a time when the wisdom appears to

be that the nature of school principalship has changed dramatically, as schools are now part of a globalised knowledge economy with principals operating in a policy-orientated context (Day and Leithwood, 2007). According to Fidler and Atton (2004, 129), 'not all teachers wish to become Head Teachers and not all those who wish to become Heads would make a good leader'. Similarly, Earley and Weindling (2004, 31) confirm that 'not all teachers enter education with a view to becoming a Head Teacher'. While the principal and deputy-principal are both administrative roles, 'they operate in different organizational contexts, occupying different levels of leadership hierarchy, and performing different duties' (Read, 2012, 13). This is why recent literature has started to question whether the activities of a deputy adequately prepare a person for a principalship of their own.

With economic, scientific and technological advances have come large-scale reforms initiated as a result of increased accountability for schools. In Ireland there have been critiques of how the global discourse of quality, standards and performance affects the policy and practice of education in Ireland (Gleeson and Ó Donnabháin, 2009; Long, 2008). Irish education is in an era of *new public management* culture (NPM). This culture views citizens as consumers, and promises better controls over performance with a heavy emphasis on value for money and accountability (Ryan, 2006).

Both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (2011) and the School Self-Evaluation Initiative (2012) from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) arose as a result of this new conception for Irish education. These initiatives when fully implemented may bring great opportunities to re-conceptualise teaching and

learning in Irish schools, empowering principals and staff to raise the levels of literacy and numeracy amongst their pupils. But they will simultaneously intensify external demands on school leadership, particularly the principal, as both initiatives mark a major national effort to improve pupil learning outcomes with target-driven results and the requirement to build the capacity of school leaders. This will command a shift in existing school culture as teachers engage in much more collaboratively based practices charged with modifying the existing practices of teaching and learning. Neither initiative can be successfully implemented through traditional and autocratic forms of leadership because no single principal has absolute expertise in all aspects of leading a modern school (Hatcher, 2005).

All of these developments mean that the principalship has become 'a job with very particular benefits – and very particular costs' (Thomson, 2009, 1), with educational literature advising that the principal alone should not exercise all the leadership but that it should be distributed throughout the school. How leadership is shared depends on principals (Thomson, 2009), as they act as torch bearers of educational change (Pashiardis, 2001), initiating and sustaining school improvement through initiatives such as School Self-Evaluation (SSE). This research is concerned with the question: Who is the school leader? Is there one person at the top, or is it a more level playing field with a shared model of leadership?

According to Gronn (2000), the model of 'heroic leader' has not been sufficiently responsive to the complexity of modern educational leadership. The role of the principal continues to expand under a whole new architecture, but with no similar expansion or development for the role of the deputy. There is a policy deficit in

defining the deputy-principal role. In this context, the research seeks to ascertain to what extent deputy-principals experience a shared leadership position with their principal in releasing leadership potential in schools. It also explores the under-utilisation of deputies. The importance of a cadre of leaders to support our principals is critical, and vice versa the personal and professional support of the principal for their deputy-principal – the pool for the next generation of principals – cannot be overstated. From my own experience of deputyship, I have come to the understanding that support, co-leadership and capacity building should be important features of the work of the principal in providing extensive support to the deputy, encouraging them to take responsibility for leading and learning within their own school communities, not just in the absence of the principal.

The preparation and development of school leaders might make a difference to leadership practices (Crow, 2006). This research looks at what form of leadership preparation might promote a greater preparedness amongst deputy-principals to move into principalship. A framework has developed from the research, with key elements included as a direct response to the identified needs of respondents regardless of school context at a time when the models of leadership have become increasingly complex.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter presented the rationale, aims and research questions that this thesis is built upon. It outlined the challenges and opportunities of modern school leadership. The core of this research is on the deputy-principal role and its potential to occupy a comprehensive and meaningful part in school life by working

in a distributed leadership context, moving away from a hierarchical model that has all leadership simply vested in the principal. There is a current lack of literature from Ireland focusing on whether primary deputyship is a meaningful preparation for principalship and its instructional demands or simply a list of duties untaken for an extra monetary allowance. This research will look to what extent the principle of co-leadership features in Irish schools and in doing so enable a view of principalship to unfold, presented through the inside track by those who shadow this school leader.

Chapters two and three provide a literature review of both national and international sources. This literature review provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study as well as a benchmark for comparing the results of the study with other findings (Creswell, 2007). Chapter two provides a rich review of literature pertaining to the value of school leadership being exercised by the deputy-principal and principal, with a particular emphasis on the value of distributed leadership. It describes the role and functions of the deputy-principal and uses role theory to fully examine the internal and external influences on the deputy-principal. It then examines contemporary principalship, including a review of academic literature on school leadership and management functions in terms of their fundamental influences on school effectiveness.

Chapter three explores the career motivation and socialisation of deputy-principals. It analyses different research studies on the willingness, aspirations and preparedness of deputy-principals to move to a principalship. The final section of this chapter explores successful leadership preparation necessary for a successful transition from deputyship to principalship. It examines the potential benefits of professional

development preparation for principalship, and whether or not it can lead to greater success as a school principal. This gives the thesis a strong theoretical foundation.

Chapter four begins by describing my epistemological stance, situated within the interpretive paradigm. It explains why a qualitative approach was taken for this study and then locates the research questions within the paradigm. The chapter then focuses on the research instrument, sample population, piloting of the research, stages involved in the data analysis, research quality and limitations of the study. It provides a profile of each of the twelve respondents. The chapter concludes with the ethical framework adopted.

Chapter five examines the findings of the research in terms of the first two research questions. Chapter six does likewise with the last two research questions. Both chapters discuss and analyse the findings from the semi-structured interviews, providing commentary on the material provided by respondents. Chapter seven presents the benefits of the research to the Irish educational landscape. It provides a brief summary of the direct answers to the research questions and then presents a synthesis of the data detailing three major themes which emerged from the research.

Chapter Two: Profiling deputyship and principalship: the literature

Introduction

The literature review will explore the themes of school-based leadership through the lens of the deputy-principalship and principalship roles. The initial focus is on the role of the deputy-principal, using role theory to underpin the nature of the position. It will endeavour to highlight the value of this school leadership role. The second part of the chapter will explore the generic leadership and management role of the principalship, illuminating it as an enormously powerful element of effective schools. In order to fully understand both roles it is important to understand the nature of contemporary school leadership and management, and these therefore form part of the academic literature review.

There is limited research in the Irish context on educational leadership, particularly studies on the school principalship (Ummanel, 2012) and deputy-principalship. The position of vice principal was first established in Ireland in 1920 because so few promotional opportunities were available to teachers. Most of the narrow literature in Ireland dealing with the deputyship comes from the IPPN, who explain that the role of the deputy-principal has often been defined as 'underdeveloped', 'unclear', and 'confused' (IPPN, 2007, 4). Circular 16/73, a policy statement issued by the Department of Education in Ireland, described the post of deputy-principal as 'required to assist the Principal teacher in the day-to-day organisation and supervision of the school' (Circular 16/73, 6). Since this description was provided over thirty years ago there has been no real policy or strategic development that responds to the leadership and management role of the deputy-principal. Reference is

made to the vice principal in the Rules for National Schools (Department for Education (1965) Rules 75, 76, 123). Rule 123 requires that 'The principal (or in his absence, the Vice Principal...) must carefully carry out the instructions in the Roll Book, Report Book and Register as to the keeping and care of school records'.

The role of the deputy-principal

Due to the sparse amount of academic research on school leadership undertaken in the Irish Republic, it has been necessary to focus on literature from other western and non-western countries. More interest in the deputy-principalship has not been undertaken to any significant degree; this is surprising, with the concept of 'distributed leadership' now well established and no longer 'the new kid on the block' (Gronn, 2003a). Educational literature in the past dealing with the role of the deputy-principal was very sparse and lacking in rigour (Chi-Kin Lee, Kwan and Walker, 2009), but this is changing. This senior school leadership role is still not clearly defined (Marshall and Hooley, 2006; Armstrong, 2005), being described as the invisible role and the neglected role (Glanz, 2004), and with no great attempt made to 'unpack' the deputy-principalship, leaving an 'ambiguous and unrecognised role with poorly defined tasks' (Shoho, Barnett and Tooms, 2012, 3).

The deputyship has not come under the same close scrutiny as the principalship or class teacher role, and this has not helped to establish an explanatory theory which would lead to a better understanding of the role of the deputy-principal. There is a general lack of a sound conceptual understanding of what is meant by a deputy-principal. According to Cranston, Tromans and Reugebrink (2004), research in this area is relatively sparse and identifies only a partial representation of the role.

Marshall and Hooley (2006) explain that this does nothing to capture the essence of it. In fact, there is no universal role definition for a deputy-principal (Weller and Weller, 2002). Only recently has the literature made any attempt to illustrate the nature of the deputyship (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). The role of deputy-principal was created due to expanding bureaucracy and the speed at which the role of the principal was becoming impossible for one person to handle (Scoggins and Bishop, 1993) first appearing early in the twentieth century (Tripkin, 2006). Mertz (2006) explains that the role emerged in response to unprecedented growth in student numbers in schools and simultaneous increases in principals' responsibilities. An early study of the deputy-principalship was conducted by VanEman in America (1926), reported in Gillespie (1961). It was a survey in fifty-two Ohio high schools where assistant principals were asked to list their specific duties, most of which were clerical tasks, supervising extra-curricular activities and meeting with parents. Once created, the role quickly became one of limited managerial duties (Buckner and Jones, 1990).

Deputies are second in command to the principal yet receive scant attention in the research literature by policy makers and academic researchers. Astounding, as all but the smallest schools have a deputy-principal, yet how they contribute to school effectiveness is little understood (Harvey and Sheridan, 1995). Some larger schools may have more than one deputy-principal. The position has different labels in different countries, called the deputy-principal in Ireland and Australia, the deputy-head in the United Kingdom, the vice-principal in Canada and the assistant principal in the USA. Regardless of the particular label, deputy-principals are one hierarchical level below the school principal in schools. In Ireland all registered teachers with the ITC are eligible to be appointed as deputy-principals within either the primary or

secondary school system, depending on their teaching qualification. There is currently no mandatory preparation or training as a part of the professional socialisation for the position, and the general requirement is successful prior work experience as a teacher. Irish primary deputy-principals are paid a promoted post allowance along with their teaching salary for assuming the role of deputy-principal. This allowance is linked to the number of authorised teaching posts in the school.

One of the most simplistic and humorous opinions on the duties of the deputy-principal from Dallas, Texas is that they fill their days with three Bs – 'Books, Behinds and Buses' (Good, 2008, 46). This is not all that different from the early literature, where the role of the deputy-principalship was associated primarily with student discipline and attendance, and was perceived as having little influence on the overall leadership of schools (Smith, 1987; Greenfield, 1985; Bates and Shank, 1983; Reeds and Conners, 1982; Black, 1980). This earlier literature from America was limited as it gave no acknowledgement of the professional support that a deputy could give their principal. The duties centred round student supervision and discipline. There was not a highly defined job description with the deputy often being given tasks that they weren't trained to do. The literature from this time showed how the principal dictated duties, responsibilities and experiences of the deputy-principal. This early literature failed to recognise that principals were not helping in preparing deputies for other positions (Greenfield, 1985) and this may be a reason why a significant number of deputy-principals were remaining longer in their positions (Gross, Shapiro and Meehan, 1980). Rather cautiously in 1973 the Irish Department of Education identified three aspects of the role of deputy-principal: 'assisting the principal in the day-to-day organisation and supervision of

the school, teaching duties and assignment of specific duties by the principal' (Circular 16/73, 6) but still identified the control by the principal as determining the deputy's roles. More recent research conducted in Queensland, Australia, found that deputy-principals are expected to engage in a variety of potentially complex and challenging management and leadership activities, also explaining that the available literature identifies only a partial representation of the role (Cranston et al., 2004). This identified role is described in terms of traditional and restricted sets of administrative, managerial and custodial responsibilities, and little has been done to advance an alternative, future-focused, strategic and collaborative leadership view of the role needed to meet the increasing complexity of schools (Beare, 2001 in Cranston, Tromans and Reugebrink, 2004, 228; Caldwell and Spinks, 1998).

Often in schools, deputy-principals are given either pastoral or academic responsibilities. In some cases, deputy-principals are expected to fulfil all the responsibilities of the principal teacher and replace them fully when they are away from school (Harris, Muijs, and Crawford, 2003). It might be expected that the role will vary depending upon the size of the school, relationship with principal (level of confidence and trust in the deputy) and the competency levels of the deputy-principal. Over the last thirty years, the position of deputy-head in the UK has 'evolved significantly into a leadership position in some schools, while it has remained relatively stable as a management position in others' (Melton, Mallory, Mays and Chance, 2012, 85). The dominant influence of the principal upon the construction and performance of the deputy leads Greenfield (1985) to believe that a deputyship could be defined as whatever the principal wants. There are often missed opportunities to appropriately situate the position of deputy-principal within a key

leadership role in the school, as 'historically, the deputy-principalship has centred on delegation to a senior teacher by the principal of unwanted administrative tasks relating to discipline, as well as custodial and social duties' (Harvey and Sheridan, 1995, 69). This is linked to one of the major themes of role theory, where there is a discrepancy between expectations of other members of the system and the behaviours of the person occupying the role (Boyan, 1988; Bridges, 1982 in Mayers and Zepeda, 2002). Role theory has long been applied to school and schooling (Bridges, 1982). This may be why many newly appointed deputy-principals claim that the role is not what they expected, not what they were trained for, and that they feel isolated. This training disconnect is reported in the relevant literature (Armstrong, 2005; Daresh, 1986).

Harris et al. (2003) give a more pragmatic view, believing that the main role of the deputy-principal is to ensure stability and order in the school. This 'uninspiring' view is very narrow and limited, suggesting that a deputy-principal should play a maintenance role rather than a development or leadership function. It gives minimal recognition to the fact that:

> deputising assumes that the deputy has not only the obligation and the responsibility, but also the competence and the confidence, to assume all duties and responsibilities of the principal in circumstances that can be very demanding, given that the nature of deputising generally arises in unplanned and uncoordinated circumstances (IPPN, 2007, 11).

Harris et al. (2003) go on to say that the leadership potential of deputy-principals in many schools is not released or exploited, but this is hardly surprising if all they are to undertake is a maintenance role where their leadership capabilities are not developed. This view totally disregards the paradigm shift from top-down

management to distributed leadership. However, preparing deputies for a principalship is a matter of developing leadership skills before their appointment as principal, as 'the possibility of becoming a headteacher in the United Kingdom without a considerable period as a deputy is very small' (Earley and Weindling, 2004, 33).

One of the most comprehensive American studies of the activities of deputy-principals investigated the degree of deputy-principal involvement in instructional leadership, personnel management, interaction with the educational hierarchy, professional development, resource management, public relations and student management (Hausman, Nebeker and McCreary, 2002). Research undertaken in Australia also identified seven major roles: strategic leadership, education and curriculum leadership, management and administration, student issues, parent and community issues, staffing issues and operational issues (Cranston, Tromans and Reugebrink, 2004). The main message from both studies was that as principals were taken away from their traditional duties, deputy-principals were forced to take on more, different and sometimes contradictory roles (Walker and Kwan, 2009).

The literature of the IPPN has found role conflict to be a feature of the Irish primary school deputyship, but it is not unique to Irish deputy-principalship, as Marshall (in Harvey and Sheridan, 1995) concludes that the work of a deputy-principal is ill-defined and contains contradictions, leaving the practitioner vulnerable to criticism when being assessed. The IPPN found that Irish primary deputy-principals can be found swinging from high relevancy when needed, to being almost displaced or

disregarded, and this can lead to them becoming disillusioned, dismayed or unmotivated (IPPN, 2007, 17).

Circular 07/03 issued by the Department of Education and Skills, refers to the deputy-principal as a member of senior management, but even so, deputy-principals 'as a cohort could feel that their positions, roles, duties, functions, challenges and opportunities remain unclear and undervalued' (IPPN, 2007, 2). There is a policy deficit in defining and detailing the role of the deputy-principals as key contributors to school effectiveness (Allen, 2003). This results in role ambiguity and 'occurs when the individual has insufficient knowledge of the expectations' of an assigned position (Huse, 1980, 53). The trouble with such ambiguity for deputy-principals is that they must carry out their role in the middle ground between the principal and the teachers, with 'the challenge of being at once teacher, coach, evaluator' (Rintoul and Goulais, 2010, 751). The IPPN found that Irish primary deputy-principals find it challenging to understand their role and to accept others' lack of understanding of it.

Similar relevant literature taken from an Australian study (Harvey, 1994) of four hundred deputy-principals found that many of them perceived a lack of clarity in their role, which led to unrealised expectations with little scope for leading innovation and change. This does not help develop, support and enhance the career motivation of deputy-principals. According to London and Bray (1984), to promote career motivation employees should be provided with positive reinforcement for good performance, given opportunities for achievement and input, and receive support for skill development. This was not the case amongst the respondents in the Australian study, where job dissatisfaction and low levels of motivation were

prevalent in up to 20% of those surveyed (Harvey, 1994). This is unfortunate, as an important issue drawn from Marshall (1992), Sutter (1996) and Hausman et al. (2002) is that job satisfaction influences deputy-principals' motivation for principalships. Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek and Rosenthal (1964 in Mayers and Zepeda, 2002) reported that the effects of role ambiguity included low job satisfaction and a high level of tension.

In order to better understand the causes and effects of role ambiguity and its perceived effect on job satisfaction among deputy-principals it is necessary to explore the long history of role theory which extends back to the 1930s (Linton, 1936). The term 'role' remains controversial in the literature (Schmidt, 2000). All people in organisations play roles. Individuals engage in behaviour patterns that go with the positions that they occupy. According to Hoy and Miskel (1996), roles derive their meaning from other roles in the system and in this sense are complementary. It is difficult if not impossible to define the role of the deputy-principal without specifying the relationship of the deputy to the principal. Role theory posits that the position an individual holds in an organisation carries with it powerful norms and behavioural expectations (Wiggins in Monahan, 1975). Some researchers (Linton, 1936) have attempted to minimise the importance of role, suggesting that it is a cultural given. Other social interactionists (Pollard, 1985; Plummer, 1975; Mead, 1934) present a more complex, multi-dimensional notion of role, arguing that the individual is more than just the occupant for which there is a well-defined set of rules. Roles are fundamentally about purposes, expected by and taken from others or created and made by one self (Schmidt, 2000). The need for deputy-principals to assume certain roles is not unusual, as every type of

organisation requires individuals to play certain roles. The assigned roles must be adopted by each individual in order for the organisation to function effectively. The lack of clarity and ambiguity surrounding what the role should entail is unusual, however, and leads to low levels of morale among deputy-principals (Mayers and Zepeda, 2002). An important point of role theory is that employees may be required to fulfil an array of roles and this may be problematic if the complexity of results causes the employee to be unable to enact them according to the expectations of others (Katz and Kahn, 1966). Different role requirements can create communication barriers (Robbins and De Cenzo, 2004).

There is no existing framework to guide incumbents and provide structure to their leadership role. The role reflects the historical expectations as well as new administrative functions as a consequence of educational reform. Huse (1980 in Mayers and Zepeda, 2002) defined role as the 'set of activities that the individual is expected to perform'. Schools are bureaucratic organisations and Millikan (1989 in Davidoff and Lazarus, 2002, 6) describe school organisations in the following way:

> Organisations are essentially collectivities of people, who define policies, generate structures, manipulate resources and engage in activities to achieve their desired ends in keeping with their individual and collective values and needs. In the human service organisation called a school, one of these desired ends is helping people to learn.

Individuals like deputy-principals occupy positions within this collection of people and their hierarchies, but with obligations (Mayers and Zepeda, 2002). These positions are in essence 'a set of expectations concerning what is appropriate behaviour for a person occupying that position' (Burnham, 1969, 72); however, expectations are not explicit for the deputy-principalship as it remains one of the least understood roles in the contemporary education system (Harvey and Sheridan,

1995). Fulfilling role requirements often requires individuals to selectively interpret events as school organisations express both individual and collective needs and values.

In order to differentiate these two terms – position and role – it can be explained that a person occupies a position but plays or performs a role, role being the dynamic aspect of the position. In this study, this suggests that 'position' refers to the location of the deputy-principal in their respective school from the perspective of social relationships, while 'role' is the set of expectations applied to the incumbent of this particular status. For this reason, 'role' and 'position' are conceived as being linked though they are separate concepts. What Burnham (1969) expresses here is best articulated by Katz and Kahn (1966), who have conceptualised role as a function of multiple factors (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Conceptualising 'Role': Katz and Kahn's (1966, 438) framework
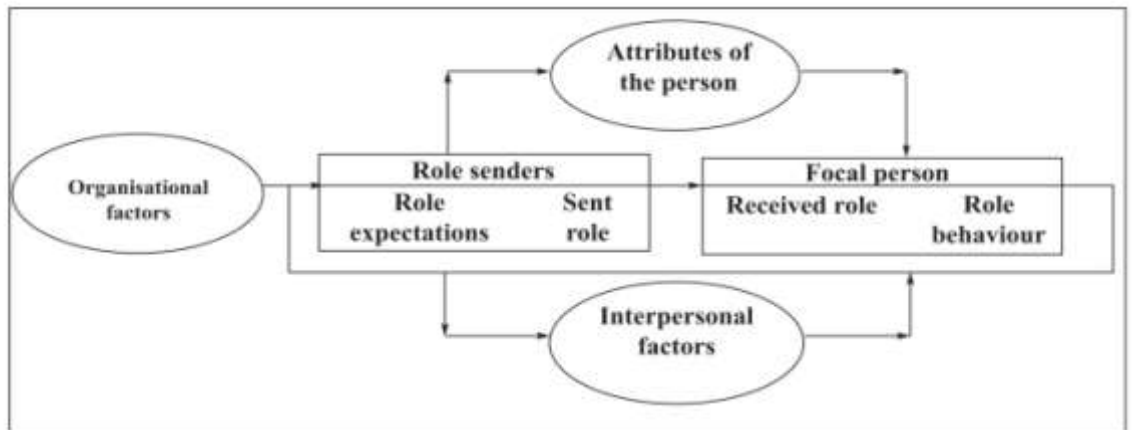
This framework depicts role as a cyclical process. The circles represent the contextual features of the role-sending cycle – organisational, interpersonal and personal influences – and the boxes represent the role set and the focal person. In the cycle, the sent role is influenced by the personal attributes of the focal person, the perception of the sent role by the focal person (the received role), and interpersonal factors between the role senders and the focal person. Both the role senders and the focal person are influenced by organisational factors. The role set's expectations create demands and constraints on the job holder, while the focal person's behaviour provides the role set with information about the extent of compliance and expectations (Smith, 1996).

Hoy and Miskel (2000), citing role theory, agree that the role is determined by social norms, demands and rules, by the role performances of others in their respective

positions, by those who observe and react to the performance, and by the individual's capabilities and personality. This results in the view that roles in school are determined by networks of relationships, reciprocal rights and responsibilities negotiated in a particular social situation (Maw, 1977), coupled with one's professional experience. Deputy-principals are torn in their loyalties between the principal and board of management and their teachers as they perform a range of responsibilities that call for the allegiance of both administrator and peer alike (Glanz, 1994). Conceptually, this could be attributed to the fact that their office becomes a role because it is defined and determined by the expectations of other office holders (Katz and Kahn, 1966). Each role has its own system, consisting of the role occupant (deputy-principals) and those who have a direct relationship with them (other teachers, ancillary staff, board of management, etc.) and thereby certain expectations from the role. There needs to be 'role-consensus' between employers and employees regarding the expectations of enacted roles in order to give rise to consistency in behaviour and an adherence to the organisation's culture (Biddle, 1986). The concept of role is vital when observing the deputy-principalship within the school as an organisation since there is a general lack of framework and structure to the deputyship role that results in disconnects in school placements (Hartzell, 1993).

The role of the deputy-principal is defined by the expectations that different people have and the expectations the deputy in turn has of the role. In this sense, the role gets defined each time by the role senders, including the role occupant. This can lead to a lack of alignment between ideal and actual responsibilities of deputy-principals. Katz and Kahn (1966) emphasise that role is a function of 'role expectations', which

are the preconceptions of what the focal person should do during their (role senders') inter-personal encounters; and the 'sent' roles, which are the acts of communication and influence by the role set to convey their expectations. Finally, what the focal person does in response to the messages received and in response to their own preconceptions of the job forms 'role' behaviour (Levinson, 1959).

Katz and Kahn (1966), while examining role conflict within organisations, emphasise the concept of 'role episode' – a term they use in referring to a complete cycle of role sending, response by the focal person and the effect of that response on the role sender. Role pressures originate from expectations held by members of the role set. Role senders have expectations about how the focal person's role should be performed, and perceptions about how the focal person is actually performing. They compare the two and exert pressures to make the focal person's performance congruent with their expectations. The adjusted responses of the focal person are observed by the role senders and their expectations are adjusted accordingly. For the role senders and the focal person the processes therefore involve experience and response (Smith, 1996). The role of deputy-principal needs to be better defined so that the expectations of them become more explicit and enjoy a mainly positive experience of deputyship. A common dilemma for many deputies is the concern of trying to do what's right for particular individuals against the common good of the wider school community.

A redistribution of power and a realignment of authority would allow for the creation of conditions where increased job satisfaction could be created by people working cooperatively to drive school improvement and change (Kaplan and Owings, 1999).

This would allow for what Harvey (1994) calls an emerging role for the deputy-principal by building leadership strength, and provide a developmental experience for future leadership progression (Hargreaves and Fink, 2006; Harris, 2004, 2003; Wallace, 2002; Gronn, 2000; Harvey, 1994). The deputy could become an educational leader with a shared responsibility for leadership where they can articulate shared professional practice along with the principal. Kaplan and Owings (1999) maintain that shared leadership increases deputy-principals' job satisfaction while providing them with additional opportunities for professional enrichment.

This work has a lot in common with research by Terry Allen in the Irish Republic (2003), entitled 'Two Heads are Better than One: An Examination and Analysis of the Role of the Deputy-Principal in Irish Primary Schools', which focused on the position of deputy-principals in Irish primary schools. It encompassed an inquiry into the perceived role, workloads, relationship and leadership dimension of the role of deputy-principal. It examined and analysed the role of deputy-principals in supporting and developing professional learning communities in schools. The findings identified a clear leadership role for the deputy-principal in cooperation and partnership with the principal. The particular value of Allen's research is that it draws on the experience and opinions of both principals and deputy-principals, thereby offering two valuable perspectives on the functioning and the effectiveness of the deputyship role in Irish primary schools. A successful reconceptualisation and transformation of the deputyship such as that described in Allen's study may lead to greater job satisfaction and a broadening of professional horizons amongst practitioners, thus creating greater career motivation for a future principalship position having already experienced openness of the boundaries of leadership.

It is apparent that the deputyship is a senior management role veiled in opportunities for the incumbent to be both a leader and a follower. The role of deputy has huge potential to deliver a high level of professional leadership in schools; unfortunately, the literature highlights how many within the education system struggle to understand what exactly the role entails. Deputies are there to assume leadership responsibilities, yet they are mainly engaged in assisting the principal in carrying out a range of tasks and functions needed for the day-to-day smooth operation of the school subject to the whims of the principal. The review of literature showed low job satisfaction associated with the role, which is often undervalued yet contributes to an 'efficient and effective school' (Glanz, 2004, 2). My research will seek to ascertain the level of job satisfaction amongst Irish deputies while comparing their leadership responsibilities with those mentioned in previous studies. The literature indicates a disconnect between what deputies currently undertake and what they could be facilitating. There are not enough opportunities for them to build their leadership capacity, and as a consequence those undertaking the role are often ineffective. This often prevents deputies from improving their practices, being deprived of the supports necessary to further their professional learning and experience enhanced job satisfaction. My own research will further seek to add to our understanding of deputies' leadership capacities within the context of the Irish Republic and make comparisons with existing international literature which questions how much impact deputies have on school improvements and improved pupil learning outcomes.

Significant recent changes in Irish educational policy, such as School Self-Evaluation (SSE), may impact on Figure 2.1. SSE is a new paradigm in Ireland's

educational development that was first introduced formally to schools with the advent of Circular 0039/2012 from the Department of Education and Skills. It is a collaborative, reflective and evidence based process of internal school review through a reframing of School Development Planning. SSE is primarily about securing school improvement by requiring individual schools to make judgements about their own performance in a more systematic way. In order to make these value judgements, schools are now required to collect, examine and share evidence about what is working well in their school and what areas need to be improved or further developed. This challenge to reform schools may impact on Figure 2.1 as it requires principals (role senders) to lead their school communities on a journey of self-exploration and critical refection, ultimately leading to informed change of the existing organisational factors. As this new initiative becomes embedded in Irish primary schools both the role sender (principal) and the focal person (deputy-principal) may experience greater innovation and diversity in their respective roles to influence school reform. The principal, under the direction of his/her board of management has the ultimate responsibility for the production of the self-evaluation report and the development of the school improvement plan. However, this ambitious and dynamic change management tool cannot be utilised by a single leader and may therefore impact on the deputy-principal role (focal person) at a strategic planning level in order to implement and monitor the process of reform. Through the deputy-principal's change in role behaviour, brought about by greater influence and authority, they may have greater capacity to impact directly on leadership for learning. The principal's expectations of the deputy-principal may fundamentally increase as they infer much greater responsibility and expectations upon deputy-principals. The constraints often being placed on the deputy-principal by the

principal may need to be ameliorated as the energy and commitment of the deputy-principal is harnessed in order to play a greater performance in achieving a strong self-confident school embracing the process of SSE.

The role of the principal

Earlier literature (Kelly, 1987) from America acknowledged that the role of deputy-principal was a pathway to the principalship. Most studies acknowledge a proliferation in the responsibilities spanning both education and administration for those who move from deputyship to principalship with principal being the 'glue' that holds the organisation together (Everard and Morris, 1996, 4) There is a plethora of knowledge reporting on the responsibilities that have significantly latered since the new millennium (Watson, 2005; Leithwood, Jantzi, Early, Watson, Levin, and Fullan, 2004; Cranston et al., 2003; Gronn, 2003b; Cranston, 2002). Numerous studies have shown that a school principal is no longer simply expected to assume the educational leadership of their school, but under the increasing managerialistic models of school operations their role has emerged into one akin to a CEO in the private sector (Gronn, 2003a). This reiterates what Fidler and Atton (2004) said about the principal's pivotal role being a demanding one; and it does not appear to be isolated to any one particular part of the globe, with increased pressure from tight accountability measures in many countries (Elmore, 2006). It is systemic on an international scale. Harris (2009, 421) uses the same language when she states: 'Few would dispute that the role of school leader is a demanding one. Leaders today have responsibilities far beyond anything their predecessors experienced.'

Much has been written about modern school leadership turning the role of principal teacher in to 'that of chief executive causing the element related to teaching to become a comparatively small part of the job' (Fiddler and Atton, 2004, 61). The considerable evolution of the principalship means that the expectations of principals as individual workers are very high, and it is interesting that Hay McBer (2000, 2) reports that 'even highly successful business executives would struggle with the job of headteacher'. The principal sets the formal conditions to support and nurture collaborative learning (Harris and Lambert, 2003). Prospective candidates must possess a variety of skills and attributes to be successful in this key leadership role as according to Burns (1996) the principal has to change the behaviour and beliefs of all stakeholders in the school community and unite them behind a new vision for the school's future. The human characteristics of principals will be a factor in their success, with specific qualities required to nurture and enable all facets of school life to function harmoniously. This has a bearing on the relationship that exists between school principals and their staff. DeAngelis, Peddle and Trott (2002), through their research in Illinois, have found that school principals heavily influence teacher working conditions and affect the ability of districts to attract and retain talented teachers. The quality of a principal therefore matters in determining the motivation of teachers and the quality of teaching which takes place in the classroom (Eraut, 1994; Hargreaves, 1994). Principals are often found having to convince their colleagues that they can successfully implement new curricular and procedural changes, while having to respond to the constant expectation of enthusiastic leadership 'in the face of resistance and, possibly, cynicism' (Fidler and Atton, 2004, 64). This is often achieved through the use of transformational leadership which gives principals the potential to alter the cultural context in which people work. In

order for this to be successful principals need to be perceptive so that they know when to push and when to leave the situation unchallenged (Davidoff and Lazarus, 2002).

Schools are no longer self-contained institutions where outsiders come in only when they are invited. Michael Fullan has noted 'out there' is now 'in here', and these relentless pressures have intensified principals' workload. Principals have to mediate fairly the demands from external sources and from colleagues (Forster, 1999). The changing face of modern education has dramatically removed the boundary between school and the wider community, with the effect that schools no longer operate in isolation. Schools have become more integrated within the community. Principals are managing radical changes in the way schools interact with other agencies and services (Harris, 2009, 421) whereby principals exercise different roles in different circumstances (Smith, Sparks and Thurlow, 2001). As a result, principals have an increasingly important function as the main channel of communication between the school and external bodies. They are now held accountable to an array of groups; relationships between the educational partners are thus fraught with difficulties. The old role of principals as solitary instructional leaders is now wholly inadequate, as they need to have considerable insight into education and be able to manage the process of change.

The school leadership literature reviewed gives a more incisive and a broader understanding of how today's school principals are charged with the task of having to 'drive up standards through performance management and hard-edged measurable targets for everyone in the system' (Fidler and Atton, 2004, 62) while also remaining

focused on instructional leadership, financial management, policy development, decision making, staff mediation, negotiation, and marketing the school, among other roles (Scott and Webber, 2008). The literature helps us to understand how all this can give rise to unrealistic expectations of school leaders when school management bodies endeavour to find an outstanding leader with exceptional creative talent. Roza, Cello, Harvey, and Wishon (2003, 31) warn against school management bodies looking for principals 'who after all walk on water'. The principal alone cannot be held responsible for school improvement and school effectiveness (Squelch and Lemmer, 1994).

There is no doubt that a modern day principalship in any school is conceptualised as demanding, and these demands do deter some potential heads from taking that step, while existing incumbents find that the demands being placed on them are greater than they are able to deal or cope with (Grubb and Flessa, 2006, 2). According to Papa Jr. et al. (2002, 5), the principal is viewed:

> not only as the building curricular expert but as the individual charged with leading and managing the internal operations of the school and the person who represents the school with a variety of external audiences regarding performance, resources and community relations.

One of the most significant findings of school leadership literature for the past number of years is that the role played by the school principal is critically important to the success and development of all schools (Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach, 1999; MacBeath, 1998; Starratt, 2004; all in Morgan and Sugrue, 2008). The research shows that leadership is one of the most important factors in making a school successful (OECD, 2008; Harris, 2004; Leithwood and Riehl, 2003).

Literature from the USA reviewed as part of this research has concluded that leadership has a significant effect on student learning, second only to the effects of the quality of the curriculum and teaching (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003). In the increasingly complex contexts of educational change and accountability, continuous school enhancement and improvement will depend upon dynamic, strong and committed school leadership and management. Improving learning for students is seen as the moral purpose for school leadership and therefore should be at the centre of all leadership activities (OECD, 2008). Leadership as a concept has always been written about and its importance has long been recognised. Leadership studies began with Ohio State University and Michigan Leadership Studies in the 1950s. It is a difficult concept to conceptualise, as Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999, 5) explain:

> Leadership as a concept and a set of practices has been the subject of an enormous quantity of popular and academic literature . . . . Arguably, a great deal has been learned about leadership over the last century. But this has not depended on any clear, agreed definition of the concept, as essential as this would seem at first glance.

Since the National College for School Leadership was established in Nottingham in 2000, a lot of reviews of school leadership literature have taken place but, 'there is no consensus regarding how to define educational leadership,' (Taysum, 2010, 37). Bush and Glover (in Earley and Weindling, 2004, 4) explored various definitions before offering their own:

> Leadership is a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. Successful leaders develop a vision for their schools based on personal and professional values. They articulate this vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and other stake holders to share the vision. The philosophy, structures and activities of the school are geared towards the achievement of this shared vision.

According to Harris, Day, Hopkins, Hadfield, Hargreaves and Chapman (2003, 9) leadership is in vogue. This focus on leadership stems from the need to cope with discontinuous, systematic and accelerating change. Leadership capacity and capability are needed in order to drive educational reform. Through leadership it is hoped to improve schools and 'address some of the macro-problems of the state and society,' (Harris et al., 2003, 9). Effective school leadership has the potential to influence school and pupil effectiveness in a very positive way. Sammons, Thomas and Mortimore (1997) explain that leadership helps to establish a clear and consistent vision which emphasises the prime purposes of the school as teaching and learning for the entire school community.

The importance of leadership in securing sustainable school improvement has been demonstrated in both research and practice (Harris and Bennett, 2001). Similarly, leadership is highlighted as the key constituent in school effectiveness (Sammons et al., 1997), 'second only to classroom practice in terms of impact on school and student outcomes,' (Bush, Bell and Middlewood, 2010, 6). This is why choosing a successful principal is one of the most important decisions that a school management body will ever have to make. The principal is viewed by teachers, parents, the wider community and the 'system' as *the* leader of the school, despite arguments to reconceptualise the public's understanding about school leadership as something enacted by many different people through distributed leadership (Cranston, 2006, 2). Leithwood and Riehl (2003, 2), in a research report for the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), which sought to identify what is known about school leadership, argue that if you 'scratch the surface of an excellent school you are likely

to find an excellent principal. Peer into a failing school and you will find weak leadership.'

This section of the literature review examines the areas of contemporary school leadership and management because of the significant influence they exert on the deputyship and principalship roles, making them more complex, with both roles necessary and instrumental for leadership to function. There needs to be a greater openness to the boundaries of leadership (Bennett, Wise, Woods and Harvey, 2003) and therefore this study of Irish deputyship also explores leadership. The literature reviewed has a common thread running through the definitions of leadership, which is that leaders develop followership in people who then have a choice as to whether they will follow a lead being offered. Principals' effects on student learning centre on the leader's role in shaping the school's instructional climate and organisation (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan and Lee, 1982 in Cooley and Shen, 2000). All this interest in school leadership has led to a growth of external scrutiny and monitoring of schools, and this has created its own set of tensions. Principal teachers, now more than ever, have to cope with change and complexity. According to Day et al. (2000), the contemporary school leader must be politically astute, a successful professional entrepreneur, a skilled mediator and an effective agent of change. Therefore the basis of power is a sound knowledge of how organisations function, interpersonal relations, group dynamics, personal management and people's values.

Management is somewhat different to leadership. Kotter (1990b in Fiddler and Atton, 2004, 30) distinguishes between leadership and management, the latter being concerned with 'consistency and order' and the former with 'constructive or adaptive

change'. Webb and Vulliamy (1996, 135) define management as 'the co-ordination, support and mentoring of organisational activities within the school'. Pollitt's (1990, 1) definition of managerialism is:

> a set of beliefs and practices, at the core of which burns the seldom-tested assumptions that better management will prove an effective solvent for a wide range of economic and social ills.

Leadership and management along with leader and manager can be confused with each other and employed in a context where the other is required. Bush (1998, 328) has 'linked leadership to values or purposes, while management is related more to implementation or technical issues'. Northouse (2007, 9) argues that 'leadership is a process that is similar to management in many ways'. It is particularly important to clarify this distinction as the management of change is an everyday feature of school practice, and change in a school is particularly affected by human variables. Both leadership and management are necessary and important due to the variety of issues pertaining to the role of principal. As Bolman and Deal (1997 in Fiddler and Atton, 2004, 31) explain, 'when organisations are over-managed but under-led they eventually lose any sense of spirit or purpose. Poorly managed organisations with strong charismatic leaders may soar briefly only to crash shortly thereafter.'

The positions of manager and leader are not mutually exclusive, and leaders can be good managers and vice versa. Hoyle and Wallace (2005) note that leadership has only recently overtaken management as the main descriptor for what is entailed in running and improving public service organisations. It is generally accepted that management or transactional leadership is also required in addition to transformational leadership (Bryman, 1992 in Fiddler and Atton, 2004).

Transformational leadership is concerned with change and empowering followers. Its main features are 'identifying and articulating a vision, fostering acceptance of group goals, providing an appropriate model, high performance expectations, providing individual support, providing intellectual stimulation, contingent reward and management by exception' (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman and Fetter in Fiddler and Atton, 2004, 33–34). A key dimension to the work of school leaders is the need to involve educational partners and stakeholders in pursuit of agreed objectives. This requires that individual and organisational objectives are reconciled where possible. As Mintzberg (1990, 168) asserts, 'formal authority vests [managers] with great potential power; leadership determines in large part how much of it they will realize.'

In the Irish context, according to a report by Haygroup Management Consultants, principals face a range of challenges in effectively delivering the key elements of their role (Drea and O'Brien, 2003, 5). The researchers stated that key survey findings profile a strong desire among principals to be relieved of time-consuming administrative functions that are rightfully the responsibility of the board of management, so that principals can meaningfully address their role as instructional leaders and have a greater influence on teaching and learning within their schools. Sugrue (2003) highlighted the changes in the role of the Irish primary principal and described phase one, which is predominantly administrative (pre-1971); phase two, which is predominantly managerial (1971–89); and phase three (1990–present), which calls for leadership in addition to administration and management. Irish principals are not alone, however; Southworth (1995 in Bristow, Ireson and Coleman, 2007, 15) states that:

Research in primary schools has shown that the tasks that headteachers are expected to undertake have changed significantly in recent years with their work being increasingly perceived as pressurised.

Another significant piece of Irish research involving twelve primary principals explored the influences that shape the identities of primary principals as a means of gaining insight into the process of identity construction and, through it, the process of school change (Sugrue and Furlong, 2002). Evidence from the study suggested that principals' identities are a significant dimension of a school's ecology, with postmodern conditions requiring principals to become more 'adept at dealing with the more unpredictable and uncertain, to learn to recognise risk, to evaluate it, to imagine possible alternatives, and to harness those forces to construct new ways of being a school leader' (Sugrue and Furlong, 2002, 207). With regard to principals' learning opportunities, the study asked policy makers to move away from orthodoxy in favour of fostering a more risky, imaginative interplay enabling school leaders to risk alternative routines and build different school communities with new identities. Risk and imagination need to become significant elements of a principal's repertoire, with the primary lesson for those who facilitate school leadership learning being that taking leave of the past does not necessarily mean abandoning tradition (Sugrue and Furlong, 2002).

A later piece of educational research conducted nationally in the Irish Republic on principals' roles and job satisfaction used data from 800 questionnaires sent to primary and post-primary school principals (Morgan and Sugrue, 2008). The questionnaire consisted of items about principals' background and qualifications, challenges of the work and job satisfaction. A total of 76% responded to the questionnaire. Results showed that the biggest challenges to Irish principals are

policy development and implementation, problem solving, conflict resolution and self-management. Results demonstrated that female principals were better able to deal with the more difficult challenges in the job and at the same time derive satisfaction from their work.

To summarise, this section dealt with the principalship and its reconceptualisation in the twenty-first century. It became evident from the literature that principals need to have a very clear understanding of schools, the education system and how both work effectively due to increased legislative change. Principalship involves an assortment of functions: being administrators, change agents, politicians, social workers and instructional leaders, to mention but a few. It is a complex role, and as leaders and managers, principals are held accountable by a wide cross-section of our society. On occasion this can leave them in an isolated and vulnerable position. Principals are charged with setting new directions, creating a new vision and building commitment towards achieving that vision (Kotter, 1996) while being positioned at the centre of the school's information network. Given what is already known, my own research now needs to investigate through the eyes of Irish primary principal aspirants to what extent (if any) the role affords an opportunity to create a vision and mission and impact positively on the local life of the community while achieving enhanced status and intrinsic rewards.

Conclusion

This literature review sought to give a comprehensive report about the nature and functions of the deputy-principal and principal. It described the deputyship as an ill-defined role brought about by a general lack of conceptual understanding of the role.

The literature described the role in terms of pastoral or academic responsibilities tending to centre round unwanted administrative tasks. Deputies often ensure stability and order in the school, while the principal faces a far greater range of challenges in effectively delivering the key elements of leadership and management practices. The principalship is a significantly altered role since the advent of the new millennium. The literature clearly describes a demanding role. The twenty-first-century principal enjoys far greater status, being referred to in the literature as 'Chief Executive Officer', the vital linchpin in bringing about school improvement and effectiveness. The knowledge, skills and attributes associated with deputyship are far diminished from those necessary for successful, high-expectation principalship. This role described in the literature, being very different from principalship, fails to provide a specific training ground for the professional learning of skills such as role modelling, team building, empathy and decision making.

Chapter Three: Motivating and preparing deputies for principalship: the literature

Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first will examine relevant theories of career motivation, making reference to a range of research studies which focused on deputy-principals in different countries. It will explore the factors including socialisation experiences which affect vertical career motivation amongst deputy-principals towards principalship. The chapter endeavours to bring together comprehensive information on the willingness, aspirations and preparedness of deputy-principals to build capacity within the system by becoming principal aspirants. The second section will review relevant literature pertaining to the need to provide professional leadership and management preparation as a socialisation for those demonstrating an interest in a school principalship.

Factors influencing deputy-principals' career motivation to apply for principalship

Career motivation is clearly an important factor in determining if deputy-principals are interested in progressing to a principalship and in doing so provide a pool of willing applicants for vacant principalships. Most theories of motivation (e.g. Bandura, 1986) argue that people are intrinsically motivated to accomplish personally important goals for themselves (Day and Leithwood, 2007). Many studies have attempted to relate desire for principalship with personal motivational factors (Hausman et al., 2002; Sutter, 1996; Marshall, 1992). There are many theories of motivation in the literature, but Steers and Black (1994 in Walker and Kwan, 2009),

maintain that they can be classified into two strands – content and process. They defined content theories as those that ask, 'Which needs within a particular person are causing a certain kind of behaviour?' whereas process theories emphasise an 'understanding [of] the decision processes within the person that underlie behaviours' (Steers and Black, 1994, 140). Although various labels are applied by different content theorists to describe needs, they share the common thread that 'an unsatisfied need creates tension that stimulates drives within the individual' (Robbins, 2003, 205) and that these drives lead to certain tension-reducing behaviours.

Humanist Psychology such as Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory and Clayton Alderfer's Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) needs theory are among the most widely used content theories (Hoffman, 1988). Maslow, an American psychologist, said people are motivated by five basic categories of needs – physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualisation. His theory predicts that when needs are satisfied, they are no longer motivators. The hierarchy starts with physiological needs and moves upwards in a pyramid shape to safety and security, social activity (love and belonging), esteem (or ego), and finally self-actualisation. Maslow (1967, 280) describes self-actualisation as people being 'devoted, working at something, something which is very precious to them – some calling or vocation in the old sense, the priestly sense'. Self-actualisation can be considered as the point where deputies assume the role of principal having satisfied all their prior deficiency needs at the deputy level. What Maslow defends in his theory is human needs based on two groupings: deficiency needs and growth needs; each lower need must be met before moving to the next level. Once each of these needs has been satisfied, if at

some future time a deficiency is detected, the individual will act to remove it (Maslow, 1943).

Although Maslow's theory is widely appealing, it has often been criticised for a lack of empirical support (Landy, 1985). Alderfer (1969), an American psychologist, attempted to address this through empirical study. Based on his findings, he proposed that people are motivated by three groups of core needs: existence (E), relatedness (R) and growth (G). Existence refers to the basic needs for existence, relatedness refers to the desire to maintain important relationships, and growth represents aspirations for personal development. Alderfer's model has gained wide acceptance in management literature (Robbins, 2003). It is hierarchical like Maslow's, as existence needs have priority over relatedness needs, which have priority over growth. Alderfer's ERG model has fewer levels, and unlike Maslow's hierarchy it allows for different levels of need to be pursued simultaneously while also allowing the order of the needs to be different for different people.

The term 'motivation' is used to explain decisions and behaviours that cannot be explained by ability alone. It 'encompasses the term "work motivation" and "managerial motivation" and goes further to include motivation associated with a wide range of career decisions and behaviours' (London, 1983, 620). Career motivation in deputy-principals may help to make the decision to progress their careers vertically to principalship. London conceptualises career motivation as 'a multidimensional construct internal to the individual, influenced by the situation and reflected in the individual's decisions and behaviours' (1983, 620), and says it is composed of three components: career resilience, career insight and career identity

(London, 1983). Day and Allen (2002, 72) write: 'Career resilience is the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, career insight is the ability to be realistic about one's career and career identity is the extent that one defines oneself by one's work'.

Unfortunately, a weakness of the Irish study conducted by Morgan and Sugrue (2008) on career motivations in school leadership is that it focused on school principals and did not include deputy-principals. It found that the main sources of job motivation in principals were 'receiving and giving support, leadership rewards such as the opportunity to give direction, intrinsic rewards of work and recognition and affirmation'. This shows the need for their 'esteem needs' (Maslow, 1943, 382) to be satisfied. Their desire for achievement and reputation is being met.

Intrinsic motivations such as intellectual fulfilment and wanting to make a positive contribution to the life of a local community are often cited as the main reasons teachers choose to further their careers and become educational leaders. With so little direct evidence from Ireland, though, it has been necessary to consult international literature for evidence. A more recent study undertaken by Ummanel (2012) set out to understand primary school principals' career development in Ireland, Cyprus and Malta. The study was inspired by initial studies of educational leadership by Peter Ribbins (1997) in England. The purpose of Ummanel's study was to explore principals' career paths and how they are made. Five primary school principals from each country – fifteen in total – participated in the study. Interestingly, none of the Irish principals, all from Dublin, had principalship as part of their initial career trajectory. The most significant fact to come out of Ummanel's study in relation to this thesis was that all five Irish primary school principals were

appointed without ever having been deputy-principals, and they still believed they could run their schools better than the previous administration. This indicates the Growth Needs (G) of respondents as an explanation for their desire for self-development and advancement. Two of them had diplomas in educational leadership and management, and two had master's degrees in education. Participants achieved self-actualisation (Maslow's hierarchy) by reaching their full potential as school leaders, but found the role challenging in the first years. Analysis found they had various reasons for wanting principalship: frustrations with the DES, influence by family members and colleagues, as well as a salary rise. Cypriot and Maltese principals said they wanted more power and they thought they could manage the school better than others.

In many school systems globally, principal positions are generally filled from the ranks of deputy-principals, although this was not the case for Irish principals in Ummanel's study. Despite the importance of deputy-principals, there has been little research into the contextual factors that influence their willingness to apply for principal posts (Walker and Kwan, 2009). One of the few studies that links contextual factors to a desire for principalship was conducted in America by Yerkes and Guaglianone (1998); it found that institutional factors (e.g. school size and location) also influence deputy-principals' career aspirations. Further American research found no significant support for a relationship between school factors and the attractiveness of individual principalships (Pounder and Merrill, 2001). A year later another American study discovered that jobs at high-achieving schools were rated more attractive than those at low-achieving schools (Winter and Morgenthal, 2002). Barty et al. (2005) in Australia suggested that principal applicants included

school location and size when deciding whether or not individual principalships appealed to them. The study also found that the presence of an incumbent and difficulties associated with local educational politics were also influential factors.

Walker and Kwan (2009) attempted to link four groups of contextual factors to principalship desire. Their large study involved deputy-principals in Hong Kong secondary schools. Their aim was to provide a greater understanding of the desire, or lack thereof, of deputy-principals to become principals. The study found that a number of professional, demographic and motivational factors appeared to link to deputy-principals' desire for a principalship of their own. It found that deputy-principals who have a stronger desire for personal growth and who are more actively involved in professional development opportunities in their schools have a greater desire to become principals. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this is the level referred to as 'esteem' (1943, 382), where people need to gain recognition and a sense of contribution by feeling valued by society. Pounder and Merrill (2001) found that the probability of being offered a job, the desire to achieve and to influence education, reasonable time demands, and adequate salary and benefits are strong predictors of attraction to the secondary principalship.

Deputy-principals who value harmonious working relationships with their colleagues are less motivated towards a principalship. Those within this group have a strong need for relatedness according to Alderfer's ERG Theory of Motivation (1969); they want to maintain harmonious relationships and bonds with their colleagues. The most interesting outcome from this Hong Kong study was that school factors did not influence deputy-principals' desire for a principalship, if professional factors are

assumed to be constant across all respondents. This means that school factors do not help in understanding if deputy-principals aspire more for a principalship. This finding contradicts that of Winter and Morgenthal (2002), but in Hong Kong many deputy-principals are appointed principals in the schools in which they already work. Given this tradition, many Hong Kong deputy-principals may never assume a principalship of their own if the opportunity does not arise in their own school, as they may be content to remain in situ for the duration of their career.

The socialisation experiences of the deputy-principals also underlie the willingness for career advancement. Socialisation theory has been defined as 'the process of learning and performing a social role' (Marshall and Greenfield, 1987, 37). The significance of socialisation experiences on career development has been promoted by career developmental theorists (Super, Savickas and Super, 1996 in Brown and Brooks, 1996). The development of career choices occurs in the context of other roles that an individual undertakes in life (Super et al. in Brown and Brooks, 1996). Individuals undertake multiple roles which affect their career trajectory. Career development is a process, and a person's career outcome is the product of interactions among personal, family, and occupational factors throughout a person's lifetime (Pik Har Lam, 2006). Research on the socialisation of deputy-principals is limited (Oleszewski et al., 2012) in an educational context which recognises that encouraging and sustaining principal aspirants is imperative for effective leadership (Gronn and Lucey, 2006).

Even taking the socialisation experiences of deputies into consideration, there are still some deputy-principals in the education system both nationally and

internationally who are simply not interested in careers in leadership at the rank of principal. The IPPN (2006) found that many teachers who are promoted to the rank of deputy-principal have no intention of applying for the role of principal. Important research on deputy-principals in England by Earley and Weindling (2004) found that 40% of them had no plans to take on a headship, although the percentage was much lower for those undertaking the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). Their study included the questions: What do we know about the sort of teachers who become Heads and what are the typical career paths and future plans? This comparative longitudinal study was conducted on principal teachers from 1982–1983 and another was conducted in 2001, a gap of almost twenty years. The research of secondary principals began at the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to raise some key issues about principal teachers' careers. The findings showed differences and similarities in terms of intentions of becoming or not becoming a principal teacher. For example, the previous post they held (such as deputy-principal) seemed to influence their motivation to become a principal.

A research project undertaken in New South Wales, Australia (d'Arbon, Duignan, and Duncan, 2002), included an item in the survey relating to the career aspirations of respondents. The structure of this item was taken from James and Whiting (1998), whose research into the career perspectives of deputy-principals in the UK developed what they termed a 'career anchorage model' (James and Whiting, 1998, 475) to illustrate their results. This model was adopted by the research team in New South Wales. Six distinct groups of respondents were identified, based on their willingness or unwillingness to apply for a principal's position (Table 3.1):

Table 3.1 Career aspirations of respondents (d'Arbon et al., 2002, 475)

Career Aspirations of Respondents	Frequency	Percent
1. Unavailed aspirants: Those who have applied for a principal's position in the past and will not do so in the future.	35	3.4
2. Settlers: Those who have never applied for a principal's position and do not envisage doing so in the future.	498	48.6
3. Unpredictables: Those who have applied for a principal's position in the past but are unsure whether they will continue to do so.	270	26.4
4. Potential aspirants: Those who have not yet applied for a principal's position but envisage doing so in the future.	38	3.7
5. Active aspirants: Those who are actively seeking a principal's position.	51	5.0
6. Uncertain aspirants: Those who would only apply for a principal's position if it was in a suitable location for them.	116	11.3
Total	1,008	98.4

The respondents were then divided into three groups (d'Arbon et al., 2002, 475):

Unwilling respondents – comprising unavailed aspirants and settlers.

Willing respondents – comprising potential and active aspirants.

Unsure respondents – comprising unpredictable and uncertain aspirants.

Over half (52%) of all respondents indicated they were not seeking a principal's position and did not intend to apply – the unwilling respondents. Willing respondents constituted 30.1% of the total: they said they intended to apply for a principalship; 16.3% were unsure. The results from this research are initially disturbing; however, on further analysis of the results, going by position of responsibility held by respondents it becomes apparent that of the 300 assistant principals who responded, 45.2% indicated their willingness to apply for a

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principalship (d'Arbon et al., 2002, 475–476). This valuable piece of research shows the voices of concern amongst potential principal aspirants.

Many deputy-principals do not want to find themselves locked away in an office all day finding that they have to monitor their colleagues, discipline endless numbers of students, work with irate and demanding parents or deal with an ever-increasing amount of administration. According to Normore (2004), this is the stereotypical view of the school principal held by many teachers. There is the fear that their Relatedness Needs (R) according to Alderfer's Theory will not be met. They want to maintain the significant relationships they have nurtured over time. They believe that the principalship may bring them less satisfaction because they do not have a sufficiently healthy character structure as a result of their basic needs (love, friendship, etc.) not being sufficiently satisfied throughout their lives. Draper and McMichael (1996), through their observations of retired teachers, were led to suppose that deputy-principals, exposed to the degree of disenchantment expressed by retirees and other experienced principals, might well hesitate to take on a principalship themselves. A study of deputies by Draper and McMichael (1998b) showed that this was often the result.

Self-belief appears to be crucial in determining the level of desire for principalship amongst deputy-principals. Those who believe that they possess the right skills and expertise while being fully utilised in their current roles see career advancement opportunities, and indicate a higher level of current job satisfaction and a greater desire for principalship (Sutter, 1996). In Draper and McMichael's Scottish study (1998a), a third of their sample of deputy-principals was not deterred from applying

for a principalship. This study found that those most likely to apply for a principalship were in their thirties and had a long-term strategic view of their career development which included vertical mobility. They did not fear the administrative burdens of principalship or the loss of contact with pupils and the effect on their quality of life. They were more apt to see the challenging opportunities in the job and felt ready to undertake that challenge. This suggests strong individuals with strong personalities possessing 'increased frustration-tolerance through early gratification' (Maslow, 1943, 388), having the power to withstand present or future thwarting of their needs.

Nevertheless, not all deputy-principals find their professional role rewarding. A study conducted by Peter Ribbins in England (1997) demonstrated that a large number of principals found their experience as a deputy particularly frustrating or disappointing because of the lack of leadership influence in the school. There were eighteen contributors to the research: nine researchers and the remainder interviewees from schools, colleges and universities. Some experienced more leadership influence as head of department than as deputy-principal. This negative view of their experience as a deputy-principal contrasted with their view of being a principal. The latter was generally much more positive because of the clear leadership role of the principal within the school.

This view is supported by Murphy and Beck (1994 in Walker and Kwan, 2009), who suggested that the contradictory demands of leadership confused and frustrated deputy-principals by asking them to 'work actively to transform, restructure and redefine schools while [holding] organisational positions historically and

traditionally committed to resisting change and maintaining stability'. This notion is also substantiated by Harris, Muijs and Crawford (2003), who said deputy-principals were being deterred from pursuing principalships because of the difficulties they experienced in coping with an expanded set of responsibilities. Hausman and colleagues' (2002) study revealed that deputy-principals who reported difficulties in balancing their work lives with professional development indicated a lower desire for principalship. Walker and Kwan (2009) found an increasing number of responsibilities for deputy-principals as a result of broad-based educational reform in Hong Kong. This in turn can lead to low levels of career motivation and role conflict within the deputyship, as being both a supervisor of teachers and a support for teachers is considered to be a main downside of the job (Glanz, 1994). Winter, Rinehart and Munoz (2001 in Newton, Giesen, Freeman, Bishop and Zeitoun, 2003) discovered, when they carried out a district-wide survey in the USA of 194 individuals holding unused principal certification, that job satisfaction with their current job is the highest-ranked barrier to pursuing a principalship. A possible reason for low levels of career motivation may be that in these situations the 'esteem' needs (Maslow, 1943, 382) of the individual are not being satisfied. Their desire for self-respect, self-esteem and the esteem of others is missing. These needs can be classified into two subsidiary sets: first, the desire for strength, achievement, real capacity and adequacy; and second, the desire for reputation or prestige, recognition and appreciation (Maslow, 1943).

While the literature so far has implied that low levels of career satisfaction and motivation would appear to affect career mobility, gender also appears to have a major impact on decisions to proceed or not to principalship (Lacey, 2002). Lacey's

Australian research revealed more male than female Victorian teachers interested in promotion. For both genders, though, the five strongest disincentives to teachers and deputy-principals seeking promotion to principalship were stress levels of the job, time demands, effect on family, impact of societal problems on the role, and the inadequacy of school budgets; women cited family less often than men (Lacey, 2002). Cranston (2007) found that female participants rated the demands of the role and responsibility, not family responsibilities, as the highest potential barriers to applying for a principalship. The importance of managing a work life balance has increased markedly over the past twenty years (De Bruin and Dupris, 2004). Jobs have become more complex and employees have been placed under increasing pressure to produce quality results in shorter time frames with fewer resources (Hosie, Forster and Servatos, 2004).

Work–life balance tensions clearly appear to be a deterrent for potential applicants, and this is against a backdrop of intensifying leadership roles with dominant accountability and managerial agendas impacting on many principals at the moment (Thomson, Blackmore, Sachs and Tregenza in Cranston, 2007). Deputy-principals clearly have perceptions of the principalship as a role somewhat different from their current one. It is generally seen as one characterised by affecting their work–life balance, holding high responsibilities, and moving them away from a teaching and learning focus. They would like to see the principal's role focusing more on strategic and educational/curriculum leadership and less on operational matters (Cranston, 2007).

According to the literature, women continue to be under-represented at principalship level in the UK as elsewhere (Gökçe, 2009 in Smith, 2011b; McLay, 2004). In 2006, women constituted 57% of the secondary teaching workforce in England and Wales, but just 36% of the secondary principalships were held by women although the percentage of secondary headships held by women has increased steadily in recent years (DCSF, 2007 in Smith, 2011a). Shakeshaft (1989) reported that women continue to be under-represented: 19% at secondary level and 31% at elementary level in the USA. 'Women represent a largely untapped source of leadership in a period of time when qualified applicants for principalship are in short supply,' write Pounder and Merrill (2001, 506).

Researchers have attempted to identify and categorise some of the barriers to women's progression to principalship as explanations to account for the low representation of women in leadership positions in education (Coleman, 2002; Blackmore, 1999; Hall, 1996; Shakeshaft, 1989). Some of the literature focuses solely on barriers and impediments to principalship rather than on a wide variety of career events and issues. Oplatka and Tamir (2009, 217) report that 'women's under-representation in headship was commonly referred to as a result of both internal and external barriers, as if the women leaders . . . necessarily and naturally aspire to headship, yet are impeded by a wide variety of determinants'.

Internationally, Coleman (2005) and Blackmore, Thomson and Barty (2006) demonstrate the continuing preference for male leadership, which mostly manifests at the level of appointment. Different studies have suggested various reasons for the low representation of women in principalship positions. Among these are cultural

reasons that identify female attributes as contributing to ineffective leadership (Curry, 2000; Blackmore, 1999; Al-Khalifa and Migniuolo, 1990), latent discrimination (Coleman, 2002), and male dominance in educational administration, which in turn hinders the leadership opportunities of many women (Limerick and Anderson, 1999; Shakeshaft, 1989). The research acknowledges that women may make their own decision not to apply for a principalship for a variety of reasons, such as lack of necessary aspirations, lack of awareness of the promotion system and a lack of confidence they will succeed, gender-based socialisation, fear of failure, and lack of competitiveness (Coffey and Delamont, 2000; Acker, 1989; Limerick and Anderson, 1999).

Smith (2011a) posits that women are not progressing to secondary principalships in England and Wales in any significant numbers, and carried out a study to understand why some woman aspire to a principalship while others are content not to. Her study draws on forty female life history narratives. The ten principals' positive perceptions of their role are contrasted with the negative perceptions of principalship harboured by the majority of the other thirty teachers in the study, '28 of whom were adamant that they would not consider headship as a career option' (Smith, 2011a, 517). Smith found that most women rejected principalship because it meant renouncing their pupil-centred values, compromising their workplace relationships, becoming tough, unpopular and isolated, and having no life outside of school. Earley and Weindling in their longitudinal study (2004) found that 40% of deputies in 2001 had no plans to become a principal. The main reasons were that it involved 'too much stress' and preferred to remain a class teacher to maintain contact with children. It is generally problematic trying to define what exactly is meant by 'stress'. As a concept it is

now becoming more accepted as relational in nature, involving some sort of transaction between the individual and the environment, but it continues to be defined in several fundamentally different ways (Trenberth, 1996).

Smith (2011b) found that personal agency in making life and career decisions emerged as a key feature, with participants divided into two groups. 'Self-defined' were those who positioned themselves as agents taking control of their lives and careers, and 'externally defined' were those who described their career choices as largely defined by the actions of others or as a result of chance and circumstance. Both groups are illustrated in the following tables.

Table 3.2 Personal agency in female teachers' career approaches (Smith, 2011b, 12)

Type	Self-perceptions regarding degree of personal agency in career decisions	Approach to career
Planners	- Are self-driven and self- motivated. - Are able to envisage themselves as leaders. - Are motivated by a desire to effect change at whole-school level. - Are willing to continue applying for promotions after unsuccessful job applications. - Have high self-expectations and high levels of self-belief and self-esteem.	- See career as a very important part of their lives. - Take a strategic approach to career progression, e.g. have clear, staged ambitions, and set out to gain specific types of responsibility, training and experience that will enable them to achieve career goals. - Have a high level of motivation. - Have a positive attitude to their job.
Pupil-centred	- Derive a sense of self and satisfaction from pupil achievement, and positive relationships with pupils and colleagues. - See their primary role as that of nurturer. - Contrast themselves and their values with perceived school leadership values / behaviour.	- Make career decisions in accordance with values relating to pupil welfare and achievement and positive working relationships. - Opt for a classroom-based career. - Display a strong sense of dedication and commitment to classroom teaching.
Politicized leaders	- Have a strong sense of values. - Have a high level of motivation. - Have a sense of mission and purpose. - Have high aspirations.	- Make career decisions in accordance with their politico-educational values / philosophy of education. - See a need to attain senior positions in order to affect positive changes school wide. - Aim for positions of influence.

Table 3.3 External factors in female teachers' career approaches (Smith, 2011b, 13)

Type	Self-perceptions regarding degree of personal agency in career decisions	Approach to career
Protégées	- Under-value their own ability and potential, and lack confidence. - Need encouragement and feedback from others to boost professional self-esteem and confidence. - Are reluctant to apply for promotions unless actively encouraged to do so by a respected mentor / manager.	- Depend on professional sources for support with career development / professional self-esteem. - Avoid making conscious career decisions or planning career moves alone. - Are more likely to apply for / achieve promotions as a result of suggestions / encouragement / mentoring from professional colleagues (especially senior colleagues).
Pragmatists	- Fit careers around other priorities or responsibilities, e.g. family, health issues, partner's career, etc. - Experience a sense of guilt / role conflict in combining job and other responsibilities.	- Are willing to take on additional professional responsibilities if these do not detract from other important areas of life, e.g. family. - Are more likely to respond to opportunities that arise 'in situ', rather than actively seeking out / planning career moves / promotions elsewhere. - Are less ambitious than earlier in their careers. - Are concerned with balancing school and family / personal life appropriately.
Protesters	- Analyse and identify factors external to themselves limiting their career progression / options. - Are also critical of their own actions in retrospect.	- Experience anger, indignation and frustration resulting from awareness of factors blocking their career development, e.g. discrimination, others' negative attitudes, lack of support, limited choices available, family, specific problems associated with particular working context. - Develop a sense of self-determination.

The first typology titled *Protégées* do not take full responsibility for their own professional roles but depend on the support and encouragement of others within their professional context to heighten their access to further skills and knowledge to progress their careers. They avoid making conscious career decisions and are reluctant to apply for promotions unless actively encouraged to do so. In fulfilling their professional roles they are reluctant to exert their own personal agency and lack the self-confidence with which to be able to play a meaningful role at a school management and leadership level. They carry out their roles in a supportive and

collaborative manner in the hope of maintaining existing relationships but are unwilling or unable to influence the existing school culture and practices to any significant extent. They accept the norms and expectations placed on them with limited opportunities to experience leadership beyond the maintenance of the existing structure, harmony and order of the school.

The second typology titled *Pragmatists* fit their careers around other responsibilities or priorities. Participants situated within this typology tend to be closely associated with motherhood although not all mothers are pragmatists and not all pragmatists are mothers. They consciously exert their professional agency but fulfil their leadership responsibilities within the particular set of constraints and opportunities afforded to them by their personal life contexts. Pragmatists seek out opportunities to exercise leadership beyond the narrow range of managerial tasks which are simply concerned with school maintenance. They seek opportunities for promotion in their own schools or in other schools. Notably, they make decisions independently aiming to influence school culture, provided that such decisions combine well with their personal situations, for example; with family commitments. Pragmatists are not passive in their role behaviour but given the reality of their responsibilities they may not always be in a position to engage in effective and sustainable school leadership to the extent they would wish.

The third typology titled *Protestors* describes those who are critical of their own actions and inactions and who analyse and identify factors external to themselves that limit their career progression. They emerge as being disenchanted with a lack of

support and collegiality from their professional colleagues. They do not always enjoy harmonious and collegial relationships with their principal and fail to receive voice, autonomy, flexibility and opportunity in directing their professional duties. They experience school leadership in a limited capacity with few real opportunities to implement any strategic actions aimed at school improvement. Protestors are aware of the restrictions on their professional lives and that by complying with them they reinforce the power of those constraints.

The literature makes reference to the negative relationship between desire for principalship and the need for relatedness (R). Deputy-principals with a similar level of professional development, who belong to the same age group and who enjoy better relationships with colleagues, appear less eager to become principals (Walker and Kwan, 2009). If growth opportunities have not been provided to deputy-principals, they may regress to Alderfer's (R) relatedness needs. Coleman (2002) found it likely that one of the major factors affecting women's career experiences is family responsibilities. The literature is very strong on this assumption, as Ortiz (1982) and Whitcombe (1979) note that parenthood does not affect career advancement for most men; however, parenthood negatively influences promotion eligibility for many women due to career breaks for child rearing.

Regardless of gender and its perceived impact on career advancement there still remains the fact that some deputy-principals are turned off the idea of applying for promotion, choosing instead to remain in their comfort zone as an assistant head, year head or subject leader. They are part of a large group of teachers who view themselves as school leaders but do not aspire to a principalship. Harris (2009, 421)

notes 'a general reluctance from those in other formal leadership positions in schools to take on this pivotal role, possibly because they are best placed to see the extent of the challenges and demands of the job'. Pont, Nusche and Hunter (2008) agree, finding that some countries report that teachers and middle leaders show little interest in moving into principalship due to negative images attached to the position, inadequate recruitment structures, high levels of responsibility and relatively low salaries.

Throughout their career, people develop a conception of principalship during their professional socialisation which is learned through both formal and informal processes. Research by NFER (1987) revealed that principals said they themselves had learned about a principalship throughout their career, from both good and bad head teacher role models. They also stressed their experiences as deputies, which provided them with a wide variety of experience, a period acting as head, and working with principals who delegated and saw deputy-headship as a preparation for a principalship (Earley and Weindling, 2007).

In Canada, Begley, Campbell-Evans and Brownridge (1990 in Pont et al., 2008, 159) also found, similarly to Sugrue and Morgan (2008), that intrinsic motivation including a commitment to lifelong learning and wanting to make a difference were strong attractors to school leadership positions. Cranston's (2007) findings for teachers seeking promotion to the rank of principal are broadly in line with those of Morgan and Sugrue (2008) and Begley et al. (1990). Participants in Cranston's study spoke about the capacity to positively influence the learning and lives of young people and the opportunity to work with diverse individuals and groups in the school

and wider community. This was also a very strong theme in Smith's UK (2011) study, as female principal teachers spoke of the great satisfaction derived from working with young people and seeing them develop. Cranston (2007, 11) writes, 'the main factors acting as potential incentives for those seeking promotion are: capacity to achieve work-life balance; school location acceptable to family; good work condition; good remuneration'. There is a strong people-orientated focus in the literature, and the chance for principals to work with other people is a positive aspect of the principalship. Positive relationships are referred to as an important aspect of the job according to Adler (1994), Blackmore (1989) and Coleman (2002, 2000).

Becoming a school principal provides opportunities for those who feel passionate about the job 'to implement their own vision', 'to make a difference', and 'to give themselves a challenge' (Earley and Weindling, 2004, 43). It provides opportunities for people management. School success is also a very important motivator and is closely linked to harmonious relations with pupils and staff. In a study conducted by Baker, Earley and Weindling (1995, 38–39), one principal expressed his satisfaction in leading 'a highly successful school with predominantly excellent working relationships', and another expressed a 'feeling of progress achievement and worth'. This is particularly true in schools with teaching principals who must perform a dual role of delivering a wide and extensive curriculum while simultaneously managing a school. The duality of the role was summed up by Dunning (1993, 83) as: 'a double load where conflict inevitably arises between the professional concerns of teaching and the growing demands of management and leadership'. Most teaching principals, due to the size of their school, find themselves having to teach in a multi-grade

situation. Multi-grade teaching involves a much greater workload and requires much more intensive planning and preparation than single grade teaching.

> The extra work in planning and classroom organisation increases the level of stress felt. Feelings of helplessness and of inadequacy and of being overrun by circumstances as one tries to struggle, juggle and complete programmes of work, while universal to all teachers, appear to be the classroom persistent of the multi-class teacher (Walsh, 2003, 78).

Despite the large numbers of teaching principals that are required to fulfil this unenviable task, policy makers give little attention to this predicament. Wilson and McPake (2000, 12) states that 'the duality of the role of teaching headteacher is often not reflected in discussion of headship'.

In conclusion, deputy-principals are motivated in different ways, according to their individual needs and desires, regarding the decision to progress to principalship or remain in their current role. Various studies have explored the willingness of deputies to make the transition vertically. The literature mentioned a number of professional, demographic and motivational needs that have been linked to a desire for progression to principalship. Many factors mitigate against applying for the role. Based on the theories of motivation it is not surprising that deputy-principals with a greater sense of self-belief in their skills and expertise are more likely to seek out a principalship. Importantly, it is generally thought that gender impacts on decisions to proceed to a principalship, with women continuing to be under-represented at this leadership level in many countries. The literature attempted to identify some of the main barriers to women's progression to principalship and my own research will investigate if respondents involved in this study perceive gender to be a barrier to principalship. It will also seek to establish if Irish deputy-principals believe there is

a preference for male leadership at primary level similar to findings of Coleman; Blackmore, Thomson and Barty.

Moving from deputy to principal: principalship preparation

Many studies deal with the role of principal teachers, quality of school management, school effectiveness and leadership effectiveness: Earley and Weindling (2004), Fidler and Atton (2004), Sergiovanni (2001), Preedy (1993). There is less information available on preparing deputy-principals for a principalship, and this is unfortunate as 'overall, there seems to be a broad international consensus among policy makers that the capacities of those who aspire to become a principal need to be developed' (Cowie and Crawford, 2007, 132). Leadership preparation is an important influence on the ultimate performance of learners in educational settings, hence the emerging awareness among all the educational partners that the preparation and development of school leaders cannot be left to chance (Clarke, Wildy and Pepper, 2007). However, there is little agreement on how to organise and develop preparation for future leadership (Taysum, 2010) with contradictory views on whether or not principals' preparatory courses adequately prepare new principals for their roles, which is surprising, as 'increasingly elaborate and extensive programs of training, assessment and certification, especially for school principals have mushroomed in many parts of the world' (Ribbins, 2008, 61). A lot of research suggests that leadership courses are not an adequate preparation for future principals (Levine, 2005; MacDonald, 2004; Browne-Ferrigno, 2003).

The literature recognises the need to attract and train quality applicants for vacant principalships. There is a need to look into more effective approaches for the

development of educational leaders, particularly as new professional standards for school leaders require university programmes to develop standards-based curricula and modify programme delivery formats. Much of the research on leadership preparation has consisted of case studies of innovative programme models and survey-based investigations of the efficacy of specific programme features (Orr, 2009). Webber explains that while principals handle a multiplicity of roles, their preparation for functioning in the position has been a source of concern globally (Webber, 2008), particularly as education departments and official policy makers continue to demand greater accountability.

Few studies have explored in depth the nature of learning which supports management development – a very important area, as career motivation can be enhanced through career development support (Day and Allen, 2002). Earley and Weindling (2007) did however report that a key point in preparing for a principalship was the breadth of experience of a deputy-principal, and their research revealed that the possibility of becoming a school principal without going through a considerable period as a deputy was very rare in secondary schools. Similarly, Fidler (1997) points out that the quality of headship is heavily influenced by the opportunity given to experience various tasks throughout the career path of teachers. Draper and McMichael (1998a) suggest that deputies who become principals would feel ready for the management role because of the extensive preparation they had undergone and because of their long-term initiation into a management identity. This substantiates the views of Cowie and Crawford (2007), who believe future principals need to have the opportunities to practise the skills and abilities the job demands in order to deal productively and confidently with the leadership and management

issues they are likely to face on appointment. Given these findings it is hardly surprising that policy makers are increasingly turning to educational leadership preparation and development as a means to improve schools and student achievement (Hale and Moorman, 2003; Farkas, Johnson, Duffett and Foleno, 2001).

However, Crow (2001) argues that preparation for a contemporary principalship has not received comparable attention, despite awareness of the importance of leadership for school improvement and students' attainment. Fortunately, as can be seen from the literature, there are some indications that this is changing, and the interest in educational leadership and management has led to investment in the preparation and development of school leaders across many countries (Hallinger, 2003; Brundrett, 2001). It is generally hoped that this investment will help in preparing deputy-principals to prepare for a role 'that embraces visioning, knowledge of curriculum and instruction and the power to move others to innovative solutions' (Cranston et al., 2004, 228). The literature would also seem to suggest that school leadership and management programme directors are developing varied and innovative instructional learning experiences to prepare future principals to lead schools in the current educational climate (Jackson and Kelly, 2002; Peterson, 2002; Milstein and Krueger, 1997).

Becoming a school principal is a transformative process (Crow and Glascock, 1995; White and Crow, 1993). Browne-Ferigno (2003) explains that becoming a principal is a complex process as it requires a person to change their educational career, so there is an intricate process of learning and reflection that requires socialisation into

a new community of practice and assumption of a new role identity. The transition requires a careful balance of knowledge development through classroom learning activities and skills development through situated learning activities guided by qualified professionals (Capasso and Daresh, 2001; Stein, 1998; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Schon, 1983). Karsjanje and Webber (2008) make the very valid point that it is generally important that future principals be selected on the basis of having more than successful teaching experience, important as that is for new principals.

When the decision has been made to participate on a formal leadership course of preparation, a transition can be said to have occurred. In order for the transition to succeed, the literature is strong on the point that individuals engaged in leadership training need opportunities to develop administrative skills through active learning activities; according to Kelley and Peterson (2000, 37), effective preparation programmes are characterised by 'significant coherence in curriculum pedagogy, structure and staffing' in which the experiential component is viewed as the core, with 'classroom-delivered curriculum content designed to support and make meaning of the experiential component'. Leadership training is made all the more relevant and meaningful if participating candidates have the opportunity to apply their newly acquired knowledge to professional practice during monitored internship experiences (Milstein, Bobroff and Restine, 1991).

There is an expectation then that the quality of a preparation programme can influence principals' work and efforts to raise pupils' achievement, yet only limited research exists on the relationship between programme approaches and effective leadership practices (Orr, 2009; Orr and Barber, 2007). Some literature indicates

discrepancies between the type of professional learning school leaders receive and how worthwhile it is in terms of carrying out their role (Fullan, 2007; Leithwood and Levin, 2005; Daresh and Male, 2000). Orr and Orphanos (2011) attempted to determine the influence of exemplary leadership preparation on future principals and how their practices influence school improvement in America. Their 2005 study reported that exemplary leadership preparation and internship programmes will positively contribute to graduates' leadership knowledge and leadership practices and school improvement progress. Browne-Ferrigno (2003) reported that role-identity transformation through a new mindset appeared to be a critical step in professional growth.

Some countries still have no formal principal preparation programmes; this is disappointing, as the literature reviewed shows an acute awareness of the need for this valuable practice to be put in place. In the UK, Norway, the USA (Tjeldvoll, Wales and Welle-Strand, 2005) and Hong Kong (Ming, 2005) there are specific leadership preparation programmes designed and delivered for school principals before they are appointed. According to Shun Wing Ng of the Hong Kong Institute of Education (2010), aspiring principals are required to have a good mastery of leadership capacities for the new paradigm of education development in the twenty-first century. In recent years many university-based educational leadership preparation programmes have redesigned their content and delivery to meet standards based on effective leadership research (Orr and Orphanos, 2011). In England in 2000, this research led to the establishment of the National College for School Leadership in Nottingham. In Ireland, the Leadership Development in Schools initiative (LDS) was set up by the Department of Education and Science in

February 2003, in order to assist and guide those aspiring to one day become school principal, to assist and guide newly appointed principals and to reaffirm and offer sustained support to those already in the role of principal.

The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) was set up by the body known then as The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) now known as the Teacher Development Agency (TDA) in England, as a qualification / license for anyone aspiring to become a principal teacher within the next 12–18 months. The programme is underpinned by the National Standards for Headteachers. The NPQH was set up with a two-fold role: to provide a training course for prospective principal teacher candidates while also facilitating pre-selection. Candidates possessing this qualification should then be ready to assume the role of principal teacher. Significantly, when the programme was set up it was not linked with any university programmes (Møller and Schratz, 2008). It is generally hoped that candidates possessing this qualification would have all the skills necessary to make them school leaders. However, according to Fidler and Atton (2004), course participants are still only deputy-principals or post-holders and still have to make the transition from changing post and probably having to change school; and while this is a true statement, initial leadership preparation is valuable because of the increased complexity of exercising school leadership (Wildy, Clarke and Slater, 2007). The design and delivery of preparation programmes for aspirant principals, having been established in the USA for several years, has now become a global enterprise (Huber, 2004).

A formal course of preparation could help prepare principal aspirants for the challenge of interpersonal relations with a formal course on the theory and practice of working with people in difficult situations, teamwork and collaboration. Feelings of unpreparedness could be addressed by affording opportunities to meet with fellow practitioners and veteran principals. The pressure of reform and administrative work could be dealt with through networking, mentoring and coaching in which aspirants have the opportunity to carry out various duties independently (García-Garduño, Slater and López-Gorosave, 2011).

Findings from the literature show that teachers' experiences in informal and formal leadership, both prior to and while participating in a formal accredited educational leadership and management programme, help to mould their conception of the principalship. Findings from the study by Browne-Ferrigno (2003), which described and analysed the professional growth of eighteen educational practitioners participating in a principal preparation cohort programme in America, also suggest that leadership studies alone do not help students to conceptualise the work of principals, but simply to begin the necessary socialisation. The process of becoming a principal is seldom compacted into a year or two of graduate leadership studies; rather it begins much earlier when teachers engage in professional activities with fellow teachers and principals (Aiken, 2002; Caffarella and Barnett, 1994; Newcomer-Coble, 1992).

The literature on leadership preparation mentions mentoring as a useful tool in the preparation of school principals. In recent years, mentoring has become increasingly popular and there have been numerous efforts to weave it into the field of

educational administration (Daresh, 2004). The literature very clearly endorses mentoring as an essential part of socialisation and formation of the professional development of future school principals. This learning guided by leadership practitioners begins the initial socialisation into a new community of practice. In the literature, it is generally viewed as a means of improving leadership development and support. There is an abundance of reports on the value of mentoring in the private sector (Clutterbuck, 1987; Kram, 1985; Roche, 1979; Hall, 1976). Using mentoring relationships to enhance professional development is not a new idea. Ashburn, Mann and Purdue (1987, 2) defined mentoring as 'the establishment of a personal relationship for the purpose of professional instruction and guidance'. Lester (1981) noted that it is an important part of adult learning because of its holistic and individualised approach to learning in an experiential fashion, defined by Bova and Philips (1984, 196) as 'learning resulting from or associated with experience (in Daresh, 2004).

Mentoring is an accepted and vital part of the developmental process in many professional fields (Daresh, 2004). According to Daresh, mentoring has at least two potential applications to improve the ways in which people can become future school leaders. He provides a very useful and thorough description of the work involved in being a successful mentor as well as a detailed explanation of how mentoring is valuable in its application to personal and professional formation. Daresh also focuses on the distinct differences between the duties of a role model and those of a mentor. Thus the literature has an acute awareness of mentoring as part of the socialisation of aspiring school principals. There is a lot of literature on the value of mentoring and field-based learning, as it increases role clarification and technical

expertise (Daresh and Playko, 1997; Daresh, 1987), changes role conception about the principalship (Milstein and Krueger, 1997; White and Crow, 1993), and develops skills and professional behaviours (Cordeiro and Smith-Sloan, 1995; Lumsden, 1992; Chen, 1991). The literature, however, also warns that not all principals – even effective ones – have the dispositions and skills needed to serve as mentors for aspiring principals (Williamson and Hudson, 2001; Crow and Matthews, 1998). It is therefore crucial that there be careful selection and training of mentors, in order to ensure that the critical functions of mentoring are performed (Milstein and Krueger, 1997; Lumsden, 1992; Greenfield, 1975).

Australian literature finds it inadequate to simply learn about leadership challenges on the job. Hence, Dempster and Berry (2003) refer to the need for future principals to go through appropriate professional programmes so they can cope with the plethora of changes occurring in education and broad societal shifts. Onguko, Abdalla and Webber (2012) highlight the competing demands for principals' attention, which include child abuse, gender equity, harassment and violence, and the changing information and communication technologies used in schools.

In the past, newly appointed principals in Hong Kong were required to go through a nine-to-ten-day induction course that helped them acquire basic management knowledge and skills (Wong, 2004). For aspiring principals in Hong Kong there is now a certificate for principalship as a quality assurance measure on the minimum requirements for the appointment to the position of principal. This can only be viewed as a positive move for Hong Kong, as Scott and Scott (2010 in Onguko et al., 2012) explain that leadership preparation courses, although a recent phenomenon (Coles and Southworth, 2005), can help prospective principals to understand how

they can support teachers by providing ongoing access to professional learning networks. Also, Banks (2004 in Onguko et al., 2012) highlighted the need for educators to promote cross-cultural literacy among educators so they can better meet the needs of students from different cultures.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2008 in Onguko et al., 2012) noted the need for educational leaders to understand how the development of a collective sense of agency among members of the school community can promote effective teaching and learning. Prospective school leaders must also understand and explore their fundamental educational values and beliefs so they can understand better how those values and beliefs shape the cultures of schools (Mulford, 2008 in Onguko et al., 2012) when school culture is characterised by 'complex rituals of personal relationships' (Waller, 1961, 103). Therefore, ongoing professional development is critical for deputy-principals aspiring to principalship if they wish to expand their effectiveness throughout their careers (Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch and Enz, 2000).

In the Republic of Ireland, there is currently no mandatory course of training for prospective school principals. Significantly, Sugrue (2003) stated that for the last twenty years in Ireland, no principal received formal training prior to their appointment, and this is an ongoing issue. According to Webber and Scott (2009) there should be specialised training before appointment to a principalship, as it affords the opportunity to conceptualise role-identity transference from deputyship to principalship. This is an essential component of principal-making (Crow and Glascock, 1995; Ortiz, 1982), especially when studies indicate that preparation and

development of principals can lead to school effectiveness and improvement (Fink, 2005; Kitavi and Van Der Westhuizen, 1997).

However, LDS does offer a post-graduate Diploma in Educational Leadership, in partnership with the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. It aims to support participants' preparation for future senior leadership and management roles. It hopes to develop the knowledge, understanding, attitudes, and skills required for successful modern school leadership (LDS, 2010, online); this is important because there is a belief that 'principal preparation is a crucial aspect of school development and progression, and that programmes of preparation should have positive outcomes for those who undertake them' (Cowie and Crawford, 2007, 129). LDS similarly offers a programme of induction for first-time principals and a framework for the professional development of Irish school leaders. The programme stresses the importance of value-driven and vision leadership and uses peer networks and support groups as instructional approaches. The programme is designed to train principals to implement effective school leadership (Ummanel, 2012).

The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) offers a one-week course for newly appointed principals annually at the end of the summer holidays. Again this course is optional, but due to its brevity there would be very limited opportunities for participants to experience professional growth and lead to sustained engagement in their learning and enthusiasm about school leadership. For those who don't participate in any leadership programme, their preparation for the role is left largely to chance, similar to 'the novelty, variety and serendipity that seemed to characterise the journey of novice principals in Australia and Mexico' (Wildly and Clarke, 2008,

731). It also denies the regular opportunity to discuss feelings of grief due to identity loss as experienced teachers and the sense of unpreparedness as prospective principals (Sigford, 1998).

Conclusion

The literature reviewed the desirability of moving from deputyship to principalship. Spear, Gould and Lee (2000) suggest teachers seek promotion to principalship based on their desire to broaden their experiences, obtain greater freedom and challenges, and increase their influence to improve the education of children, while others see themselves as leaders but do not aspire to principalship. The literature then focused on gender and how it applies to the development of women principal teachers. The literature recognises a growing awareness of gender as a key dimension of principal recruitment. The final section of the chapter briefly explored the role of leadership training and preparation for deputy-principals to stimulate professional growth. The literature expounded that becoming a principal is a transformative process and as such requires socialisation into the new role by engaging in a meaningful and worthwhile leadership and management preparation programme which will hopefully result in self-actualisation for participants. In order to contribute to the existing knowledge, my own research needs to investigate the assumption that the deputyship is a good training ground for principalship; and also establish what sort of training (if any) Irish primary deputies would like to see put in place in terms of restructuring for successful principalship preparation to discover if there is a consensus with the literature review which calls for specialised training before appointment.

The four sections covered in these two chapters have explored the relevant literature that has informed the research of this thesis. The following research questions have emerged out of the literature review:

1. How do deputy-principals view their role and the role of deputy-principalship?
2. How do deputy-principals view the role of principalship?
3. What factors influence deputy-principals' career motivation to apply for a principalship?
    a. What aspects of the principalship role are attractive?
    b. What aspects of the principalship role are unattractive?
4. What form of leadership and management preparation could encourage career preparedness and career motivation amongst deputy-principals for a future principalship role?

Broadly the analysis of literature has brought together some of the themes pertaining to the progression from deputy-principalship to principalship and its preparation and motivation. There is consequently a need to supplement the existing knowledge to make it more inclusive and representative of Irish primary deputy-principals whose career trajectories are central to the research topic.

Chapter Four: Framing the research methodology

Introduction

This chapter begins by exploring my epistemological stance, outlining the rationale for adopting an interpretive qualitative approach. It identifies why this was appropriate for illuminating the opinions and beliefs of primary deputy-principal teachers in Ireland. The chapter then discusses the research instrument, sample, and piloting, the stages involved in the data analysis, and the research quality in terms of its 'trustworthiness'. The chapter concludes with the ethical framework adopted.

Philosophy and methodology

As researchers try to make sense of the information they gather and turn it into knowledge, they draw implicitly or explicitly upon a set of beliefs or epistemological assumptions called paradigms (Morrison in Briggs and Coleman, 2007, 19). In educational research Morrison explains that paradigms are sometimes called epistemes or traditions about how research evidence might be understood, patterned, reasoned or compiled. A paradigm is therefore a thought pattern or a particular way of thinking and understanding. There are a number of research paradigms and they differ according to their ontology (nature of reality), epistemology (relationship between the research and what is being researched), axiology (role of values), rhetoric (language of research) and methodological assumptions (process of research) (Cresswell, 2007).

I believe that researchers come to their task with particular world views, not least about how knowledge is created. The paradigm within which this research is located

in is the interpretive paradigm. This should be made explicit so that readers' expectations can be informed by the researcher's position. Woods (2006, 2) suggested that quality in research could only be judged on the basis of 'the particular epistemology you work within'. One's epistemology is literally a theory of knowledge of, 'what is, that may be organized into different series of thoughts,' (Taysum, 2010, 65) and should concern the principles and rules by which one can decide whether (Mason, 1996) and how social phenomena can be known, and how knowledge can be demonstrated. McIntosh (2008, 35) suggested that an epistemological stance includes 'what we think we know, and how we know it, including knowing what we don't know'. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) pose the question whether reality is imposed from the outside or whether it is a product of consciousness. I believe that my epistemology guided me in generating knowledge and explanations about the ontological components of the social world.

One objective of this research has been to develop an understanding of how the deputyship and principalship are constructed and conceptualised by deputy-principals as part of the investigation into their vertical career mobility. This meant seeking perspectives on both of these leadership roles, and with this notion in mind the suitable approach appeared to be an interpretive qualitative one, where the research aligned itself with the interpretive paradigm and the adoption of a qualitative research stance. A further objective was to explore which features of principalship might help or hinder the future supply of principal aspirants and identify successful forms of leadership and management preparation, ensuring a supply of deputy-principals moving into principalship. This is undertaken by viewing events and the social world through the eyes of respondents through face-to-

face interaction. The stress is on understanding the social world by examining respondents' interpretation of that world. In working with the respondents (deputy-principals) during this study, I was aware that there was no objective reality and that the respondents brought many realities and perceptions to my research.

The specific research questions, data collection sample and method of this study situate it within the interpretive paradigm. It is the interpretation of the deputy-principals and the researcher that are privileged in this research.   The specific research questions are:

1. How do deputy-principals view their role and the role of deputy-principalship?

2. How do deputy-principals view the role of principalship?

3. What factors influence deputy-principals' career motivation to apply for a principalship?

    a. What aspects of the principalship role are attractive?

    b. What aspects of the principalship role are unattractive?

4. What form of leadership and management preparation could encourage career preparedness and career motivation amongst deputy-principals for a future principalship role?

'Interpretivism has made an important impact upon education research,' writes Morrison (in Briggs and Coleman, 2007, 23). This strong impact of interpretivism may be attributed to its concern for the individual. According to Crotty (2008, 66), it has emerged 'in direct contradistinction to positivism in attempts to understand and explain human and social reality'. Cohen et al. (2007, 21) say one of the central aims of the interpretive paradigm is to try to understand the subjective world of human

experience. Hardly surprisingly, then, researchers who find their work situated within the interpretive paradigm suggest that it is not possible for humans to be the 'subjects of science' and that the 'subjective meanings' of the learners must be considered (Pring, 2000, 26). This substantiates the notion that this paradigm can be viewed in direct contrast to the positivist paradigm, because according to Pring (2000, 47) 'reality is a social construction of the mind', with there being as many realities and perceptions of realities as there are individuals.

The interpretivist tradition assumes that meaning is subjective and research is accepted as value-laden, resulting in multiple realities (Greenbank, 2003). According to Creswell (2007) the interpretivist researcher tends to rely upon the respondent's views of the situation being studied and recognises the impact on the research of his/her own background and experiences. In this research I did not stand above or outside the research but was a respondent observer (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). The interpretivist paradigm emphasises the creation of knowledge through 'social interaction' (O'Donoghue, 2007, 10). The emphasis on social construction of knowledge appealed to me, as did the idea of knowledge constructed by 'mutual negotiation' and 'specific to the situation being investigated'. It underpinned a desire to focus on the conceptualisation of deputy-principals towards the deputyship and principalship that would build on existing knowledge. The reality of each respondent's experience lies within the individual and each was subjectively involved in his or her experiences. In social science the purpose of research is to gain access to peoples' understanding of their own situation (Bloomer and James, 2003).

Interpretive researchers operate within a set of clearly defined principles regarding what it means to conduct educational research with people and not subjects: 'They begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world' (Cohen et al., 2007, 22). I wished to give voice to deputy-principals so that I could understand their specific roles. Through conversation with them, I engaged with the real world of practice and took from them an embodied sense of knowing that is grounded in experience of school leadership at primary level. Their understanding of their motivation towards principalship and deputy-principalship was illuminated by their own unique experiences, and participation in the research may have impacted on them as they considered their career trajectory. This is a fundamental difference from the natural science researcher who uses a more 'mechanistic and reductionist view of nature' (Cohen et al., 2007, 17). Therefore, researchers who work within this paradigm do not generally begin with a theory as a backdrop to empirical research. Instead, they begin to develop a theory as their research progresses.

There is an understanding amongst those who advocate this paradigm that not only does the work impact upon the sample population but the sample population impacts upon those conducting the research. Based on this premise, it is evident that people's experiences are central to this paradigm and that the reality is not viewed as 'external phenomena waiting to be uncovered as facts but a construct in which people understand reality in different ways' (Morrison in Briggs and Coleman, 2007, 24). I am very involved in the research, having once been a deputy principal. I am conscious that the individual respondents had an impact on me as I conducted the research. Thankfully, the interpretive paradigm embraces the notion of subjectivity and the personal involvement of the researcher (Bassey, 1995). Reflexivity meant I

had to be conscious of my own presence and have a critical self-conscious attitude towards the data. I was able to reflect on my own thoughts and consider how my own assumptions about contemporary school leadership may impact on the inquiry.

Phenomenological approaches to qualitative research stress an awareness of the ways in which the researcher as an individual with a particular social identity and background has an impact on the research process (Crotty, 1998). I believe it would have been naïve of me to argue a position that I would be able to fully divorce myself from my judgements and be completely objective about researching social phenomena in an educational setting. I collected the data in a non-interfering manner without any predetermined constraints or conditions. I was mindful of my own positionality within the research. It was a consideration that I didn't want to ignore or delete. At no point during the research did I try to hide or misrepresent my own position.

In order to investigate the concepts in depth, and to deepen understanding of the complexity of issues involved, the research is undertaken from a qualitative perspective. Qualitative research is a 'powerful tool' (Merriam, 2002, xv) sharing the theoretical assumptions of the interpretive paradigm; hence, researchers favouring the interpretivist approach tend to use qualitative methods. The three most common are respondent observation, in-depth interviews and focus groups. These methods generate field notes, audio recordings and transcripts. Qualitative research is considered by Denzin and Lincoln (1998, 2) as 'a field of inquiry in its own right'. Morse and Field (1996) argue that it is the primary means of constructing and examining theoretical foundations in the social sciences.

This study is based on the understanding that all qualitative researchers are philosophers in that 'universal sense in which all human beings . . . are guided by highly abstract principles' (Bateson, 1972 in Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, 22). These principles combine with beliefs about ontology, epistemology and methodology. They shape how the qualitative researcher sees the world and acts in it. All of these premises form an interpretive framework, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2005, 22). Consistent with undertaking qualitative research, this investigation allowed for individual and richly descriptive reflection by respondents to emerge which was based on their leadership journey. Stake (2005) highlights the fact that taking account of a variety of experiences and contexts in qualitative research optimises understanding. It allowed me to use a naturalistic approach where I did not have to manipulate or interfere with the respondents and their schools.

Qualitative research methods enabled me to collect and organise information in the form of open-ended contextual data so that findings could then be produced in terms of the respondents' interpretations of their situation. It illustrated a holistic view of school leadership through the answering of the research questions, enabling contact with the people involved to an extent necessary to grasp what was happening in the field. Quantitative methods were not considered conducive to success, as they may 'neglect the social and cultural construction of the variables which quantitative research seeks to correlate' (Silverman, 2000, 4), and the reliance on instruments and procedures hinders the connection between research and everyday life (Bryman, 2008). Quantitative methods rely too heavily on administering research instruments to respondents, or on controlling situations to determine their effects. A relationship

such as this with respondents would have left me more distant and uninvolved, and this was not desirable.

Qualitative research starts with the assumptions that individuals have an active role in the construction of social reality and that research methods that can capture this process are required (Boeije, 2010). Respondents in this research were asked to share their conceptions, insights and analysis of the deputyship and principalship roles. They had the opportunity to voice their opinion about progressing from a deputy-principalship to a principalship. The emphasis was on words rather than numbers in the belief that the insights provided would lead to rich and detailed data about the perceived attractive and unattractive features of principalship. The study involved respondents giving opinions, perceptions and experiences of what they characterised to be the features or qualities needed to be successful in their professional lives.

Data collection

The research sample

Sampling is 'the selection of a group of cases from a larger collection of such cases according to a specific procedure' (Sim and Wright, 2000, 82). Purposive sampling gave me control to select a specific target group who were primary deputy-principals from the midland counties of Ireland. Deputy-principal respondents fulfilled the criterion that respondents should have enough detailed information to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2007; Langdridge, 2007). Bryman (2008, 458) observed, 'most writers on sampling in qualitative research based on interviews recommend that purposive sampling is conducted'. Six respondents came from schools with a teaching principal and the remaining six came from schools with an

administrative principal. This was deliberate so that meaningful comparisons from both principalship positions would be represented in the data. Although this was not representative of the total sample population of primary schools in Ireland, where there is a clear majority of schools with a teaching principal, I deemed it important to gain an equal insight into both types of schools in order to ensure the credibility of the research data to the reader. Both male and female deputy-principals were chosen, as the literature showed that gender may have an impact on the willingness or unwillingness of applicants to apply for a principalship. The uneven split in the sample i.e. three male and nine female, though not intentional, is representative of the distribution of male and female teachers in the Irish Republic's primary school system.

Respondents were chosen from both urban and rural schools in counties Cavan, Longford, Roscommon, Meath and Westmeath. These counties were chosen because of their proximity to my own geographical location. I accessed the website of the Department of Education and Skills which provided a list of primary schools, pupil enrolment numbers, principals' names, schools' addresses and telephone numbers. This identified which schools had a teaching principal or an administrative principal. From this list of schools, only those with an enrolment in excess of forty-nine pupils were considered as schools with less than forty-nine pupils would not have a deputy-principalship position. From this list an initial twelve schools were selected. In deciding which schools to approach, consideration was given to the distance needed to travel to each school to conduct the interviews, whether the school was in an urban or rural setting and whether it had a teaching or administrative principal. The length of time that the deputy-principal had occupied his/her senior management

position was not a consideration in selecting schools and could not have been ascertained from the Department's website. The Information Sheet for Research Study (Appendix 2) was posted to the each deputy-principal at the school address given on the website. At this point, the gender of the deputy principals was unknown so it was necessary to make follow-up telephone calls to confirm deputy-principals' gender. The telephone conversations revealed the inclusion of three male deputy-principals while simultaneously providing an opportunity for further explanation and clarity to possible respondents in relation to the study. It was made clear during each telephone conversation that respondents were free to withdraw from the study at any time. During this initial telephone conversation eight of the twelve respondents gave their approval, willingness and availablity for participating in the research. Four respondents requested that I contact them again to confirm their availability and willingness to be interviewed. A subsequent telephone call a number of days later to the remaining four deputy-principals confirmed their willingness to be interviewed. The following tables provide respondents' background details.

Table 4.1 Research sample 2011: respondents from schools with a teaching principal

	Ethan	Olivia	Kate	Elizabeth	Emma	Sophia
Gender:	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age:	36	27	31	56	38	52
Number of years in education:	15	6	10	36	16	31 (career break for one year)
Teaching, education qualification:	B. Ed., Diploma in Special Education	B. Ed.	B. Ed.	Dip. Ed. (Scotland)	B. Ed.	B. Ed.
Leadership / management course undertaken since becoming deputy-principal:	Diploma in Education Management			Diploma in School Leadership (undertaken prior to appointment as D.P.)	Currently completing a Master's Degree	
Teaching experience prior to deputyship:	Mainstream teacher, Learning-support teacher	Mainstream teacher	Mainstream teacher	Teacher in a special school, Mainstream teacher	Mainstream teacher	Mainstream teacher
Type of school:	Rural co-educational	Rural co-educational	Rural co-educational	Rural co-educational	Rural co-educational	Rural co-educational
No. of pupils on roll:	153 approx.	115	56	96	104	95
Length of time as deputy-principal:	9 years	2 years	3 years	9 years	5 years	20 years

Table 4.2 Research sample 2011: respondents from schools with an administrative principal

	Ian	*Jack*	*Lily*	*Paige*	*Ava*	*Julia*
Gender:	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age:	27	43	49	35	30	52
Number of years in education:	7	22	28	13	8	30
Teaching, education qualification:	B. Ed.	B. Ed.	B. Ed.	B. Ed.	B. Ed.	B. Ed.
Leadership / management course undertaken since becoming Deputy-Principal					Master's Degree in Education Management	
Previous teaching experience prior to appointment as deputy-principal:	Mainstream teacher	Mainstream teacher, Learning-support teacher	Mainstream teacher, Learning-support teacher	Mainstream teacher, worked in an all-Irish school	Mainstream teacher	Learning-support teacher, worked in primary rural school
Type of school:	Urban co-educational	Urban co-educational	Urban boys' School	Urban girls' School	Urban co-educational	Urban co-educational
No. of pupils on roll:	398	198	191 approx.	225	246	388
Length of time as deputy-principal	2 years	14 years	2 years	8 years	4 years	6 years

Principals were deliberately not included in the research sample, as this sub-group has traditionally taken centre stage in school leadership research, without the same opportunity being afforded to deputy-principals. I sought to investigate the principalship through the eyes of potential aspirants rather than focusing on current incumbents. This was integral to the research design. I also wished to investigate to what extent deputy-principals themselves feel that they contribute to school effectiveness, without having to focus on any other respondent group.

The number of respondents was the result of sampling based on theoretical saturation, whereby data collection from the source was considered to be complete when relevant data categories were exhausted (Cousin, 2009). Examples of data categories in this study included: *Managerial tasks of the deputy-principal*; *Leadership tasks of the deputy-principal*; *Ambiguity and confusion of the deputy-principal role*; *Knowledge needed for principalship*; *Skills needed for principalship*; *Attributes needed for principalship*; *Positive initiatives impacting on principalship*; *Negative initiatives impacting on principalship*. According to Bryman (2008, 416), 'The key idea is that you carry on sampling theoretically until a category has been saturated with data'. He explains that 'the chief virtue of theoretical sampling is that the emphasis is upon using theoretical reflection on data as the guide to whether more data are needed'.

It was not possible to know in advance how many interviews would be needed. As the twelve transcripts were thematically analysed it became clear that the same themes from the transcripts were being generated and it seemed acceptable to conclude that theoretical saturation had been reached. A researcher knows sufficient sampling has occurred 'when the major categories show depth and variation in terms of their development' (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, 149). Respondents provided a wealth of data under the major categories dealing with: *Deputyship*; *Principalship*; *Career Motivation for Principalship*; *Attractive aspects of principalship*; *Unattractive aspects of principalship*; *Leadership and management preparation courses for principalship*; *Successful preparation for principalship*. Saturation of categories was arrived at quite quickly, possibly because of the relatively homogenous sample. Theorising was a greater concern than the statistical adequacy

of the sample. I knew sufficient sampling had occurred when the same emergent and initial themes were robust and were thus validated.

Research instrument

Research has to demonstrate 'fitness for purpose' (Cohen et al. 2007, 460) and the research instrument that seemed most suitable for this research was the interview. Having given this statement careful consideration, it was decided that the research instrument most suitable for this research was the interview. The interview is used in the majority of published qualitative research articles (Silverman, 2005). I believed it to be 'fit for purpose' as interviews are optimal for collecting data on people's perspectives and experiences. My ontological position suggested that people's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions are meaningful properties of the social reality which my research questions were designed to explore. My epistemological position suggested that interviews were a legitimate way to gather data as I was able to interact with respondents, converse with them, listen to them, and gain access to their opinions and articulations. As a research instrument, the interview has much to offer in qualitative studies as a 'flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard' (Cohen at al., 2007, 349). As it is a flexible tool, responding to the unplanned (May, 2001), I was able to tailor and refine it as the research progressed, but was also aware of its epistemological shortcomings:

> If you are interested in people's interpretations and understandings you must bear in mind that talking to people will not enable you to get inside their heads, and that you will only be able to gain access to those interpretations and understandings which are revealed in some way in an interview. (Mason, 1996, 40)

The research hoped to obtain the views and values of the respondents which have formed over time. This provided an opportunity for respondents to reflect on how their role has affected their professional and personal lives. The interview enabled this as it is particularly useful for exploring complex and subtle phenomena. This goes back to what Cohen et al. (2007) said about 'fitness for purpose'. If the purpose of a particular piece of research is simply to collect information on simple and uncontroversial facts, then questionnaires may prove suitable.

I chose semi-structured interviews as they allowed me to probe for more detailed responses, where respondents are asked to clarify what they have said (Gray, 2004). This allowed me to broadly control the agenda and the process of the interview, with the respondents being free to respond as they saw fit. It has predetermined questions but the order can be modified based upon what the interviewer finds appropriate. I had a clear list of issues to be addressed and was flexible in terms of the order in which the topics were considered; this 'let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised' (Denscombe, 2007, 176). Figure 4.1 illustrates the series of steps taken in formulating the questions for the interview schedule.

Figure 4.1: Formulating interview questions with Ireland's primary deputies, 2011
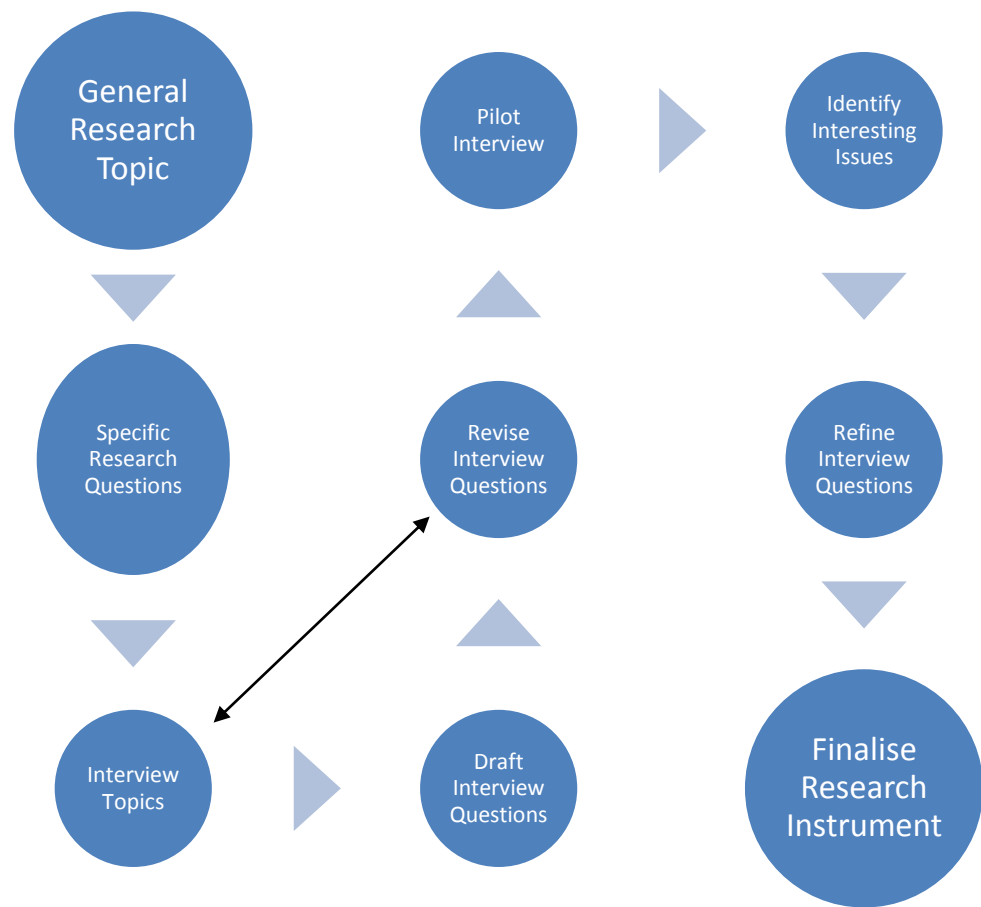
The semi-structured style of interview honoured the professional knowledge (tacit and explicit) of each voice. This approach provided 'qualitative' depth (May, 2001, 124) and space for respondents to discuss the research questions from within their own frame of reference. Semi-structured interviews facilitated a reflexive, interviewee-centred, flexible and stimulating discursive environment, as proposed by Sarantakos (2005).

The interview questions were framed under the four research questions. I drafted an initial set of questions and submitted them to my supervisor, who shortened them and redrafted three of them to avoid confusion. Submitting the questions to the

supervisor ensured that they were not biased or leading. I was then able to use the questions during piloting. I subsequently redrafted and edited further prior to using them for the specific target group. Question 8, relating to discrimination for a principalship post, was added to the interview schedule. I wanted to ensure that the questions related directly to the research questions. The opening question was deliberately kept general and addressed only statistical information about respondents and their school. This was to settle them into the interview and help them feel comfortable with me and the interview situation. The final question gave them an opportunity to comment on anything that hadn't been mentioned already. While there was a set running order of questions, it didn't matter if this changed during interviews. The number of questions was kept to twelve so that the approximate length of each interview would be no more than sixty minutes.

Prior to the main data-gathering phase, a pilot interview was conducted with a deputy-principal not involved in the main study. This involved a 'dummy run' and helped 'to throw up some of the inevitable problems of converting [my] design into reality' (Robson, 2002, 383). The respondent chosen to be the pilot interviewee taught in my former school and was appointed to her deputyship when I relinquished the post in 2005. Since she was a former colleague of mine, I knew she would be 'congenial and accessible' (Yin, 2003, 79). This pilot interview led to some changes in the research instrument. The issue of candidate discrimination for principalship positions had been discussed in the literature as a barrier to principalship, yet in compiling the research instrument for the pilot, I forgot to include any reference to possible discrimination on the grounds of gender. The literature had a particular concern for gender, yet this had been completely omitted from the interview

schedule. It was only when the pilot was recorded and transcribed that this omission became obvious and the necessary amendments were made to include this issue.

Piloting provided an opportunity to realise the need to achieve a good balance between talking and listening. When I played the pilot recording, it made me aware of what I was doing during the interview and I realised that I was interrupting the interviewee frequently. I similarly observed that at times I had not in fact been really listening to what the interviewee was saying. I came away from the interview with a different message to what came across on the recording. My memory of the data was at times different to the voice recording, and this made me very conscious of the need to actively listen to respondents.

All interviews were audio-recorded on an iPhone 4S in WAV format and converted to MP3 format when uploaded onto a computer. They were subsequently transcribed using Express Scribe Transcription Software. This time-consuming approach (involving several playbacks of each recorded interview at slow speed) helped me remain very close to the emerging data and facilitated an intrapersonal and reflexive (sometimes unconscious) recognition of the emerging patterns in the data. The interviews took place from October 2011 to January 2012.
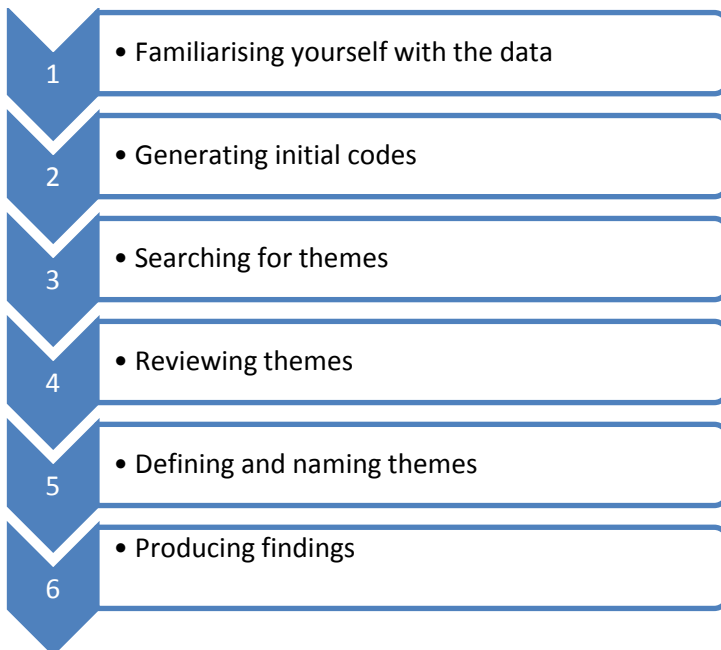
Data analysis

The analysis hoped to establish the most important themes, quotes and any unexpected findings from the research. It was decided at the 'Defence Stage' of the research process not to use computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). I was conscious of the considerable time and effort necessary to

become proficient, having already taken time to become proficient with the software for the transcription of the interviews. While CAQDAS would have taken over the physical task of writing marginal codes, I would still have had to interpret, code and then retrieve the data. Computer software packages 'do not actually decrease the amount of time you spend on [indexing and retrieval]' (Mason, 1996, 125). Similarly, Reid (in Silverman, 2000) explained that most software programs expect data to be entered in a word processing package, so this task along with reading and coding the large volumes of data would not have been removed by a computer software program. It does not and cannot help with decisions about coding textual materials or interpreting findings (Weitzman and Miles, 1995). I agreed with Stanley and Temple (1995), who suggested that most of the coding and retrieval features that someone is likely to need in the course of conducting qualitative research can be accessed through powerful word processing software. I had concerns about whether using a computer program distances a researcher from the data (Bong, 2002; Roberts and Wilson, 2002). I had never used CAQDAS, and held the view that reification of coding where data reduction is endemic could lead me to lose some of my understanding if the units of meaning became de-contextualised.

I was aware that the theoretical conceptions should provide the basis for the decision of how best to analyse the data gathered. The complete process of data analysis requires that data be 'systematically organised, continually scrutinised, accurately described, theorised, interpreted, discussed and presented' (Ryan, 2006, 95). I decided to use thematic analysis to identify, analyse and report patterns in data, along with the coding framework that emerged from the literature review. This essentialist method revealed 'experiences, meanings and the reality of respondents'

(Braun and Clark, 2006, 81). I completed thematic analysis of the data following a guide provided by Braun and Clarke.

Figure 4.2 Data analysis process for research into Ireland's primary deputies, 2011 (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 87)

1	• Familiarising yourself with the data
2	• Generating initial codes
3	• Searching for themes
4	• Reviewing themes
5	• Defining and naming themes
6	• Producing findings

On first reading the raw data I familiarised myself with it by reading and re-reading in an 'active' way to search for meanings and patterns and by noting down initial ideas. I was interested in the words and language used by respondents, the sequence of interaction, 'the form and structure of the dialogue, and the literal content' (Mason, 1996, 109). I made an interpretive reading of the data where I was mainly concerned with the respondents' interpretations and understandings and their accounts of how they made sense of their role and that of the principal.

This part of the research study involved 'organizing, accounting for and explaining the data' (Cohen et al., 2007, 461). Miles and Huberman (1994, 56) provided a very useful explanation of analysis, stating that 'coding is analysis. To review a set of

field notes, transcribed or synthesized, and to dissect them meaningfully, while keeping the relations between the parts intact, is the stuff of analysis.' Coding is defined as the process through which 'data are fractured, conceptualised, and integrated to form theory' (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 3) and where 'similar data are grouped and given conceptual labels. This means placing 'interpretations on the data' (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 29).

A coding framework (Table 4.3) emerged from the literature review using the four main research questions as a frame. From these starting codes, a reiterative process of coding followed. The interviews created additional codes categorised under the research questions which were consequently added and led to further refining of the codes that had already emerged.

Table 4.3 Coding framework developed from the literature review (Chapters 2 and 3)

Deputies' roles	Principals' roles	Deputies' career motivation influences	Preparation for Principalship
Experience leadership	Need to experience shared leadership	Intrinsic rewards	Higher education institutions
Positive contribution	Need to delegate	Career motivation	Action Learning Networks
Sense of authority	Accountability	Promotion	Mentoring from other principals
Promotion	Professional isolation	Enhanced autonomy	Courses run by Leadership Development in Schools initiative
Distributed leadership	Leaving 'comfort zone'	Interacting with staff, pupils and wider community	
Supporting the principal	People management	Receiving and giving support	Courses run by Local Education Centres
Deputising during principal absences	Resource management	Salary	Professional organisations and opportunities for career development
Poorly defined role	Opportunity to create vision	Higher status in school and community	
Misunderstood role		Positive contribution to local community	Commitment to lifelong learning
Broad range of tasks	Recognition and affirmation		Practical leadership skill development
Administrative burden	Chief Executive Officer	Stress	
Student behaviour		Quality of life effects	Local contextual knowledge
Time management	Business manager	Personal and family circumstances	Experience of distributed leadership
Dual role of teaching and administrative duties	Dual role of teacher and administrator	Bureaucracy	
Special educational needs	External relationships	Workload / paper work	
Policy development	External and internal challenges	Negative media image	
External relationships	Personal resilience	Loss of relationship with pupils	
Lack of leadership training		Demands of local community	
		Lack of necessary preparation / expertise	

During this part of qualitative analysis, different sections of the data needed to be differentiated and combined, then used to make reflections about the information. Coding involved allocating each sentence of raw textual data with a provisional code that eventually helped to discriminate and generate themes. Table 4.4 is an examplar

Table 4.4 Provisional coding framework developed from the data

Headings from coding framework	Provisional codes / labels	Raw textual data from respondent interviews
Deputies' Roles	Duties of deputy-principals	*'I'm in charge of policy development in certain areas of the curriculum . . . Green School Project currently in our school and I am the co-ordinator for that project . . . supervision in morning and afternoon and training of the football teams, girls football, boys football and things like that.'*
Deputies' Roles	Lack of role clarity and ambiguity	*'I wouldn't have a specific list of duties, I just suppose really help out as the principal sees fit here and there. . . . I know how there are things that maybe you think you should be doing but you mightn't be doing, you mightn't be doing, as I was saying. You're there to help out in a way.'*
Preparation for Principalship	Deputising	*'I know definitely from personal experience, the four or five weeks that I stood in for the principal, it's a very very tiring role, you're jumping from one thing to the other, one minute you're dealing with cheques and cheque books , the next you're dealing with a child that's had an accident outside in the yard and a teacher rings in sick one morning when you've got 100 things planned out to do and one of the teachers unfortunately is sick for the day and you might even have to go and fill in yourself if you can't get a substitute teacher out on time or you might have to go and stand in a classroom until a substitute can get to you.'*

Data reduction involved the use of codes initially taken from the literature review but then expanded as new issues arose from the data. This coding enabled units of

meaning to be attached to the descriptive information during the interview.) and they were assigned units of meaning to the descriptive information during the study. They are generally attached to different parts of information of varying size. Miles and Huberman (1994, 56) explain that they can take the form of a straightforward category label or a more complex one such as a metaphor. I was trying to keep the data manageable so that I didn't feel overwhelmed by it. I was able to apply the codes simultaneously to text and created more than one type of category. This form of indexing enabled me to access the data in various ways. The categories helped to focus and organise the retrieval of sections of text for further analysis.

The data was presented respondent by respondent and then used to amalgamate key issues emerging across the respondents (Cohen et al., 2007). Subsequently, codes relating to similar concepts were grouped together into significant themes as shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Example of coded data collated within a significant theme

Significant theme – Deputy-principals: Leadership Delegation from the Principal
'I do believe in empowering a deputy principal and I do think a principal should give a deputy more, I don't mean power but more of a greater role.' (Ethan)
'He doesn't delegate that much towards me and sometimes I feel I could be helping him a lot more, and even when I would suggest to him that I could do this part of a policy or I could look after this part of the running of the organisation of the school' (Elizabeth)
'You need to be able to delegate as well, you need to be able to empower other people and trust them with some responsibilities, particularly the deputy-principal of the school.' (Ava)
'I do feel that perhaps I could do a lot more than I actually am doing but the principal could include me more by assigning me more of a leadership role in assisting her to run the school.' (Olivia)

I completed this through data reduction, data display and drawing and verifying conclusions, all of which happen concurrently (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Data reduction took place throughout the analysis. I used qualitative content analysis where 'many words of text are classified into fewer categories' (Weber, 1990 in Cohen et al., 2007, 475). Bryman (2008) outlines several advantages of content analysis in terms of its transparency, unobtrusive method and high flexibility. I analysed the codes to search for potential themes. I searched for links between some of the emerging themes, and this involved reviewing and refining the initial themes into larger thematic categories. Categories were produced from theoretical constructs rather than from the material itself. This method of analysis was about summarising and reporting written data. The data was re-read and checked against the themes to ensure they were appropriate for the data; some were re-coded. As the data was being analysed by use of coding, I had ideas, insights or comments. This process was challenging to complete as it involved not only a search for exact word matches, such as 'distributed', but also a degree of subjective analysis. This meant identifying words and phrases which could be associated with a different match; for example, 'working together' could also be considered a feature of 'distributed leadership'. The final stage involved a final analysis relating the themes to the research questions and literature, selecting extracts from the data and reporting it in Chapter four.

Table 4.6 Sample of coding: themes and categories emerging from transcript analysis

Transcript from Interview	Theme	First Round Coding	Second Round Coding
'Tell me is there a difference between what you think you should do and what you actually do in the school?' 'A lot of people will probably assume that I do an awful lot more for my role than I actually do; sometimes I feel as a deputy principal working in the school that there's probably a lot more different things around the school that I could take on. I feel when I mention certain things to the principal that I could take on in the school, sometimes I feel that she's a little bit reluctant to pass on more duties to me, she doesn't really seem to embrace the fact that I do actually want to take on extra things in the school. Sometimes I do actually feel that my voice is a little bit ignored in that respect.'	Duties of deputy-principal	No role descriptors	Unplanned managerial functions
			Vision lacking
			Lack of principal involvement
		Informal	No empowerment
			Limited autonomy
			Lack of shared leadership practices
			Willingness and desire to take on leadership duties
'And what particular aspects of a principalship would you perceive to be unattractive?' 'Well I think there is increasing demands of society and the personnel and the professional development and life within a school and I think the principal really needs to be committed to that. I really think that there's a huge amount of stress involved. I mean things often go wrong in school and ultimately the principal is the one that goes home at the end of the day and has sleepless nights. In my role I don't feel, yes, I would be there to support the principal and I would feel the stresses and strains to a much, much slighter extent. The stress that the principal must feel at times is unbearable and to be honest, I know this is very confidential but I know our principal has been so affected at times by stress that it has had a really bad effect on her personal life.'	Demands	Internal demands	Professional stress
		Society developments	Internal stakeholders
			External stakeholders
		Personalisation	Personal stress
			Professional isolation
	Impact on personal life	Dealing with personnel	Challenges dealing with personnel
		Stress management	Uncomfortable in role
			Testing relationships
		Adaptability	Confidence testing

Research quality

I employed Lincoln and Guba's framework of trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The framework introduced in the 1980s gave fresh ways of expressing validity, reliability and generalisability 'outside of the linguistic confines of a rationalistic paradigm' (Tobin and Begley, 2004, 4). Their concepts of credibility and dependability provided the initial platform from which much of the current debate on rigour emerged. They refined their concept of trustworthiness by introducing criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility, which parallels internal validity, addresses the issue of 'fit' between respondents' views and the researchers' presentation of them (Schwandt, 2001 in Tobin and Begley, 2004). It poses the question of whether the explanation fits the description (Janesick, 2000 in Tobin and Begley, 2004) and whether the description is credible. If there can be several possible accounts of an aspect of social reality, it is the credibility of the account that the researcher arrives at, that is going to determine its acceptability to others. A completed draft transcript of each recorded interview was made available to the research respondents prior to data analysis. This gave them an opportunity to amend, add or delete something they may have said, and built in member validation into the research. No respondent requested that the data be changed in any way. A draft of the research analysis was submitted to two respondents (Emma and Ava), both of whom recently completed master's degrees in education. This was done to reassure readers that the data was produced and checked in accordance with good practice. There were few comments and no criticisms from either respondent. Both found the analysis interesting, believing it could impact on the role conceptualisation of primary deputyship and lead to a more enhanced and

sophisticated style of principalship preparation. Confirmation was sought from both respondents that I had correctly understood the data I had analysed. I presented my research to a fellow doctoral researcher for peer review at key stages in the process, to validate my analysis and gauge a reaction to my draft findings.

'Transferability' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, 316), which parallels external validity, refers to the generalisability of inquiry. Qualitative inquirers need to recognise that the comparable external validity is substantially different in qualitative research as there is no single or correct true interpretation. Qualitative research involves a small group of respondents – often a homogenous sample, and therefore the research findings tend to be orientated 'to the contextual uniqueness and significance of the aspect of the social world being studied' (Bryman, 2008, 378). Lincoln and Guba (1985, 316) explain that whether findings 'hold in some other context, or even in the same context at some other time, is an empirical issue'. Qualitative researchers produce rich, deep accounts and descriptions which, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), act as a database for making judgements about the possible transferability of findings to other settings. My goal in completing this research was to generate 'thick description' (Geertz, 1975, 27) of views held by respondents who through their own agency have the capacity to make a valuable contribution to knowledge. Patton (1999) shows reservation towards generalising, explaining that qualitative findings are highly context and case-dependent. Other researchers will need to judge whether the findings of this research have any significance or bearing on the school leadership debate in other jurisdictions. Boeije (2010, 180) wrote, 'External validity or generalisability is one of the most difficult subjects in qualitative research'.

Dependability, which parallels reliability, is achieved through a process of auditing. Researchers are responsible for ensuring that the process of research is logical, traceable and clearly documented (Schwandt, 2001 in Tobin and Begley, 2004). Dependability can then be demonstrated through an 'audit trail' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, 319) where others can examine the data, methods, decisions and end product. This entailed keeping full records throughout the research process. Bryman (2008) however found that auditing has not become a popular or pervasive approach to enhancing the dependability and validation of qualitative research. Rather than focusing on reliability, which refers to the ability to replicate findings in other settings, dependability is a more useful concept in interpretivist research (O'Donoghue, 2007). I have provided significant data, including direct quotes, with this in mind.

Confirmability, which parallels objectivity, is concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of findings are not figments of the researcher's imagination but are clearly derived from the data (Tobin and Begley, 2004). It acknowledges that complete objectivity is impossible in social science, but it should be apparent that the researcher has not allowed personal feelings or theoretical leanings to sway the direction of the research and possibly distort the findings that emerge from it.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) mentioned various possible threats to validity and divided them into three broad headings: reactivity, respondent biases and researcher biases. Threats to validity in my research included my own bias of the role of the principal being a challenging and onerous one, coupled with the possibility of differing responses from interviewees. I was conscious of respondents' bias taking various

forms, such as withholding information or trying to give the answers and responses they thought I was looking for. However, being aware of my own bias and making respondents aware of my position helped to significantly reduce this risk. Researcher bias refers to what the researcher brings to the situation in terms of assumptions and preconceptions which may affect the way respondents behave in the research setting (Robson, 2002). The use of an interview schedule ensured covering the same topics with the respondents and eliciting the same kind of answers.

It is difficult to replicate interviews or data analysis, so great emphasis was placed on conducting a trustworthy study. This was achieved through a clear statement of aims and research questions, a clear description of context, inclusion of sufficient original data to mediate between evidence and interpretation, and a clear description of methodology and data collection.

Ethics

In exploring the ethical issues of this research I have consulted the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research published by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) in 2011. I conducted this research according to BERA's guidelines that all educational research should be conducted within an ethic of respect for:

- The person
- Knowledge
- Democratic values
- The quality of educational research
- Academic freedom

As this particular research involved first-hand data collection, it was necessary to submit to an ethical approval process. I completed a University of Lincoln EA2 Ethical Approval form for human research projects (see Appendix 4) prior to designing the research instrument, which was approved. The document *Ethical Principles for Conducting Research with Humans and Other Animals – University of Lincoln* was consulted prior to submitting this form. Respondents were required to give their informed consent to participate in the research (Bulmer, 2008). The informed consent clarified the nature of the research and the responsibilities of each party. I clearly explained that they were free to participate, decline, or withdraw altogether. They were made fully aware of my professional background, and I detailed how I came to engage in this research area. They were assured that responses to personal questions need not be given, that there were no right or wrong answers, and that their replies did not provide a judgement about them, but were indicative of their perception. In light of the experience of the research or as a result of debriefing, respondents had the right to withdraw retrospectively any consent given, and to require that their data, including recordings, be destroyed. I sought verbal assurance from them immediately following data collection that the information could be included in the study. This safeguarded against any use of information which may have been accidentally disclosed (Endacott, 2004).

All respondents remained anonymous, this right being promised explicitly and applied to the collection of data by audio recording during the face-to-face semi-structured interviews. It was clearly explained to respondents why the interviews were being audio-recorded, and that they had the right to object to being audio-recorded prior to beginning the interviews. All respondents fully agreed to be audio-

recorded, having no issue or anxiety in any way with the recording device being placed near them; the results obtained were consonant with their right to welfare, dignity and privacy. They were given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

Continual alertness, mindfulness, thoughtfulness, empathy, and personal and professional sensitivity were adopted throughout. As researcher, I was committed to the ethic of care and the associated values of honesty, authenticity, respect, transparency and humility. No offer of inappropriate financial or other inducements was made to obtain research respondents. There was no occasion during this research for withholding information or misleading or deceiving respondents. The nature of the data collection and the purpose for which it would be used were outlined fully in a language they could fully understand.

Each respondent was offered appropriate information in the informed consent statement about the nature, results and conclusions of the research, which clarified what may be done with the information they conveyed (Sieber, 2008). I informed them of my intention to share or further use the research data, and of the possibility of unanticipated further use. Organisations such as the IPPN or the INTO may be interested in obtaining a copy of the finished research, and respondents were informed of this. All data was stored securely on a password-protected laptop, and recordings of the semi-structured interviews were stored securely.

I did not consider there to be any risks that may be considered exceptional. All interviews were conducted in respondents' schools at the end of the school day at a time chosen by respondents. Due regard was given to the possibility of sensitive

disclosures, and any such instances were managed in a way that prevents harm or damage to others. One respondent referred to a difficult and highly charged relationship with their current principal, and I became privy to their emotions and feelings about this difficult situation. After the interview, the respondent sought to discuss their situation further with me as a colleague, and it was clear that the difficulties were causing them considerable stress and anxiety. There were clear signs of emotion from having to deal with this fraught situation. I was clear that this disclosure would not become part of the findings.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to document the philosophy, strategy, methodology and data analysis which undergirds the research study. I set out my point of departure from which the study became located within interpretivism. I detailed the rationale for undertaking a qualitative approach, and endeavoured to prove my commitment to qualitative research that is grounded in reality. This followed a theoretical discussion of how the sampling occurred. My account of data analysis demonstrated a process of interpretation through which I produced meaning out of raw data. The section on research trustworthiness recognised the need for verification within qualitative research and established how credibility has been integral to the research itself. The chapter continued with a clear statement of the principles which have guided the process of analysing the data and disseminating the findings. I subsequently gave the practical reasons why I needed to adopt an ethical approach to my investigation and how I justified my actions in accordance with accepted best practice in social science research.

Chapter Five: profiling deputyship and principalship: the research data

Introduction

This chapter presents an account of the respondents' rich and meaningful data, giving an opportunity to compare their individual and collective views and opinions about the deputy-principalship and principalship. The chapter deals with the first two research questions linked to the literature review in Chapter two. It considers how deputy-principals view their leadership position while examining their job responsibilities. It looks at how well prepared they are for their current role along with the positive and negative facets associated with it.

From an examination of the deputy-principalship, the analysis examines how deputy-principals view contemporary principalship, describing the key dimensions of professional practice for principals. It looks fundamentally at the challenges and opportunities that principalship can offer above and beyond deputyship. It presents the findings in relation to the particular skills set and support structures believed necessary for principalship.

Deputy-principals' roles

Role perceptions

The main role highlighted was that of assisting the principal. Practically all respondents expressed their commitment and professional support to their principal.

'The main role I would have, like I would work in co-operation with the principal.' (Ian)

'I suppose you're there to assist and help out.' (Jack)

Both of these male respondents came from schools with full time administrative principals. Six respondents from both urban and rural schools had difficulty trying in articulating and constructing the true nature of their role. There didn't appear to be a clear conceptualisation of its purpose, and it was described as a mainly supportive and complementary role. Respondents with specific duties were assigned them by the principal, while others lacked a clear job description. Only one described it as *'varied and challenging'.* These views accord with those already noted in the literature which suggests the deputy-principalship remains an ambiguous and unrecognised role with poorly defined tasks (Shoho et al., 2012). Earlier literature similarly highlights the unclear role of deputy-principalship in school operations (James and Whiting, 1998; Ribbins, 1997; Webb and Vulliamy, 1995). Dr. Keith Watson also (2005) confirmed the lack of a specific role in a review of fifty-seven job descriptions for deputy-principals from across England in 2002.

No, I wouldn't have a specific list of duties, I just suppose I really help out as the principal sees fit here and there. I do a little bit as needs be; when things arise I just take care of them I suppose. (Ava)

There was a strong emphasis on working and meeting with their fellow teachers and outside agencies. Regular communication with fellow teachers about various issues and particular pupils was mentioned quite a lot during the interviews, and it appeared that correspondence was regarded as a substantial part of their role. Outside of this, respondents tended to make references to routine maintenance activities such as responsibility for developing a curricular policy document, organising church

services, providing a first aid service and undertaking extra yard supervision duties both before and after school. The responses demonstrated that the traditional facet of the role is clearly still anchored in the organisational stability of the school which involves coordinating school projects such as the Green Schools Inititaive.

Three respondents spoke of their roles in coordinating this particular school initiative. This is an international environmental education programme, designed to promote and acknowledge whole school action for the environment. It entails coordinating a green-school committee involving different members of the school community, action planning, carrying out an environmental review, and also informing and involving the wider school community about being a green school. Coordinating the green schools initiative is a big responsibility and involves quite a lot of planning and administration. The position of coordinator is time-consuming and requires a lot of commitment. This would be one of the greatest areas of responsibility mentioned by Olivia, Elizabeth and Kate.

> *Firstly I am responsible for taking care of the roll books, as my duty of deputy principal; we also have the Green School[s] Project currently in our school and I am the co-ordinator for that project.'* (Olivia)

> *Last year in particular, as deputy principal I was the Green School's co-ordinator and I looked after more or less the organisation of the committee where we achieved our first green flag last year.* (Elizabeth)

> *I suppose things like Green Schools and that, you were fit to kind of delve off in that area.* (Kate)

> *My role, as described at the moment is in charge of supervision and discipline in the morning for about 20 minutes just while the children line up outside, and I am also responsible for quite a bit of extra supervision in the yard and I have overall responsibility for enforcing the school's code of behaviour.* (Julia)

At first, it may appear that Julia simply undertakes her role as deputy-principal for the first twenty minutes of each school day, returning to being a teacher with no additional responsibility, but in reality, as she has overall responsibility for school behaviour, this is actually a major school leadership function. Working in a large urban school with 388 pupils where pupil management and behaviour would be a substantial issue, this level of responsibility poses a major challenge and opportunity for her to maintain a stable school environment. It involves her project-managing the drafting and publishing of the school's mandatory code of behaviour, liaising with the entire school community about pupil behaviour, while inducting and mentoring new staff on how to implement the code. This reveals the level of trust and dependency that her principal has in her capabilities. Literature has found that the work of chief disciplinarian consumes much of a deputy-principal's time (Read in Shoho et al. (eds.), 2012), yet only Julia mentioned this area as being part of the deputy's job description.

Nine of the twelve respondents believed there was a difference between what they should do and what they actually do, suggesting a misalignment and necessitating the need to reconfigure their role more on leadership issues than traditional functions.

> *Essentially I am receiving extra money for doing very little in comparison to what is being loaded on and is constantly being loaded on to a principal on a yearly basis, it's never ending, the buck always stops with the principal, it's always the principal that's being asked to do these things, you know, you could utilise your deputy more.* (Emma)

There was a general feeling of inconsistency as their duties are defined by the needs of the principal at a particular time. Respondents explained that due to the

hierarchical system, the principal traditionally decides what duties they're required to perform, and there was a definite feeling that this did not happen in a collegial manner. Duties are assigned individually rather than collectively and deputies have little agency to alter or change their duties. A review of literature has similarly shown that a discrepancy exists between the ideal and the actual roles of deputy-principals (Cranston et al., 2004).

Respondents felt that they had the capacity to undertake a greater number of leadership responsibilities, with clear feelings among eight respondents that they would embrace the opportunity to broaden their range of school improvement projects beyond the maintenance of organisational stability. They would clearly like to move away from their traditional duties of operational management and move more into administrative leadership. Undertaking duties such as the Green Schools Initiative, while important, did to some extent leave respondents feeling undervalued and often unacknowledged.

> *Because the Green School Initiative takes up quite a bit of my time, I don't get to be involved in more of the planning that is happening with the new literacy and numeracy initiative . . . . To be honest, in June when we had the green flag ceremony, I got no more thanks or praise than any other member of the committee.* (Olivia)

> *I'm also a leader in the school as the deputy principal, but I don't get that opportunity to actually tell the board of management what I'm doing or to show them what I'd like to do in the school.* (Ava)

There is also a growing expectation by deputy-principals that they should contribute to instructional effectiveness and educational leadership (Harvey and Sheridan, 1995). For example, Elizabeth would like to contribute more but spoke of her principal not delegating much to her, while Emma felt she had more to contribute in

relation to curriculum development. This was highlighted in Emma's school during a Whole School Evaluation by the Inspectorate, when it was suggested that the deputy-principal could be utilised more. Emma further explained that she would like experience of leading a specific educational area, such as special education, allowing her to directly influence pupil learning outcomes. This is astounding when compared to deputy-principals in the UK, who spend over 40% of their time on leadership duties decided through a democratic process (Melton et al. in Shoho et al. (eds.), 2012).

> *A lot of people will probably assume that I do an awful lot more for my role than I actually do. Sometimes I feel as a deputy principal working in the school that there's probably a lot more different things around the school that I could take on.* (Ava)

This was similar to Olivia, who stated:

> *Well to be honest, I do feel that I'm not really used to my full potential, I think I could give a lot more to the school. Really, the principal isn't hugely involved in delegating.*

Both of these highly important and informative comments illustrate how eight of the twelve respondents in this study view their professional roles. They are clearly disenchanted and uneasy about their lack of involvement in school administration. In Olivia's school there appears to be a lack of collegial support coming from the top. Their roles could not be thought of as 'the armpit of the system' (Wynott, 2005, 48).

There was not a wide range of managerial and strategic functions mentioned by respondents from the primary schools with a teaching principal. School size may be an important factor in influencing the limited level and scope of deputy-principal responsibilities. This is disappointing, as Kaplan and Owings (1999) cited a range of

duties and responsibilities which included curriculum development, evaluating and coaching the teaching staff, and promoting school goals in the shifting job description of deputy-principals. Only Paige and Ian, coming from large urban schools, seemed to have an engagement with this variety of leadership and management. Both possess a strong professional identity, speaking in terms of their roles involving administration, planning, curriculum leadership and staff management. Paige said training, staff development and curriculum development were very important in her deputy-principalship. Her role as an instructional leader allows her to impact upon school improvement and student learning outcomes. This is in very stark comparison to other respondents who mentioned the *'drawing up of staff rotas'*, *'ICT* [Information and Communications Technologies] *maintenance'*, and *'organising the athletics team'*.

Significantly, all schools regard their responsibilities and tasks as being as great as other schools although not all schools have the same level of management suport. A study of 130 deputy-principals in America found that the involvement of deputy-principals in management functions was an important factor in determining their aspirations for principalship (Chan, Webb and Bowen, 2003). In total, four respondents (Lily, Julia, Ian and Paige) felt there was no difference between what they do and what they think they should do. They felt their role functions were appropriate to the level of deputy, where they feel they are making a genuine professional contribution to the overall school leadership, deriving a sense of satisfaction from carrying out their duties:

> *I feel very little difference between what I think I should be doing and what I actually do; the only place I do feel guilty is with my teaching duties.* (Lily)

Lily described how she often felt that her loyalty and dedication to both positions compromised her, particularly when her deputy role sporadically drew her away from her classroom teaching responsibilities. Ian felt his role was having an effect on the school and believed he was able to make a positive contribution to the life of the school. He mentioned his involvement in both curricular and organisational policy formation and in deciding class allocations. He also spoke about being in a decision-making position for the *'staff supervision rota'* and *'deciding the holiday schedule for the coming academic year . . . and things like extracurricular activities'*.

> *I suppose since I got the position I would be maybe more to the fore in terms of decision making, whereas before this you might go with your ideas to the principal and deputy principal or offer suggestions, whereas now, I suppose you're in a more decision-making position currently.* (Ian)

Respondents provided a list of duties which helped with the day-to-day smooth running and management of the school. With the exception of Paige and Ian, all other respondents failed to describe their role as involving managing the curriculum, setting goals, evaluating teachers and providing professional development opportunities. Ethan's appraisal of his leadership role highlighted the preoccupation with the day-to-day running of the school. He was, however, not the only respondent who appeared disillusioned and dissatisfied with the deputy-principalship.

Right, well I've a number of agreed functions in the school. One would be computers − I look after computers and am responsible for their maintenance, upkeep, right. Roll books I've to check, and help teachers, especially new teachers with their roll book and make sure they've been filled in correctly. I'm responsible for upkeep of notice boards in the main hall, I'm responsible for photography of main events and things that happen in the school, make sure they're all kept and then they have to pass them on to a lady who does the school magazine. . . . The principal likes to keep me busy with these basic tasks that anyone could do, rather than share her leadership with me as her deputy. I don't feel I have any great power or leadership responsibility. (Ethan)

Ethan's experience of the deputyship is similar to that of thirty-six deputies in a qualitative study by Ribbins (1997), which found that they considered their experience as deputies to be disappointing and frustrating because they did not feel supported by their principals.

Preparation for deputyship

Respondents considered how well prepared they were for the role of deputy-principal by thinking about the various formal training and initiatives undertaken for successful leadership associated with the deputyship. They discussed their professional socialisation and how it impacted on their preparedness to assume the role of deputy-principal. The data gathered from the interviews suggests there is a very definite perception that preparedness for a deputy-principalship is strongly linked with having successful work experience as a teacher. The reason for this agreement that they all felt well prepared may come from the fact that the challenges of the role are not very great and so the level of preparation needed is less significant than that needed for principalship. Ten of the respondents believed they already possessed the skills necessary to perform the role, and this large majority becomes significant when compared to the results from the international study conducted by

Melton et al. (in Shoho et al. (eds.), 2012) in which deputy-principals indicated they came to the deputyship unprepared for the reality of the situation and had to figure out on their own how best to meet the demands and responsibilities of the role. The role described by respondents in this study centres more on the maintenance and effectiveness of school operations.

> *Well I certainly did [feel prepared] because I'd been working for almost twenty years in the school. When I became deputy principal it didn't seem daunting at all.* (Elizabeth)

> *Well I suppose in all honesty I probably did because I'd been teaching at this school from [when] I left college and apart from that I was a past pupil . . . so I suppose I've had a long incubation.* (Jack)

Eleven of the twelve respondents' schools are relatively stable and comfortable work environments. They are rural primary schools that haven't experienced change and development to the same extent as large urban ones. Respondents are highly familiar with and accepting of the school ethos and culture, while possessing a deep knowledge and understanding of the school community, having developed a range of close relationships with colleagues. Tighe and Rogers (2006) found that in the 1980s the position was often bestowed upon a successful teacher, who then took on management duties in addition to continuing full-time classroom teaching duties. Respondents clearly felt that their professional socialisation in the school prior to their appointment as deputy-principal had shown them what they could expect to experience in the role.

> *I suppose I did in the sense that I'd been working in the school for quite a few years . . . when I took on the role of deputy principal in the school. Because I'd been in the school for so long, I knew what the role of the deputy-principal entailed; I knew what the previous deputy-principal did. She had done jobs like the role books.* (Ava)

She then summed up the role succinctly:

> *...to be honest, I knew it was not a terribly onerous task, I knew I was very capable of it.* (Ava)

Eight respondents had been part of the in-school management team prior to appointment as deputy-principal, providing them with a sense of what could be expected of them in the role. This is not significant, as deputy-principals in primary schools are recruited from existing staff who may or may not need to have been a member of the in-school management team. Only Elizabeth felt the need to undertake a formal course of leadership preparation before her appointment, and she explained that she *'was constantly up-skilling . . . and I did do a leadership course just before my appointment as deputy'*. Elizabeth had positive expectations of the deputyship, hoping to make a positive difference for school improvement. She believed a course of training would give her the necessary tools and skills to bring some form of innovation and change to her school; however, her principal was unwilling to delegate sufficient responsibility, leaving her as an untapped resource of leadership potential and energy.

Eight respondents believed that in-school management was an important experience providing the necessary training and preparation for deputyship. Teachers very early on in their careers explore leadership as they observe the school leaders in their schools, and this can give them an understanding of what good leadership entails (Read in Shoho et al. (eds.), 2012). Previous common experiences included being a member of the board of management, being involved in the development of organisational and curricular policies, and familiarity with the dynamics of the school community. Respondents felt these experiences influenced their preparedness

for the role. Extra-curricular activities including those outside of the curriculum were also mentioned. Elizabeth mentioned her involvement in the Green Schools Initiative, while Ian mentioned his involvement in different events such as fundraising committees and social clubs. While these activities are of merit, they are not on par with instructional leadership experience.

Notably, differences in age and experience appeared to influence the presumption of readiness to assume the administrative leadership responsibilities. Kate and Ian felt unprepared just like respondents in the international study conducted by Melton et al. (2012). They were the youngest respondents, both in their mid-twenties. During the interview Kate realised she was not prepared for deputyship, and this was the first time in her career that she had been asked to justify her level of preparation for undertaking the role. Through further probing, she explained that she was prepared as regards school routines but not school policies, so it was the administrative side of the role for which she felt ill-equipped. Ian assumed the role of deputy-principal of a large 398-pupil school, but only graduated from college himself in 2005. Both of them viewed the deputy-principalship as being more of a challenge, recognising that they held no formal leadership qualification at the time of appointment:

> *Well I suppose before that I was lucky enough, I did have a post and one or two of the positions from the post, I suppose things like Green Schools and that, you were fit to kind of delve off in that area. I knew the school, I knew the run of the school, I knew the parents, you know, but being prepared? I don't know, I wouldn't say I was and to be honest I never questioned my ability to be deputy before this, so it's interesting.* (Kate)

> *That's a tricky one. Well to be honest, I suppose I have to be honest here, no, not particularly and I would never have taken a school leadership course before being appointed, and I'm sure it would have been of some benefit to me.* (Ian)

Overall, with the exception of Elizabeth, all the other respondents failed to engage in any deliberate preparatory courses or training prior to their appointment, probably due to the limited expectations of their deputy role. Ava had completed a master's in Education Management, but this was not in preparation for the deputyship. This is not unusual to Ireland – similarly, in England, deputy-principals assume much more of a leadership role, even though they have had little formal training in leadership (Melton et al. in Shoho et al. (eds.), 2012). Respondents instead expressed the view that all activities undertaken as part of their preparation happened in school and were considered incidental; however, it is possible that some may have been undertaken as deliberate steps towards achieving a deputyship. Ethan referred to a one-day preparation course that he attended prior to his appointment. Paige attended no form of training or preparation prior to her appointment. Ian explained that *'there was no prior training or no kind of assistance, per se, like offered by anybody'*. Olivia attended many courses in teaching and curriculum planning, but nothing specific to school leadership.

Positive and negative aspects of deputyship

Paige, Ian and Lily mentioned their personal satisfaction when their principal turns to them as a partner in team leadership beyond their classroom responsibilities, affording them the opportunity to influence others. There was an underlying commonality to their responses in this regard. Ian described how much satisfaction he derives from the recognition of his professional contribution, emphasising the fact that *'you're involved in the decision-making process . . . you would have ambition for where the school would be in five years' time. I enjoy having the ear of the principal.'* Lily and Julia also spoke positively of *'having the ear of the principal'*.

On the other hand Elizabeth, Ava and Ethan stated that they did not enjoy the collegial support of the principal, and this is disappointing because today there is much more talk about shared leadership, leadership teams and distributed leadership (Southworth, 2004) providing greater professional enrichment for deputies (Kaplan and Owings, 1999).

Eight respondents (Paige, Ian, Julia, Elizabeth, Kate, Emma, Ava and Lily) felt that respect which goes along with the deputyship was a very positive aspect. They clearly like the power, esteem and status which accompany the job title. Elizabeth fundamentally expressed the view that the role offers her a certain level of respect from the more junior members of staff, granting the opportunity to build meaningful relationships through face-to-face conversations with them. Along with the element of respect Olivia, Ava, Elizabeth and Ethan mentioned the extra remuneration as a positive incentive. They view the extra salary as compensation for the extra duties they perform. They receive an extra allowance for the deputyship on top of their regular teachers' salary, and they believed it was commensurate with the responsibilities. These respondents viewed the salary as a personal gain influencing their decision to take on the deputyship.

Ethan offered a pragmatic view of deputyship, describing it as *'a very comfortable role ... it's the principal that has the overall challenge of running the school'*. He further described the position like this: '*if there's trouble, anything goes wrong it's the principal who's responsible'*. He believes the quality of life and working conditions of the deputy are far superior to those of the principal. The word *'comfortable'* describes exactly how he views his current position as more of a daily

operations manager away from all the stress and extra demands of principalship. Jack answered similarly:

> *You have a say in the running of the school but the overall responsibility lies with the principal, and they are ultimately the one who is responsible for the running of the school and are answerable to the board of management. The overall responsibility does not rest with you as the deputy.*

This raises the issue of where exactly the power lies between the deputy-principal and the principal. Jack makes a clear distinction between the roles, and his understanding is that the ultimate authority and responsibility rests with the principal, far beyond the deputy's call of duty. Kate reinforced these sentiments by stating, *'it's not going to come down on my head'.* There is a willingness and desire to expand the role of deputy so that it becomes more important yet there is an expression of relief at not having the bear the responsibility of principalship.

> *I love it because I can walk away from my duties, you know, I can walk away at 3pm. There's a huge difference between a deputy principal and what a principal has to do.* (Emma)

Expanding the role of deputy will not occur easily as seven respondents (Ava, Ethan, Emma, Olivia, Julia, Jack and Elizabeth) were quick to highlight the role ambiguity, insufficient recognition, and lack of control over their specific duties as being the main unattractive aspects of deputyship. Ava highlighted role ambiguity as a specific negative associated with the deputy-principalship:

Sometimes, when I sit back and think about my role, actually, now that you do mention it, I feel that my role in the school isn't actually probably clearly defined, you know, I help out with things but I suppose when I think about it, I don't actually have a specific list of duties. Sometimes I think I'd like to get involved and be responsible for particular organisational things or particular subject areas I'd like to have a more particular role in the school. I just feel what I do, a lot of my work is, I just help out with things but I don't have any particular list of things that I have to take care of. That could probably be something that needs to be developed more.

Ava has a very unclear and ill-defined role in school operations, leaving her feeling de-motivated. She comes from a large urban school with an administrative principal not an isolated school house on a prairie. She is failing to build her own knowledge and skills for accomplishing school goals, and she appeared to harbour feelings of dissatisfaction and disillusionment with her position. This is not peculiar to the Irish primary school system: Marshall (1992 in Harvey and Sheridan, 1995), writing about the Australian school system, similarly concluded that the work of the deputy-principal is ill-defined and contains contradictions, leaving the deputy vulnerable to criticism when being assessed. The need for a concrete job description is imperative other wise efforts to prepare deputies and to study current problems will be ineffective (Mustafa, 2001).

As deputy-principals, all twelve respondents hold classroom teaching duties, yet only four reported how the increased workload associated with the deputy-principalship affects their teaching responsibilities. Paige stressed, *'there's just so much to do and so little time and you're trying to squeeze it all in around teaching at the same time'*. One of the most negative aspects of the deputy-principalship is the time allocation for them to be effective in undertaking their deputy tasks and their teaching responsibilities. This is the one negative side of the deputy-principalship for

Ian, as he explains: *'The two roles, trying to fulfil both roles to the best of your ability and to make sure that nothing is neglected as part of fulfilling the two roles, that's the only challenge that I would find in relation to it.'* This is by far the biggest challenge facing deputy principals according to Melton et al. (in Shoho et al. (eds.), 2012), as balancing various duties required of their positions poses a threat to their effectiveness.

Julia and Paige expressed apprehension about having to take over the running of the school in the absence of the principal. Paige explained that she is always *'dreading'* getting *'that'* phone call because it is just *'such a big change for the whole school'*. Julia also held this view, and went further: *'I could end up acting principal and I suppose that is the thing I wouldn't like, that's not what's happening now, I'm still deputy principal but I don't like the thoughts of being acting principal.'*

Seven of the respondents were unhappy with their level of involvement in the overall running of the school and level of influence on school improvement. Respondents found their time taken up with daily tasks such as yard duty supervision rotas, arranging substitute cover for absent colleagues, arranging timetables for parent–teacher meetings, organising school tours, minding maths equipment and booking drama entertainers. This level of unhappiness is also seen in early literature from the 1980s, where the roles of deputy-principals had little influence on the overall leadership of schools (Smith, 1987; Bates and Shank, 1983; Reeds and Conners, 1982; Black, 1980).

Kate feels that she *'could be given more overall responsibility in the school, and as deputy you really are dependent on how much control the principal is willing to give you. There can be a little reluctance to hand over the reins and allow someone else to take charge.'* She similarly feels that her role functions are not a result of purposeful developmental planning. She often feels that she does not receive the same recognition from the school community as the principal. Similar sentiments were expressed by Elizabeth, who felt her *'role isn't recognised as much as Aidan's. He is the principal and at the end of the day I am just seen as his assistant and it doesn't really matter what I do – that isn't going to change. My work just maybe isn't seen as being as important as his.'* This isn't surprising because Elizabeth's workload isn't as onerous or extensive as the principal's. The feelings of frustration expressed by respondents in this section of the interview were similar to deputy-principals in Draper and McMichael's study (1998a).

Principals' roles

Role perceptions

All respondents had a particular perception of the principalship as they continually seek to support principals in managing the school. They are exposed to the role and therefore have a unique opportunity to observe the principal. They spoke of principalship as regards the day-to-day management of the school under the direction of the board of management, commenting on the many dimensions attached to it. They saw it as a very diverse, very different role to theirs, believing that the deputy-principalship and the principalship could not be easily compared. A principalship presents far more dilemmas, paradoxes and tensions than the deputyship. There was a clear understanding that principalship needs successful management, as there is

considerable *'accountability'* and *'responsibility'* for what happens in the school. Lily's comment was typical: *'It's a tall order, yeah, like there's a lot there, you need a lot of different characteristics.'* It was evident from all responses that the principalship has altered.

The value of strong and purposeful school leadership was to the fore. Instructional leadership was mentioned to a large extent by all respondents. Ethan was firm in his belief that *'the role of principal is to ensure that there is a good teaching and learning environment in the school and this should be known by all staff, right, and teaching and learning should constantly be discussed and monitored and reviewed at all meetings'*. Respondents spoke of the important work of leading the school through all the educational, legislative and societal changes taking place in the Irish educational system at present. Elizabeth stated her view of legislation and principalship very crudely: *'Well the amount of legislation is horrendous'*.

Respondents felt that it is up to the principal to empower all the members of staff and create a positive school culture. This is not the reality for seven respondents in this research who feel a lack of engagement outside of arranging school tours and carol services. Four respondents described the principalship as the equivalent of a *'Chief Executive Officer'*, having to operate like a manager of a private sector company. They mentioned much more scrutiny of schools, with the additional responsibilities of the principal constantly changing and the level of accountability to the board of management increasing. Elizabeth viewed the principalship as being *'like running a business really nowadays and there's so much administration involved'*. She felt that

the head of a successful business could be a potential model for a successful school principalship.

It was interesting to listen to the language in vogue among all twelve respondents while discussing the principalship. The word 'demanding' was used on a number of occasions. The influence of leadership and management, originally dominating the business world, is now echoed in the realm of education.

> *Yeah, it's very hard to be a good principal really, to be a successful principal that everybody likes you... It's very difficult, it's a tall order, yeah.* (Julia)

> *It certainly is a demanding and a complex role having to deal with teaching and school leadership...* (Olivia)

> *Aidan's a teaching principal and at present he has fifth and sixth class which is a very demanding role and he is dealing with parents, children transitioning from primary to secondary. So that in itself is a very demanding position as well as running the school...* (Elizabeth)

The emphasis is now on raising standards by improving outputs through priority setting and strategic planning. Clearly the business world is proving influential on our education system. Hughes (1973) first suggested that principals' roles could be conceptualised as both leading professional and chief executive. Respondents described the role in terms of leadership from the private sector, but research findings from successful business settings are commonly held as potential models for success in schools including leadership development (Read in Shoho et al. (eds.), 2012). This demonstrates a shift in how the role is now conceptualised. Respondents clearly viewed the principalship as one of management where:

You're not just managing two hundred and twenty-five or whatever number of children it might be, you're also managing the staff you've under you and you're dealing with different groups as well, you've a board of management that you're working with, you have people from the Department of Education coming in to you . . . you're dealing with parents. (Paige)

Eleven respondents had previous experience of deputising for the principal for varying periods of time, and this provided a tangible insight into the role itself. Three respondents found the experience manageable, although challenging, but the remaining eight found it demanding, very tiring, isolating and lonely. The length of time involved would range in varying degrees covering illnesses, maternity leaves, conferences etc.

Knowledge, skills and attributes necessary for the principalship role

Respondents expressed many views on a range of knowledge, skills and attributes needed for modern successful principalship summarised in Table 5.1 below. (There is no significance in the ranking order of items within this table.)

Table 5.1 Summary of qualities necessary for the principalship role

Knowledge	Skills	Attributes
Local school context	Communication	Ability to create vision
Local history, culture and traditions	Problem-solving	Ability to delegate
Curricular and pedagogical knowledge		Ability to prioritise
Information Communication Technologies		Ability to motivate
		Enthusiasm and drive
		Sympathy and empathy

Three respondents (Lily, Jack and Sophia) referred to the importance of a principal having a thorough knowledge of the school community with its own particular

'history, culture and traditions' (Julia). According to Julia a successful principal needs to know the context of their school and background. Julia's school has been designated as disadvantaged, and she believes that a principal in this setting would need to be sympathetic and show empathy towards families from a low socio-economic background. Jack described this knowledge as *'very valuable information'*.

Olivia was the only respondent to highlight the need for background knowledge of classroom teaching and learning. Three respondents highlighted the need for ICT proficiency. Paige explained that *'ICT knowledge is of particular benefit to a school principal and it is necessary for them to be competent with modern technology and e-learning'.* A good working knowledge of ICT was also mentioned by Lily.

The collaborative nature of contemporary principalship means that effective communication and consultation have become highly important. Leithwood et al. (1999) attest that good communication is necessary for transformational leadership through soliciting teachers to internalise a school's mission and willingly participate in a collaborative team. Therefore half of the respondents viewed an effective principal as having the correct tools to convey the right messages to motivate staff to work towards success. They viewed good communication as pivotal for harmonious working relationships. We may glean from Ethan's interview some concern over the ability of his principal to communicate: *'I feel my own principal is weak when it comes to open communication and fails to involve the rest of the school when it comes to planning. She holds back a lot of information that the rest of the teachers should know about. Should I stay going?'* Most interviewees voiced the need for

interpersonal skills encompassing the ability to listen and understand. Problem solving, decision making and personal stress management are all linked to this skill set. Respondents felt that principals with strong interpersonal skills are more successful in modern school leadership.

Delegation was a recurring theme in the interviews, with successful principalship being achieved if the authority and power of the principal was shared with the rest of the staff. The principalship is beyond the capacity of one person, and through delegation the principal can reduce their workload and concentrate their energy on important and critical areas of concern. Ava conveyed a fairly confusing message when she explained:

> *You need to be able to delegate as well, you need to be able to empower other people . . . She's a really good leader but there's probably a lot of work that she undertakes outside of school in the evenings and a lot of jobs that she could actually delegate to myself or to others.* (Ava)

This finding was somewhat paradoxical, because she describes her principal as a good leader but surely this would entail good use of delegation; from the above statement this is clearly not the case. Ethan and Elizabeth expressed the view that delegation would allow other members of staff to flourish. Through motivation the principal can give the other teachers a sense of importance and job satisfaction.

Positive and negative aspects of principalship

Respondents were unable to furnish as much data pertaining to the positive initiatives on principalship. Five respondents needed probing in order to cite any positive initiatives at all. This is a finding in itself, with only three initiatives mentioned throughout the interviews. All respondents made reference to the IPPN,

praising their efforts for principals: *'I think the IPPN, the Irish Primary Principals'*
Network, I suppose professional is the first thing that springs to mind' (Ava). Ava
went on to describe all the courses and networking services that they offer principals.
Discussing the IPPN, Ava spoke of the continual need for continuous professional
development and how this organisation was very good at supporting principals in
this way. There was a sense of the IPPN allowing its members to learn about all the
different aspects of leadership. Jack described a summer course with the IPPN as
'very beneficial'. These views are not surprising because professional associations
are a major source of growth for deputy-principals (Oleszewski et al., 2012).

In her interview, Julia felt that in recent times, principals themselves had established
many more local support networks with their colleagues from neighbouring schools.
She explained, *'that's where he gets his greatest support, to be honest, the local men*
and women around who he knows'. Kate said these local networks are a *'relatively*
new phenomenon and can really help any principal who needs advice or counselling
from someone who knows what they're going through'. This view of local principals
creating their own support networks, and in doing so helping to meet the challenges
of the role, was very important to both Julia and Kate.

Respondents spoke of the Leadership Development in Schools initiative (LDS) as
being of great benefit to principals for school leadership and planning. Three
respondents have attended courses along with their principals and found them very
well run, effective and worthwhile. Paige spoke of this initiative providing principals
with *'new professional experiences . . . enabling principals to develop decision*
making skills', while Sophia spoke of them providing *'very valuable experience in*

cultivating leadership development'. Respondents held the view that LDS gave school leaders greater confidence as they come to a better understanding of the difference between leading and managing a school. What emerged here is the need for principals to engage in professional development that will enable them to connect with self-evaluation of leadership capacity and keep engaged with the evolving concept of school leadership.

Respondents from schools with a teaching principal highlighted the difficulty of the dual role of teaching and running the school, believing that principals need the ability to prioritise tasks and responsibilities in order to devote direct teaching time to the children in their class. They didn't believe this was easily achievable:

> *Eighty percent of schools have teaching principals; this is the job they applied for the first day, so this is what they are ─ teaching principals. . . . Now I've no doubt that there are principals out there that are struggling, they're not doing well in their role and the reason is they're not giving their classroom time to the children, they're carrying out principal functions during classroom time and this is having a negative effect.* (Ethan)

> *Huge, it's huge, like for our teaching principal, and I really do feel she has to give the focus to her class. . . . You have to be able to focus on your class and leave the administrative side of things until after school.* (Kate)

> *The most important thing that I feel that they should be doing is looking after their class. Teaching principals need to have the ability to close their classroom door and focus on their main teaching role, and this is a tall order.* (Elizabeth)

Respondents from the schools with a teaching principal acknowledged that teaching principals are allocated a specific number of principal release days to undertake administrative tasks, but even with this *'there's an awful lot of things you have to deal with straight away, having to deal with an issue straight away or*

correspondence or board of management, and that takes away from your teaching time' (Kate). Jack felt that principals needed to have a vision of their school and where they wanted to be in the future. He spoke of a sense of mission and the need to be *'able to inspire and shape the attitudes of the other teachers'*, explaining that a forward-thinking principal should have ambitions and want to see them fulfilled. Emma and Ava shared this viewpoint:

> *You have to start from a point and you have to see a goal and you want to get there . . . you have to bring the staff along with you; every successful principal needs a vision.* (Emma)

> *...it's certainly a role that requires someone to have a great inspiring vision, a vision of change for the school and that they can take on board new initiatives.* (Ava)

There was a general consensus that the principalship is expanding and becoming more complex due to different education reforms. The Irish educational context is changing, with a requirement from central government for the learning outcomes of pupils to improve. It is the professional obligation of the principal to see that this happens by conducting an internal process of school self-evaluation. A dramatic decline of Irish students' performance on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test results in international reading and maths has led to this. The Irish government put a lot of store in PISA. This will be a significant and onerous challenge, as data from all respondents suggests that the cuts to funding in primary education are having a significant impact on the principalship, particularly the cuts to capital spending, special educational needs and the rise in the pupil–teacher ratio. Principals are now expected to meet the challenge of raising pupil test scores with far less financial support, meaning changing demands on principals. Emma put it this way:

There's cutbacks - who does it fall to now? It falls to the principal, you know, at the end of the day they've to deal with it. The principal's role is having to change and develop as they adjust to a very new educational setting with far less resources and a lot more expected of them, with the cutbacks and . . . you're answerable again.

Whole School Evaluations (WSEs) were mentioned by eleven of the twelve respondents as being a significant initiative. It was surprising that WSEs were highlighted, having been in operation since 2005, although at the time of conducting the interviews many schools had not yet experienced the process. With the exception of Julia, the other six respondents who mentioned WSEs felt they impacted negatively on the principal. Not all of them had prior knowledge of WSEs but believed that the performance of schools is now transparent: *'WSEs have led to much greater accountability, and the principal's performance can now be judged as parents make decisions about where to send their children based on reading WSE reports'* (Ian). For stakeholders it may be a means of providing transparency and of knowing which schools to choose (Mathews, 2010). Elizabeth believed that they're *'an awful lot of stress for principals because they're working to capacity as it is without this added stress of all this record keeping and policy making'.* Elizabeth experienced a WSE in her school and highlighted a definite link between WSEs, quality assurance and reform efforts. It has a focus on compliance with standards through greater scrutiny, which should lead to improvement as schools are confronted with an independent judgement. According to Van Bruggen (2000), external assessment can stimulate improvement by identifying weak points and analysing causes.

The most recent initiative to be launched by the Department of Education and Skills at the time of conducting the interviews was the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy for Learning and For Life (2011). Half of the respondents spoke of this new strategy in terms of trying to modernise due to a perceived underperformance in the teaching of English and mathematics:

> *The new Literacy and Numeracy Strategy will place a huge burden on principals as they try to develop a strategic plan in order to improve pupil test scores on standardised tests. The outcome of this will determine how effective they are as principals and they will have to lead and manage the rest of the teachers in the school in achieving better results. This is very daunting for any principal.* (Paige)

Respondents spoke of a clear intensification of work for principals, with more significance being placed on assessment test scores. Ethan, Jack, Ava, Kate and Sophia said recent legislation was having a significantly negative impact. They felt there has been a plethora of legislation serving to intensify the amount of documents and paperwork for principals to deal with. This legislation, according to Ava, has led to *'exacting demands of the role'*. Principals have had to become far more vigilant in the execution of their duties. Jack felt that legislation was leading to a *'one size fits all'* situation where the principal is no longer able to use his/her professional autonomy. Sophia had the view that new legislation was *'expanding the bureaucracy'*. The remarks made by these respondents illustrate the contextual backdrop in which modern principalship is expected to operate.

Conclusion

This chapter has drawn on the data to answer the first two research questions. The respondents have described their existing leadership roles as being, in the main, unfulfilled and underutilised. Respondents felt well prepared for the role of deputy

yet underparepared to assume a principalship illustrating how different both leadership roles are perceived. The data demonstrates a need for the role of the deputy-principal to be reconceptualised, with a change in organisational culture that will bring more ownership, a larger role and autonomy to its incumbents. On the one hand there is also a reluctance or hesitation amongst respondents about the level of accountability they are willing to assume. They enjoy the relative comfort of deputyship with its level of respect and authority and don't entirely envy the more accountable position of principal. Not all respondents within this research would embrace whole heartedly a redefined role encompassing greater co-leadership, commitment, time and accountability for the deputy. On reflection this may be part of the reason why some principals feel unable or unwilling to create an atmosphere where co-leadership can exist to a greater extent with his/her deputy. The deputy needs to understand that being part of the leadership culture of the school is not just about enhanced prestige, respect and a leadership title but also requires for greater commitment and increased productivity on the his / her part. A reconceptualised deputyship may serve to promote a greater understanding of the vital position of deputy and this could be very positive for the principalship as respondents describe an intensified principalship significantly altered as a consequence of a number of negative as opposed to positive initiatives. The following chapter will explore the remaining two research questions.

Chapter Six: Motivating and preparing deputies for principalship: the research data

Introduction

This chapter deals with the last two research questions and is linked to the literature review in chapter three. It focuses initially on respondents' willingness to apply for principalship and begins by looking at the varying levels of aspiration and motivation for promotion. It explores the various factors (school size, location) which impact on the desire for transition to principalship. It analyses the positive and negative aspects of principalship, uncovering what motivates some respondents to see themselves as career deputies who are content to remain at this rank. The analysis looks at the perceived impact that principalship can have on personal and professional life in terms of work–life balance, stress and decision-making practices.

The concluding section of this analysis centres on the final research question of pre-service preparation for principalship. There is an assumption that the deputyship is a good training ground for a principalship, and this section questions whether respondents consider this to be the case or not. It asks them to evaluate the contribution of their current leadership functions in preparing for principalship, to determine whether or not this knowledge base is sufficient for principalship and to identify specific approaches necessary to build deputy-principals' capacity for future principalship.

Preparing for principalship: motivation

Attractions

As part of the information sought from respondents, they were invited to comment on whether they would like to progress to principalship. All acknowledged that this was not the first occasion they had considered this possible career path. Three of the twelve respondents (all male) said they would like to be a principal in the future. Only one male had actually applied for a principalship in the past. Research from Australia highlighted stronger aspirations among male assistant principals than females (Lacey and Gronn, 2006). The three male respondents spoke about a principalship in positive terms and were undaunted at the possibility of assuming the position: *'I know it's what I really want so I'm ready for it'* (Ethan). They viewed it as a chance to acquire greater responsibility and organisational mobility. The nine female respondents (with the possible exceptions of Lily and Sophia) did not consider a principalship as being part of their career trajectory. The responses of the females were in sharp contrast to the males'. The language they used was more negative, and as they reflected further on the possibility, they became more certain that it was not an appealing career option.

Three of the twelve respondents (one male and two female) had applied for a principalship in the past but had been unsuccessful. The three men believed that they had leadership potential and that their experiences of the in-school management team afforded them the confidence and aspiration to seek a principalship. They expressed confidence, even enthusiasm, about meeting the expectations and challenges they knew they would face as principal. Of the three male respondents, Ethan was the most ambitious about wanting to secure a principalship of his own: *'I would look*

forward to the challenge of leading in my own school and knowing the school where I'm going to be.' He viewed the deputyship as a suitable preparation for progression to a principalship, feeling that he had *'outgrown'* the deputy-principalship and had the capacity to progress to principalship. He demonstrated a strong need to acquire a principalship, being highly motivated, showing an intrinsic desire for personal development along with dissatisfaction with his present position. Deputies who are more intensely involved in their own and others' professional development in schools are more eager to become principals, and Ethan has experience of organising short one-week teacher courses during the summer, using his school as a venue. These courses are sanctioned and funded by the DES.

> *I think there's a terrific training ground for, like I could go into any job, for the next stop is to move on and become principal. I know it's what I really want and I'm ready for it. So I think if you've had a good experience deputising . . . had opportunities to fill in for a principal, and if you've enjoyed it, then obviously you think well, this is for me, I should try it.* (Ethan)

Both Jack and Ian displayed fears of a new principal coming into their respective schools seeking to change the *'status quo'* (Jack). They said they would prefer to take on the mantle themselves and prevent a teacher from another school assuming the role and possibly seeking to *'transform the school with their own new brand of leadership'* (Ian). This demonstrates the particular school factors (size, location) affecting their willingness to apply for a principalship. Both men work in large urban schools with an administrative principal. They presented themselves as potential principals who are career-oriented and self-assured about further career advancement but wish to remain in their own schools, and if they cannot achieve a principalship in their own school, they may be content to remain as career deputy-principals. The impact of school factors on principalship attractiveness was clearly significant for

both men's willingness to seek a future principalship. In this regard they were different to Ethan, who made no connection between school factors and his desire for a principal position, being affected by professional and motivational factors only.

The idea of being a school principal appealed to Ian, as he felt this would afford him the opportunity to:

> *have contact with all the people in the school. . . . That would attract me . . . kind of the overseer of the school and while you're working in your own class now currently as principal, you kind of have access to all the classes and everything that's happened in the school and the organisation of events and that, I get a good buzz out of, well, say, the events and a busy school and working with people would be the big attraction.*

His motivation is driven by the need for growth without the influence of school factors. As regards financial remuneration, only two respondents (Jack and Lily) spoke of the financial gains associated with promotion to principalship. Monetary gains as a motivational factor comes under 'existence needs' according to Alderfer's ERG theory (1969). Four respondents spoke of there being absolutely no financial incentive for assuming a principalship. Financial reward may not be a motivating factor for the other eight deputies, so they didn't mention it during the course of their interviews. Those who did refer to it made the point that the pay differential between a beginning principal and a deputy-principal is not great, particularly if the deputy-principal is already at the top of the pay scale:

> *I think the money is a huge incentive, if it was more justifiable to make that step up because the workload is huge but yet you're not rewarded in your pay.* (Emma)

> *I mean it's certainly only buttons extra what the principal earns in the week.* (Ava)

Jack had a different view, speaking more favourably about the increase in salary that goes with the principalship: *'I suppose obviously we're in recessionary times, you'd obviously be paid that bit extra for it.'* This is in contrast to Elizabeth's view stating, *'the principalship's remuneration is a pittance'*. Perceptions from the other respondents ranged from the salary being based on the number of teachers in the school rather than the level of responsibility, to a lower salary compared to similar positions of responsibility in industry where the management of resources was seen to be equivalent in responsibility. The point was made that in the current economic climate, it is unlikely that any substantial increases in salary for principals will occur in the foreseeable future. Similarly, respondents in Draper and McMichael's study (1998b) gave the increase in salary only moderate approval, as the difference between the salary of a deputy and a principal was not great.

Disincentives

In order to determine the possible underlying reasons for not seeking principalship as part of their professional career, respondents were asked what they perceived to be unattractive about the role. They put far more emphasis on the unattractive aspects of principalship compared to the attractive aspects. In terms of personnel management, Sophia and Lily felt that working with others and trying to maintain positive staff relations was a very difficult and unattractive element of the role. They cited issues such as underperformance management or trying to enforce directives from the board of management or DES against the will and cooperation of fellow teachers as being potentially problematic and cumbersome: *'Sometimes a principal has to stand back and be critical or criticise staff, and that's not a very nice thing to have to do'* (Sophia). Both were aware of staffroom politics having the potential to create a

challenging role for any principal, or the need *'to de-escalate angry parents at the school gate'* (Lily). They felt they would have to forfeit the close relationships with the children and teachers by taking up a principalship. They are motivated to remain as deputies by their need to maintain existing relationships with the members of their school communities, demonstrating a strong need for relatedness according to Alderfer's ERG theory (1969). Neither respondent relished the idea of trying to foster harmonious relationships with teachers on the one hand while effectively monitoring their performance on the other. Both, however, would consider applying for a principalship if necessary in a different location. This would avoid having to change or alter relations with existing staff members, as they would be new to the school. This is not uncommon; Walker and Kwan (2009) found that vice-principals who value harmonious working relationships are less inclined to apply for principalships, while the maintenance of a harmonious relationship with teachers is a crucial concern for school leaders in Hong Kong (Walker and Dimmock, 2005).

All nine female respondents came across as being comfortable and confident in their front-line positions, did not see the principalship as a role that they sought, and experienced a sense of self-efficacy and professionalism from deputyship. Their sense of being 'experts' and 'professionals' inculcated in nine of the interviewees a sense of security and success, leading them to turn down the idea of promotion to a principalship. High satisfaction in the current role was also found to be a potential barrier to deputies applying for a principalship in Neil Cranston's 2007 Australian study of deputy-principals. The nine female respondents (with the possible exceptions of Lily and Sophia) appeared unwilling to relinquish the familiarity and confidence of the deputyship in order to experience the discomfort, uncertainty and

perceived debilitating isolation of being a principal. Lily and Sophia were the only female respondents who said they would consider a principalship if they had to move to another part of the country. Lily mentioned moving to Galway in the west of Ireland because of her husband's work commitments there; she explained that if *'she had to move'* she would probably look for a principalship, but *'it's not just a case of wanting to go out there and apply for the next principalship that's in the locality'*. Sophia spoke of moving to Wexford in the south-east of the country to be nearer her husband's family, but was adamant that this would be the only circumstance under which she would consider applying for principalship.

Seven out of nine female respondents find that their current role is one they enjoy and can be useful in even though they would embrace the chance to broaden their range of responsibilities. Their current satisfaction has not motivated them to acquire a principalship of their own. This is interesting, as it goes against a number of studies which have attempted to relate desire for principalship with personal motivational factors. Marshall et al. (1992) connected desire to deputy-principal job satisfaction, maintaining that 'satisfied' deputy-principals were more likely to aspire to principalships, whereas those experiencing less job satisfaction were more likely to remain in their present roles. An important issue drawn from the literature is that job satisfaction influences deputy-principals' motivation for principalships. If Alderfer's theory of motivation is considered in relation to the female deputy-principals involved in this study, it would appear that none of them are motivated by growth needs – unlike the male deputy-principals. It may well be that some female respondents felt that their talents were not being fully utilised and therefore failed to see the advancement opportunities that a principalship could offer them. Not all

female respondents are enjoying their deputy-principalship role but still find it more appealing than a principalship.

Comparing deputyship with the principalship, Ava spoke of it in terms of *'unpredictability'* and *'complexity'*. She made a point about the demands of Irish society today being far greater than when she began her teaching career. Today's principals face far more complex expectations, with a new generation dissatisfied with the educational status quo (Normore, 2006). Sophia spoke of *'the expectations [having] changed; parents' expectations of their children have changed without taking into consideration all that goes along with it'*. There was a clear reluctance amongst female respondents to take on further responsibilities, to address burdensome bureaucracy and to lose control over their lives. Ava was very clear in her assessment of the principalship when she described it as having *'to undertake a huge range of complex and demanding tasks, new legislation, constantly new initiatives . . . a more demanding body of client/parent out there . . . parents are expecting a lot more from their child's education today.'* This is similar to the research findings of d'Arbon, Duignan and Duncan (2002), who concluded that this is why aspiring principals may be discouraged from applying.

They also described the unrelenting workload of the teaching principal during this part of the interview. Female respondents in Cranston's Australian study (2007) also rated the demands and responsibility higher as a barrier than their male counterparts. *'There are huge demands on your personal life, on your professional life and just the stress of it all'* (Paige). Elizabeth and Jack had similar comments, while Julia

admitted that becoming a deputy-principal hadn't even been in her original career plan.

> *Well the hours that are involved, for example, there's no such thing as walking out the door at three pm and forgetting about your job to the next morning, you have to really be on call an awful lot of the time. You know, one day out of 365 you could be called upon, or else you could be called on 365 days, depending what happens. You always have to be on call and the summer time is not your summer anymore.* (Elizabeth)

> *You're never off, seven days a week, the middle of July a water pipe leaks, you're away on a week's holiday in Kerry and someone rings you, whatever you're supposed to do from down there, you're actually never away from it.* (Jack)

Ava, Paige, Olivia and Julia strongly believed that principalship would impact hugely on their life outside of school. Their comments were rife with examples of how their work–life balance would be significantly altered upon assuming a principalship. They believed that this position would impact negatively on personal relationships and family life. Both Paige and Ava spoke of having a young family to care for at home. They realised that the demands of principalship would create hardships on their families. Ava described her home life:

> *At home I do have quite a young family myself, and I know the role of the principal is something that takes a lot of time, a lot of time outside school and I just feel that really with my family I like to be able to dedicate time to them in the evenings.*

Julia spoke of having a *'good quality of life'* outside of school and not wanting school to impinge on that *'in the slightest'*. Olivia is only recently married and has a long commute to her school each day; however, even without the issue of commuting, a principalship in a school nearer her home did not appeal to her either. The principalship did become vacant in Paige's school, and she explained why she didn't apply for the position:

It wasn't going to be worth it for me to take on all that extra responsibility, and not only take on the extra responsibility but not get the extra remuneration for it and then have less time with my own family as well, that it was going to have such a negative impact on my own family life, I just felt it wasn't worth it. (Paige)

These feelings are similar to what Hausman et al. (2002) found from a study in America revealing that vice-principals who reported difficulties in balancing their work lives with professional development indicated a lower desire for principalship. The impact on personal and family life was seen to be the greatest inhibitor to applying for a principalship in d'Arbon and colleagues' Australian study (2002). It is acknowledged in the literature that family commitments are different for men and women (Cheung, 1997; Coleman, 1996), with the latter carrying the main responsibility for domestic arrangements (Blackmore, 1999; Coleman, 1996).

Stress was highlighted by seven female respondents as a negative feature of principalship. They spoke of stress relating to the position coming from parental criticism and the high demands being placed on contemporary schools from local communities. None of the male respondents made any reference to stress in the course of their interviews. Kate explained *'that your head is the first one to roll if a negative incident occurs in the school'*, while Paige said *'you're very much on your own as a principal. The buck stops with you.'* Olivia used similar phraseology: *'At the end of the day, the buck stops with the principal.'* The language used by respondents was similar in style to that of deputies in Draper and McMichael's study (1998b) when describing the principalship. Sophia commented on health issues and how the demands and responsibilities of principalship can *'lead to issues such as lack of sleep, weight gain, nervousness and anxiousness'*. Ava has had firsthand

experience of principal stress. Being open and honest in her remarks, it could be seen that watching her own principal cope with stress had left her very dubious and sceptical about undertaking a principalship of her own.

> *The stress that the principal must feel at times is unbearable, and to be honest, Derrick, I know this is very confidential but I know our principal has been so affected at times by stress that she's had to go, she's had to actually, it has had a really bad effect on her personal life and she has needed help and assistance with things like that.* (Sophia)

It was acknowledged that there could be a struggle, leading to some degree of tension, trying to sustain the school while successfully balancing and addressing the needs of diverse stakeholders. This often unattractive aspect of principalship is mentioned in the literature (Rintoul and Goulais, 2010; Stengel and Tom, 2006; Begley, 2003). Principals are trying to do the right thing, and this may occasionally lead to conflict with particular stakeholders impacting negatively on the entire school. Ava spoke of this element of a principalship in terms of *'trying to weigh one person's individual interests against those of the rest of the school'*. She explained that in her own leadership role to date she has had to try to do what's best for the individual while also ensuring it wouldn't have a negative impact on the rest of the school.

Respondents commented negatively on principal decision-making practices, trying to balance stakeholders' needs with the overall good of the school and the workload of teaching principals. This is an aspect of the role that Ian didn't believe he would enjoy. He felt it could be difficult having the responsibility to make careful and unbiased decisions for all the members of the school community. Involvement in school affairs from members of the wider community has become far more common,

and various members of local society may try to exert their influence over the school. Thus Ian, coming from a large school staff, was acutely aware of how a principal could be easily caught *'between a rock and a hard place ... on one hand there are the whims and demands of the parents and on the other the needs and requests of the teacher.'*

d'Arbon et al. (2002) mentioned principals frequently having to make choices about people in situations where there were no obvious right or wrong answers. The study found that training programmes did not equip them well to deal with such tensions. It was noticeable during Ian's interview how he spoke of the parents and their whims and demands, but when he mentioned the teachers he spoke of their needs and requests. He had an awareness of the principal being charged with making decisions on a daily basis often defying easy solution.

> *I think there are a lot of outside influences, not outside influences, a lot of groups of people who don't give principals, not so much the respect but that they don't take them for, you know, they don't take their role as seriously as it should be taken.* (Sophia)

The dual role of teaching and administration was mentioned by five respondents as being particularly unattractive, confirming the generally held negative view towards the teaching principalship. The six key descriptors of this role from respondents were: undoable; unattractive; unpleasant; extremely difficult; unrelenting workload; feelings of guilt and inadequacy. *'I find the role of a teaching principal very unattractive but I suppose in this school we're lucky in that we have the numbers to have an administrative principal'* (Ian). There were similar sentiments from other respondents. Emma thought it was *'madness'* that the *'day of the teaching principal wasn't gone'*. Similar feelings of guilt and inadequacy were expressed by Olivia,

speaking of her own principal having to leave her class to attend to other duties. Her language demonstrated a reluctance to experience any of these emotions firsthand. Respondents from schools with a teaching principal and an administrative principal believed that it was becoming increasingly difficult for principals to devote a sufficient concentrated effort to their teaching duties, while Olivia mentioned colleagues in other schools who have regretted becoming teaching principals:

> *I have many friends who are principals as well, and many of them do regret taking the position up; they feel that their family life has been affected. They find it impossible to teach and be a principal at the same time. They're just not coping with both jobs and I think they would love to go back to being just teachers again.*

A study of deputies (Draper and McMichael, 1998b) showed that deputy-principals exposed to disenchantment by experienced principals led to a greater reluctance to apply for principalships.

No female respondent mentioned the possibility of being discriminated against for principal selection on grounds of gender, age or academic qualifications making them reluctant to apply. Analysis of the raw data showed no experiences or perceptions of 'glass ceilings' (Luke, 1998; Davidson and Cooper, 1992) showing an inability to rise above deputyship. The responses from females were similar to those of Walker and Kwan (2009) in Hong Kong, who found that gender and academic qualifications did not appear to be influential factors. Female respondents didn't make any observations about the greater number of males who are principal teachers in proportion to women within Ireland's primary school system, considering that the vast majority of teachers are female. There was no acknowledgement that men progress to principalship more easily than their female colleagues. Fitzgerald (2003)

quotes Ministry of Education figures to show that in New Zealand, 73% of the principals were male and 27% female, with 39% of teachers being male and 61% female. Most leadership positions are held by men (Coleman, 2005). The literature would suggest gender discrepancy in secondary management; however, all respondents in this study are from the Irish primary sector.

Internationally, Coleman (2005) and Blackmore et al. (2006) demonstrate the continuing preference for male leadership. Statistical evidence would seem to imply that women are discriminated against when applying for school leadership positions. Research conducted by McLay (2008) in UK independent secondary schools has shown that a serious problem of discrimination would appear to be ageism. One woman (aged fifty-one) reported a perception that there was discrimination because of age – she felt it was necessary to be appointed before reaching fifty. Taking career breaks and the tendency to gradually build up confidence and experience before seeking a principalship seem to disadvantage women by giving them a much shorter age span in which to apply (McLay, 2008). Prejudice against female applicants was also observed by Brooking et al. (2003).

Preparing for principalship: training

Respondents commented on the functions of deputyship that have prepared them for a future principalship. Traditionally there is an assumption that deputy-principal experience provides adequate preparation for principalship, but this has been challenged by some researchers, including Harris et al. (2003) and Ribbins (1997). This was a question respondents found difficult to answer at first. Kate's initial response was: *'Honestly, not a lot. I don't think so.'* With the exception of Ethan all

of the others had to pause and reflect on how their experience of deputyship could leave them better prepared for principalship. They were mindful that their role is significantly different to that of principal. This was a very honest acknowledgement and not just applicable to Ireland – English headteachers do not feel totally prepared, having had years of experience in roles similar to but not the same as headteachers (Daresh and Male, 2000). The five key aspects of deputy-principalship mentioned by respondents in preparing for principalship were: prior membership of the board of management; mentoring from the principal; deputising for the principal; membership of the IPPN; and attendance at LDS seminars and courses.

Ten respondents believed that their board of management membership has been a particularly valuable element of deputyship in preparation for principalship. It provided opportunities to engage with fellow board members and to see just how the principal interacts with this corporate body. Julia believed her membership had given her a better understanding of the relationship between the principal and the board. Engagement with whole school planning and policy development as part of the in-school management team was a definite advantage in preparing principal aspirants. It made them knowledgeable on a range of school practices and procedures unique to their particular school while simultaneously developing their administrative skills.

They similarly felt that the deputyship affords an opportunity to shadow and be coached by the principal in leadership training. Respondents thought it was of immense benefit to be guided by another qualified professional. This job-shadowing opportunity is undertaken in an informal and ad hoc manner, and none of the respondents spoke of it in terms of a formal mentoring programme for possible

future principalship. It does however allow them to look at their principal's leadership ability and reflect on their style of leadership. Ava described her principal as the *'linchpin'* between the board, parents, teachers and pupils. Respondents felt that shadowing brings a lot of benefits in terms of role clarity and opportunities to reflect on principal practices. They can focus on the principal's generic managerial skills and see how they navigate their school through a range of different situations.

> *I have the opportunity to see the principal motivate staff . . . and this year I have seen her develop our school literacy and numeracy strategy for the next three years.* (Sophia)

By working in tandem with the principal they can see the principal model the job and learn from a more experienced colleague. All had experience of deputising for the principal and found this opportunity invaluable in preparing for a principalship. Being a deputy afforded them the opportunity to deputise in the absence of the principal.

> *Well having the opportunity to step into the principal's role where you get firsthand experience of running the school yourself. You get a real feel for the job when your principal is away on maternity leave and you're left as the captain of the ship.* (Emma)

> *I think as deputy acting up for the principal I've learnt a lot.* (Ethan)

They valued this experience, feeling it had given them an insight and different perspective on principalship. It had made them more aware of the responsibilities and challenges which principals must face on a daily basis by giving them more of a role in the decision-making process through tangible, practical work experience in time management, budgetary affairs and school administration.

As deputy-principals, respondents were all members of the IPPN and therefore have access to all its leadership resources. The IPPN has a wealth of support available to deputy-principals and principals, and respondents believed this independent, professional organisation could be of huge benefit in preparing for a principalship. Lily, Sohia, Ethan, Ava, Olivia and Paige believed they had increased and acquired new leadership knowledge and expertise through IPPN. The Leadership Development in Schools initiative (LDS) enabled Paige, Sophia and Ian to avail of continuous professional development in the area of leadership development from a teaching and learning perspective:

> *I would never have had the opportunity to avail of this wonderful service and attend the seminars on school leadership if I hadn't been a deputy . . . and made both of us reflect on our own school and how well we're doing in our jobs.* (Sophia)

In terms of successful principalship preparation, the responses suggest a definite need for some form of preparation and professional training to address the needs of some deputies. Others had a different view, believing that a deputy-principal would need to assume a principalship before they could really begin to fully assess and reflect on the skills and abilities the job demands. Ethan felt, *'to prepare me at this stage, I feel that I need to just get in there'*. He felt that a candidate needs to live the experience of being a principal so they can reflect on how well they are doing in the job. He was motivated by his own perceived competence and readiness, obtained through wide experience of working in different primary schools and helping deliver summer courses for teachers. He had also attended a course in educational leadership where he found that he learnt as much from his interactions with fellow participants as from the course facilitators. Continuous professional development was viewed

positively in assisting deputy-principals to feel confident enough to apply for a principalship so they can put their learning into practice (Walker and Kwan, 2009).

A number of suggestions were made about various learning experiences. A formal educational leadership programme delivered by one of the universities or the LDS initiative would be of considerable benefit in principalship preparation, helping a deputy to *'grow professionally into the principal's role'* (Ava). She further explained that a leadership programme would need to be fully accredited and *'it needs to be an exact course of preparation that would prepare deputy-principals properly to take on the role of principalship'*. Caution was however expressed by Ava regarding the relationship between programme content and the realities of current leadership and management practice in Irish primary schools so that the theories can be applied to daily school operations. One of the most serious critiques of leader preparation content focuses on the belief that it does not reflect the realities of the workplace (Hess and Kelly, 2005). Attendance on a postgraduate school leadership course would provide respondents with the opportunity to look at school leadership through a different lens, meet new people from different educational backgrounds, and learn new knowledge from fellow practitioners. Further professional development is necessary to increase both the quality and the quantity of principal aspirants (Walker and Kwan, 2009). The attitudes of respondents correlate with this and with Michaelidou and Pashiardis (2009) in Cyprus, where school leaders also prefer specific training designed for participants' individual needs. In Scotland, O'Brien and Draper (2001) found that headteacher training generally increased perceived capacity to do the job.

The main socialisation experience believed necessary for principalship according to Olivia, Ava, Paige, Ethan and Ian is the opportunity to work directly with principals in real settings using mentoring as a professional learning tool. This would bring them into regular communication with other principals where they could learn about the role, how they experience it, what the challenges are and what personal qualities they would need. It would also provide the benefit of building relationships with principals from different-sized schools.

Two respondents believed it advantageous for deputies to experience school leadership under at least two principals, bringing them into contact with varying styles of leadership, and allowing them to observe best practice in different educational settings by providing role models to work alongside. This could be influential in helping them to develop as future principals. Paige believed it would provide an opportunity to see how other school leaders handle difficult situations. If the established principal turned out to be a poor administrator, then they could prove influential in terms of how not to lead. The need to build relationships and networks with other school leaders was a definite theme of respondents:

> *I think it would be a good idea to be exposed to different principals in different schools because no two people will do the job in the same way. We are all familiar with our own principal but we need to have the opportunity of going out to engage with other principals.* (Paige)

Jack explained that if a deputy had this opportunity they could *'adopt new professional behaviours that are being modelled by the principal with whom [they are] shadowing'*. This would enable the principal to share their professional experience with the deputy. Fidler and Atton (2004) suggested that selective mentoring and coaching are required in preparing deputy-principals for

principalship. Similarly, respondents in Cranston's Australian study (2007) mentioned mentoring and observing quality principals as a means of professional development. Fundamentally, principals would need to give deputy-principals more responsibility and delegation beyond the limited range of extra duties currently assigned. This sort of on-the-job training would be as important as any leadership course that might be undertaken.

A model of collaborative leadership between deputies and their principals would be preferable so that aspirants could, if desired, prepare in a meaningful and useful way for future principalship. This would provide an invaluable opportunity to engage in leadership activities beyond the organisation *'of the annual school tour'* (Elizabeth). Mentoring, school-based experiential learning, shadowing, peer support, networking and formal leadership programmes have been identified as valuable learning opportunities (Bush and Glover, 2004). Julia held the view that a distributed leadership approach would delegate responsibility for various operations to the deputy-principal, allow for mutual exchanges between principal and deputy, and create a healthier professional and personal relationship. It is widely recognised that principals can create a culture supportive to leadership learning (Walker and Dimmock, 2005).

> *So I think that things should be shared among people, and the principals should distribute the leadership more to the deputy. This is the best way for them to experience principalship and lead to a better relationship between them and the principal. It can help to put them on friendlier terms, with more dialogue happening between them.* (Julia)

Ethan had similar sentiments:

I think when there's two people making decisions it's more likely that the decision will be the correct one, you know what I mean?

Kate and Olivia believed in the benefit of meeting and liaising with friends and colleagues who are serving principals. Both were keen to acknowledge the relationships they have already forged with other principals and to convey just how useful it would be to engage with these people and probe them about their professional experiences. This would enable a prospective candidate to model their behaviour on someone already in the role that they admire for various reasons known to them. One element of successful leadership may itself be about a commitment to enhancing the leadership skills of others (Dimmock, 2003).

As I mentioned before, I have a number of friends who are principals so I suppose they would give me advice and advise me on the approach for successfully preparing for the role, and in that sense, mentoring from other principals also. (Olivia)

Desirable components

Respondents had a wide range of ideas and suggestions pertaining to future targeted leadership and management areas for professional development. The areas would need to be adequate, relevant and attractive in order for them to advance professionally. Most respondents were open and honest in identifying areas of school administration that may challenge them as novice principals. Ava, Jack, Elizabeth, Olivia, Lily, Ian and Emma mentioned a need for professional development in the areas of change management, time management, legislation, ICT, school policy development and strategic planning, and inclusion of children with special needs. Respondents are correct in this assumption, as Daresh and Male (2000) found that new school principals in the UK and USA are ill-prepared for the degree of

responsibility thrust on them. Today, school leaders find themselves working in increasingly litigious communities. Unsurprisingly this area worried respondents (Ian, Elizabeth and Olivia) and they felt at a disadvantage when it came to the legislative reality that exists in schools.

A number of key areas where they felt insufficiently equipped came from their limited experience of managing restricted human and material resources in the current financial climate. Respondents perceived a deficiency for future principalship due to inadequate knowledge and skills caused by scant involvement in the areas of financial and personnel management (Emma, Elizabeth, Olivia, Lily, Paige, Ava, Jack and Kate). These were definite areas where professional development was required. Regarding the leadership and management of people, respondents felt unprepared for dealing with issues such as staff grievances, staff motivation, team building, mentoring newly qualified teachers and hiring new staff. They could see the value in professional development in the area of staff management. With regard to communication, Kate, Ava, Emma and Sophia felt they would like to develop themselves as communicators and develop skills that would enhance positive relationships in school, enabling them to carry out practical tasks such as the conduct and management of staff meetings. This led to the area of financial management and budgeting, where currently decisions are made by the principal without the consensus and involvement of the deputy. Jack, Elizabeth and Kate admitted that they would be severely lacking in knowledge of how school budgeting operates and need a lot of skill development in the area of financial management and decision making as regards allocation of resources: *'I wouldn't know how to allocate funds among the various budget accounts'* (Jack).

Respondents' limited experience in directing and instigating the formulation of long-term plans and setting priorities and targets for school improvement have left them at a disadvantage at a time when schools are required to formulate three-year improvement plans in literacy and numeracy. This is an essential element of a principal's remit and therefore it is understandable that it was an area cited for professional development.

Conclusion

Only the male respondents, along with two possible female respondents, demonstrated any interest in vertical career mobility. The female respondents were generally more reluctant to seek career progression, finding the idea of greater responsibility and organisational mobility a less appealing prospect. Even with high levels of current job satisfaction, they saw themselves as career deputies, which didn't relate to a desire for principalship, and associated a teaching principalship with more negative attributes than positive ones. They place a high value on maintaining collegial and harmonious relationships with fellow teachers and pupils and need to experience distributed leadership to a far greater extent to promote capacity for principalship. However welcome this would be, the data findings have highlighted a general acceptance that this on its own will not be sufficient to motivate a quality deputy pool of aspirants. The data highlights a need for a multi-faceted, challenging and formative leadership development programme consisting of theoretical knowledge with practitioner experience to develop the capacity of future novice principals. A central feature of this capacity-building programme arising from the data is mentoring and shadowing from existing principals. The need for professional development prior to principalship appointment focusing on knowledge

for making good decisions to adapt to various situations was stressed. Good decision-making is viewed as a key requirement for successful leadership, and respondents in their current deputy roles rarely have the opportunity to make the type of decisions they may face as principals.

Chapter Seven: Towards a professionalised primary deputy-principalship

Introduction

The initial impetus for this study came from a lack of Irish research pertaining to primary school deputy-principals and their career advancement. Significant satisfaction in the role does not lead to a greater desire for principalship among the Irish deputies interviewed for this research. When the causes of this were investigated, current incumbents' experiences were found to lack any genuinely meaningful forms of capacity-building for principalship, and this links to earlier international literature on deputyship (Porter, 1996). This appears to add to deputies' limited career aims, since desires to remain a deputy (or to progress) were found to be closely connected to family, community, satisfaction in current role and the need for relatedness by being compliant rather than reflective or critical. In this regard the study underlines how Ireland's deputies do not differ in their career intentions from those as far away as Hong Kong (Walker and Kwan, 2009) or Australia (Cranston, 2007).

The findings synthesised in this chapter, following a brief restatement of the data from the research questions, provide insights first into the constructed knowledge of the nature and culture of Irish deputyship. Secondly, three new models of distributed leadership have been devised specifically for Irish primary schooling. Finally, the chapter discusses customised professional leadership preparation to encourage deputies' transitions to principalship in Ireland, arising from this study's identification of the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for principalship.

Leadership roles, career motivation and preparation

Deputies' roles were revealed by this research as mainly assisting and supporting principals, and are clearly subordinate to and supportive of the principal, where 'the assistant principal is the best ally, confidant and friend a principal can have' (Myers, 1994, 116). In half of the schools in this research, the deputy had no clear professional role identity specific to the level of responsibility ordinarily associated with this rank. In the current climate of performativity and accountability, Irish deputies have not extended their role or power. Their main contribution to their school is one of organisational stability, providing a safe and orderly climate rather than leadership: 'The work of the assistant principal is centred on routine clerical tasks, custodial duties, and discipline' (Koru, 1993, 70), but 'if it can be shaped appropriately then the post clearly has great potential' (Watson, 2005, 27).

In contrast, principals were viewed as having a significantly more complex and important job, with demanding characteristics needed. Respondents viewed this position as being much more important than their own. Characteristics necessary for successful principalship included the need to be a very charismatic, energetic, strong-minded and skilled practitioner who can articulate a vision in today's demanding accountability context. Reference was made to the need to deal with an intricate and complicated series of social relationships. This led to an acknowledgement that strong, clear communication is considered invaluable to relate to staff and ensure everyone plays a meaningful role in school life. The notion of trust and principals' acknowledgement of teachers' expertise was important.

Some respondents did not feel their principal viewed them fully as a co-leader. This is not entirely surprising because if the opposite of perceived wisdom and popular leadership theory is explored, there is some merit in arguing that deputy-principals should not be acknowledged as co-leaders on par with principals. Findings from this study reveal both deputyship and principalship as being distinctly different positions. In being different they cannot be classified as being equal in terms of leadership importance. The principal receives a larger salary in comparison to the deputy-principal for taking on far greater responsibility with the data highlighting the rapid and unrelenting pressures and demands of principalship. In exchange for these pressures the principal enjoys greater autonomy, respect and recognition while playing a greater role in the decision making process within the school far beyond that of the deputy-principal.

The principalship also calls for a different set of skills, values and dispositions. Many deputy-principals may look enviously at the intrinisic and extrinsic rewards of principalship. So why then should the deputy-principal be concerned with the challenges of strategic planning, instructional leadership and transformational leadership? Perhaps it is a much more solid training for the deputy to engage in the routine day to day management tasks of school management. Time spent undertaking these duties competently may clarify for them the full range of activities undertaken in a school and help them acquire effective managerial skills for future principalship. After all someone is going to have to take charge of the school registers, tours and discipline issues and the deputy-principal can amply fulfil these tasks in exchange for their extra allowance on top of their teaching salary. These tasks however mundane and lower-order contribute towards the provision of an

efficient and well maintained school. If the deputy-principal does not undertake these essential tasks then who will?

With studies showing that the deputy-principal is effectively in the background, it is understandable that the term 'Chief Executive Officer' (CEO) was used in illustrating the principalship, while the word 'lonely' demonstrated that the principal is often a separate entity bearing the burden of leadership. Despite this many respondents come from schools where the principal fails to foster individual and collective capacity to promote mutual responsibility. The acculturating effect of this is disengagement with the principalship. Importantly, 'few schools are likely to achieve maximum effectiveness or excellence without a team approach to leadership' (Gorton, 1987, 1), but the respondents involved in this research appeared to be operating within a climate which values hierarchical assumptions about leadership.

To motivate deputies to move from what they perceive as a fairly constrained and comfortable position to the more demanding one of principalship, appears to require the opportunity for greater responsibility and organisational mobility. Principalship provides an opportunity for personal development and capacity building to demonstrate a strong commitment to education. Sheils-Dunleavy in New York (2010, 22) wrote, 'Potential school administrators desire a leadership role that will have an impact on the school's achievement, and allow them to participate in sharing the vision of school improvement'. Relationships are a unique, powerful force in each school. The negative relationship of one respondent with their principal is a motivating factor for seeking principalship elsewhere. Others were positive and

affirming about a need to protect and nurture the harmony and strong collegial bonds that exist. The motivation to protect and guard against an 'outsider' entering and 'upsetting' the existing familial school culture is also prevalent. The discomfort, uncertainty, loneliness, risk-taking and vulnerability were the highest factors resulting in an unwillingness to apply for a principalship.

Deputy-Principals within the study didn't perceive gender to be a barrier to principalship. None of the female respondents felt that they would be at an unfair disadvantage in applying for a primary prinacipalship position. However the career paths of the female respondents were externally defined. Within Smith's (2011a) typology of teachers referred to in chapter four, the female respondents in this research can be defined as either protégées or pragmatists needing encouragement to consider principalship while doubting their own ability as a future principal. They experience a certain amount of guilt / role conflict in combining their professional role with other responsibilities. Female respondents are more likely to apply for promotion as a result of suggestions and encouragement from others. When looking at the aspirations of female respondents it can be concluded that their careers are influenced by their family stage and the work needs of their spouses, as well as unexpected life events. This research revealed that men are more likely than women to consider a path which leads to principalship similar to Hill (1994) and Grant (1987). There was no indication from any respondent that they harboured ideas of the Irish primary school principalship being an exclusively male occupation. This is a significant revalation and unlike Winter and Morgenthal's 2002 empirical study in Kentucky, America which found that the principalship is

still dominated by males. A possible reason for this difference could be the fact that the American study was conducted amongst second level assistant principals.

Encouraging desire for career progression (amongst female respondents) would be much helped by principalship preparation, according to this research. There was a genuine understanding about the need for a definite form of management and leadership preparation to create a principalship pipeline. It was strongly noted that the role of deputy is not enough of a training ground on its own. Targeted professional development in the area of primary school leadership is necessary. The word 'professional' suggests status which 'needs to be earned' and includes 'responsibility' (McLean in Crawford, 2009, 200). The dominant belief is that any model for principal preparation needs to be specifically designed for deputies at the primary school level to construct new knowledge and progress their professional status vertically towards principalship in a proactive and planned manner.

Nature and culture of Irish primary deputyship

During the analysis it became apparent that power, perceived power and power sharing have a huge bearing on deputyship, making it possible to broaden the data analysis. The theme is sub-divided into five key features which provide a deeper understanding of the nature of contemporary Irish primary deputyship: (i) Maintaining order and stability; (ii) Role clarity – potential to be clear or ambiguous; (iii) Experience of school leadership; (iv) Strong influence of the principal on the deputy-principal role; (v) Level of self-efficacy amongst deputy-principals. These key features are summarised in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Knowledge of the nature and culture of Irish primary deputyship

Maintaining order and stability	Deputies: • are influenced by school culture • are strongly acculturated to school norms • are very concerned with school maintenance • have little influence on school culture • lack autonomy to exercise school leadership
Role ambiguity	The vague role description leads to a: • limited definition of the role • difficulty differentiating between role as educator and role as senior school leader
School leadership experience	Deputies could expand their experiences of school leadership if they are: • given more opportunities to do so • willing to make more opportunities to do so • prepared to critically examine and change their own acculturations to existing patterns • able to transcend the strength of school culture that militates against deputies' involvement in leadership
Principals' effect on deputy-principals' role	Principals are the greatest influence on deputy roles because: • deputies regard them as the main authority • principals model values, behaviours and beliefs • principals define parameters for deputies' roles • principals control deputies' access to principals
Deputy-principals' self efficacy	Deputies have low self-efficacy because: • their authority comes from the principal • they shape their practices according to the principal's vision • principals' praise or disapproval highlights deputies' powerlessness • deputies have little autonomy or decision-making powers • principals' ideologies dominate schools

Deputy-principals operate within a particular social framework, each of them being socialised into their particular role meaning each deputy has a different role according to the school in which he/she works. The culture of the school impacts on them, with cultural norms influencing the way school leadership is exercised. The deputy influences school culture to a lesser degree. The findings revealed that within schools respondents have learnt the norms and expectations, often referred to as

career socialisation. People in the schools interact with each other, and these interactions do not just emerge but are premeditated. This research demonstrates for Irish deputies the significance of social learning as discussed in international studies such as Super, 1953. In Irish primary schools, this social learning takes the form of social experiences on career trajectories impacting on an individual's self-conception.

In the 'occupation' of deputyship, many respondents mentioned the limited opportunities to operationalise leadership. Canadian literature indicates that deputy-principals are assigned such tasks as data management, discipline management and student registration (Armstrong, 2009). This restriction to administrative or managerial tasks is reinforced by deputies' acceptance of these, since the respondents in this research saw their roles as contributing to school culture by maintaining the existing structure, harmony and order. While this research involved only twelve deputy-principals, it can be anticipated that other deputies might identify with this evidence, as 'schools regardless of location, tend to look more similar than different' (Knowles, Cole and Presswood, 1994, 121). The roles held by the deputies in this research are similar to those found in research in other countries. It's therefore possible to speculate that, although this research was conducted in rural and urban primary schools in the midland counties of Ireland similar roles might also be found in larger urban centres in Ireland.

The focus is on the individual fitting into the school community and perpetuating the school as it is. This is why Matthews and Crow (2003, 273) see the American deputy-principal's role as 'undergoing change in contemporary schools that creates

role confusion and ambiguity', leaving it fragmentary and vague, as is the case in Irish primary schools. Bureaucratic organisations are particularly committed to enforcing group norms as their primary means of maintaining organisational control and persistence (Blau, 1962). This lack of autonomy is in line with the portrait of the English deputy-principal offered by Reay and Dennison (1990), while Judith Koru (1993) titled her article focusing on deputship as 'The assistant principal: crisis manager, custodian or visionary?'. But these similarities to the current situation of the Irish primary deputies in this study indicate that the role is still ambiguous in Irish primary schools. Respondents said there was not any real capacity for them because a restraint is placed on individuals as they conform to others' expectations.

As they conform to these expectations, Irish primary deputy-principals are often faced with an ill defined, misunderstood, conflicting role surrounded by ambiguity, with current incumbents from this research struggling to articulate and define it. The emotional experience of respondents is shaped by difficulties in clearly differentiating between their roles as teacher and deputy. There is only one deputy-principal in each school, so respondents are unable to share their experience of the role with colleagues as schools are characterised by formality in their internal social relationships, hence the hierarchy of office holders (Weber, 1964). They cannot speak freely to their colleagues in the same open manner as occurred within this study. Deputy-principals are considered to be a rank above other teachers within the hierarchy so they must be discrete in sharing their personal thoughts and opinions regarding their positions in the staff room.

Difficulties like unclear role description are often experienced by those undertaking liaison and coordinating roles in organisations (Law and Glover, 2000). Harrison explains that respondents' performance in carrying out their duties is an outcome of their needs, perception of the results required, the rewards being offered and the amount of effort, energy and skill that they possess or wish to direct towards their particular duties (2000). There was an acknowledgement that deputies are not functioning to capacity as a direct consequence of role under-load occurring when leaders feel they are only being given routine administrative tasks (Law and Glover, 2000). For those who have mastered how to *'organise sports day'* (Sophia) or *'fill in the school register'* (Lily), the deputyship should offer something new and appealing apart from the mantra of *'assisting the principal'* (Olivia, Ava, Emma, Kate, Elizabeth, Julia). They have learned through experience what the expectations of them are. Most versions of role theory presume that expectations are the major generators of roles and expectations learned through experience (Biddle, 1986). They only have experience of their organisation as they learn role expectations and behaviours. The persistence of the organisational culture makes it unlikely that they would change current practice, as it would mean critically examining what has already been internalised and accepted, replacing it with new values and beliefs which would have to be learnt. Their managerial approach has left them prepared to support and replicate what they have experienced, not to change it as they attempt to hold their position within the social-organisational setting. There was no evidence of self-reflective learning amongst respondents that leads individuals to redefine their current perspective in order to develop new patterns of understanding, thinking and behaving (Harrison, 2000).

The low expectations placed on some deputies mean they engage mainly in routine day-to-day plant operation activities. This research places what is happening in some Irish primary schools in line with studies from as far back as the late 1970s, which similarly found that the focus of the deputyship was on daily operations (Maddock and Hyams, 1979; Badcock, 1977). Irish primary schools have not altered their human capital management in the intervening years, and deputies dutifully carry out the wishes of their principal in the hope of making a positive and acknowledged impact. Thus, their role could be viewed as one where fellowship (Swenson, 2009) rather than leadership is the key to success; 'fellowship' was added as a code during analysis. Their loyalty requires them to help the principal realise his or her vision even if the deputy-principal does not agree with it (Mertz and McNeely, 1999).

This loyalty also means that the greatest single influence on the culture of leadership seems to come from the principal. This occurs within a hierarchical and supervisory relationship, where role theory presumes a certain stability of social structure (Strauss in Rose, 1962). The structural and conceptual organisation of schools delineates the authority structure. The principal models the values, behaviours and beliefs that are important, and the deputy-principal takes direction, needing to understand how the cultural values of a particular school underpin their agency. This acknowledges individuals 'as actors whose subjectivity is continually formed in and through interactions with others' (White in Lewis and Haviland, 1993, 29). In examining the concepts of role-theory, the situational forces provide an understanding of individual performance and organisations have on particular role expectations of the deputy-principal. Crucially, role expectations may or may not coincide (Law and Glover, 2000). The respondents are fulfilling a role within the

parameters of their complex and dynamic relationship with the principal. The term 'significant others', coined by Mead, could be used to describe principals, 'who have the most intimate socializing capability for the individual,' deputies (in Ball and Goodson, 1985, 104). The deputy can be viewed as a social yet reflexive product whose identity is formed and shaped by the crucial part played by the principal. The word 'significant' can be attributed to the principal's perceived superior status or by the importance of their close working relationship.

The principal's status results in deputies' reduced autonomy or decision-making authority, and being successful means being loyal and agreeing with the principal's way of doing things. In this way the principal could be viewed as the 'socialisation agent'.

> By virtue of their position [principals] have rights of initiative to – or to erode – the relevant norms. By what they say and do, reward and defend, administrators convey a set of values, create (or limit) certain opportunities and control certain consequences (Little and Bird, 1984, 2).

For Foucault (in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983), power is a means for individuals to control the other. In this light, 'it is a way of acting upon a subject . . . by virtue of their acting or being capable of action' (Foucault in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983, 220). During second round coding, emotional angst and ambivalence were added as an outcome to principal dominance in relation to role expectation for deputies. Incidents of praise and disapproval from the principal seemed to emphasise respondents' own sense of powerlessness. The evidence from respondents suggests the potential for principals to expect their deputies to shape their practices according to their own needs and expectations, leaving them to resign their own ideologies in favour of the principal's.

There were clear feelings among respondents (Emma, Olivia, Ava, Ethan and Elizabeth) that their current enculturation is less than satisfactory to them. This could be a direct result of the interplay of purposes, complex dynamics of status and power, and relationships with their principals whose behaviour could be interpreted as authoritative and controlling. When professional roles are characterised by conflict, change and ambiguity, intense and often negative emotional reactions are the consequence (Schmidt, 2000). Role conflicts have been associated with various indices of poor integration in the workplace, such as poor job performance, lower commitment to the organisation and higher rates of accidents and resignations (Biddle, 1986). As a direct consequence, negative emotions can then arise when purposes cannot be achieved (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1998), making the work of the deputy-principal virtually impossible to perform in a fulfilling way. The struggle between the principal and deputy can lead deputies to surrender not only power but also status and emotional integrity, causing them to receive little prestige, deference and esteem. This fails to acknowledge the value of distributed leadership and leads to the next theme, which explores the level of distributed leadership being operationalised in Irish primary schools.

Emergent typologies of deputy-principalship

From the preceding construction of the nature and culture of deputyship, three typologies of deputy-principalship are suggested as appropriate to Irish primary schools' current managerial arrangements. For these it was decided to use the terms *transactional*, *prescribed* and *strategic* to best describe the deputies' characteristics that emerged from this study (summarised in Table 7.2). They are unique to this research and have not been adapted from anyone else's ideas. All respondents

experienced one of the typologies, each encompassing their own properties. Distributed leadership is normally concerned with leadership practices beyond the principal and deputy-principal; however, owing to the size of some of the primary schools involved in this study, it was not deemed necessary to move beyond these two leadership positions when observing leadership capacity. Table 7.2 illustrates how each respondent was categorised within one of the typologies. The characteristics of each typology are illustrated in Table 7.3.

Table 7.2 Location of respondents under the new typologies of Irish primary deputy-principalship
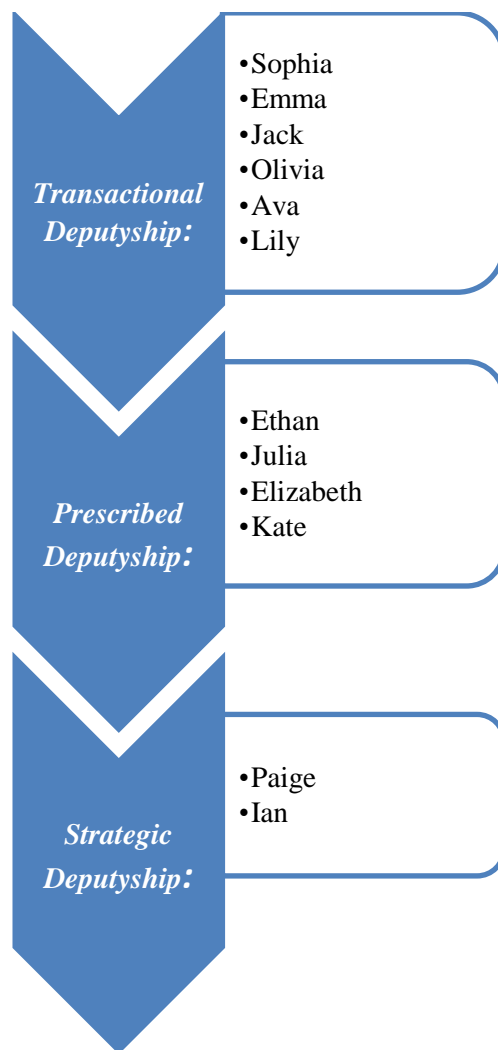
Transactional Deputyship:
- Sophia
- Emma
- Jack
- Olivia
- Ava
- Lily

Prescribed Deputyship:
- Ethan
- Julia
- Elizabeth
- Kate

Strategic Deputyship:
- Paige
- Ian

Table 7.3 New typologies of deputy-principalship for Irish primary schools

Transactional Deputyship:
- Duties assigned by principal through necessity on an ad hoc basis
- No specific list of responsibilities furnished to deputy-principal
- Designated tasks focus on the smooth running and organisation of the school
- Little or no contribution to the organisational learning
- No collegiality or collaborative culture
- Sole leadership resides with principal, who is unwilling to relinquish power and control
- Doesn't acknowledge potential for deputy-principal leadership
- 'Pseudo' leadership role
- Negative perception of principalship

Prescribed Deputyship:
- Duties assigned by principal
- Often conflicting priorities
- Responsibilities generally include drafting particular curricular or organisational policies
- Responsibility for maintenance and equipment issues
- Some scope to develop the leadership role beyond management duties
- No significant impact on teaching and learning outside of their own teaching responsibilities
- Negative perception of principalship
- Limited collegiality and collaborative culture present at leadership level

Strategic Deputyship:
- Based on planned opportunities for deputy to contribute to the development of leadership
- Shared leadership practice
- Open boundaries of leadership
- Opportunities to exercise leadership through strategic planning and policy development
- Direct involvement in decision-making
- Direct bearing on classroom practice
- Flexibility and autonomy
- Positive impact on the principalship

Transactional Deputyship

Half of the sample (six respondents) were categorised within the *transactional deputyship typology*, which has very limited capacity in terms of its ability to implement any strategic actions aimed at school improvement. Within this typology respondents operate at a managerial level only. They are not required to function at a strategic level and this means they are curtailed in impacting directly on school improvement. This means that their level of influence on the school is limited and constrained. The research found an emphasis on principal-centred supervisory routines rather than on collaborative and shared leadership involving both principal and deputy being characterised by a lack of clarity. This relates to findings from a qualitative research study by Blase and Blase (1999) in the USA. Deputies do not receive the support necessary to play a strong school leadership role, having implied authority and power that fails to materialise due to unlocked potential. They simply undertake to perform tasks as individuals which fulfil their organisational role and take them away from a focus on pupil learning.

Respondents found it very difficult to explain what their functions as deputy-principal involved, and commented on supporting the principal, although only in terms of carrying out tasks at random times of the year. One spoke of organising the bus for the annual school tour, while another mentioned ordering the annual play for the Christmas concert. This is a far cry from supporting the social and intellectual capital in the school (Dimmock, 2012) and gives an impressionistic view of someone very detached from a leading professional role. The leadership is concentrated in the principal, who undertakes responsibility for the school by maintaining individual ownership of it: 'Heads and principals retain much of the formal authority in schools

and so distributed leadership resides uneasily within the formal bureaucracy of schools' (Hartley, 2010 in Bush, 2011, 89).

There may be barriers to working together due to micro-political tensions, and this is significant at a time when faith has been lost in the sole or hero leader (Dimmock, 2012), with an atmosphere of distrust undermining collegiality: *'Days could go here and I mightn't get talking to the principal at all'* (Jack). There was no mention of shared decision-making to ensure that the deputy's and principal's organisational goals were aligned. This goes against the grain of modern leadership approaches whereby the imagery 'of principals defining organisational reality has been giving way to that of leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon, a perspective that considers all teachers to be leaders or potential leaders' (Dimmock, 2012, 23). Respondents in this category are simply left to carry out the random, mundane requests of the principal, who fails to involve the deputy in evaluating the school so they tend to settle for just enough quality to get by. Respondents in this typology of deputyship experience difficulties in influencing decisions that relate to the core business of the school i.e. pupil learning. They fail to engage in leadership at a strategic level which means a lack of effective participation in school-based decision making. They are not afforded the opportunities to undertake strategic actions based on their own personal and professional values.

Prescribed Deputyship

One third of respondents were categorised within the *prescribed deputyship typology.* Unlike the previous typology they were furnished with a specific list of duties by the principal, who did not have the time, or desire, to undertake the

particular management tasks himself or herself. This is the fundamental difference between transactional and prescribed deputyship. The deputy-principals operate at a managerial level within this typology. They fulfil important maintenance duties within the school organisation that would otherwise have to be undertaken by another member of staff if they didn't undertake them. Leadership and management are equally important if schools are to operate smoothly and achieve their objectives (Bush, Bell and Middlewood, 2010). Gronn (2000) views distributed leadership as a form of aggregate leadership behaviour, but this is not wholly embraced in this typology. This is disappointing, as principals are responsible for promoting and developing quality leadership potential amongst their colleagues, 'but if those in formal positions do not wish to have their power distributed in this way' (Bottery, 2004 in Bush, 2011, 89), then *c'est la vie*. At least they have slightly more opportunities to demonstrate their skills and commitment to their role compared to those falling within the first typology, but not to the full extent of engagement with strategic planning. Their contribution to their school does however allow it to operate effectively and run smoothly however within this typology deputies are unable to pursue their own individual visions and develop their own self-awareness as a school leader in their own right.

The typology of prescribed deputyship gives some recognition to the concept of teams, when 'teamwork' and 'flatter hierarchies' are encouraged in order to achieve school improvement. Team-based efforts help to maximise individual potential and 'all teachers harbour leadership capabilities waiting to be unlocked and engaged for the good of the school' (Harris et al., 2003, 78). Teamwork is an important element of distributed leadership. It provides motivation, encouraging team members to take

on more initiatives and responsibility for decision-making over and above choosing the hymns for the First Communion Mass. This illustrates a disturbingly low level of participation in decision-making, showing an underutilised source of leadership.

The view of principalship within this typology was in the main negative, with the general consensus being that the role is fraught with pressures, conflict and excessive bureaucratic requirements. These connotations may be coming from the perception of the principal having to exercise a journey of leadership on their own, where organisational change has become a cultural feature while undertaking teaching responsibilities. Respondents are more valued and supported than those in the first typology but not to their full potential, failing to take on initiatives or actions to bring about positive changes. Due to this narrow range of human capacity-building, the scope is limited for deputies and principals to learn more about their own strengths and weaknesses, thus impeding further improvements for the benefit of the whole school community. It fails to recognise the commitment of the individual, and this is a significant loss, as capacity-building can be defined as 'the collective competency of the school as an entity to bring about effective change' (Harvey, 2003, 21). Principals may be unwilling to relinquish power because the current climate of accountability could leave them vulnerable due to lack of direct control. This may be particularly true in relation to financial, legal and human resource issues as well as the overall development of the school (OECD, 2008). Principals may feel that they are the ones who are ultimately responsible for all that happens in school, and there can therefore be concerns and anxieties about distributing leadership.

It is noteworthy from both of these typologies that certain tasks undertaken by deputies are necessary and need to be completed for the smooth and efficient day-to-day operation of the school. This is in keeping with the question I asked earlier in this chapter, if the the deputy does not undertake these tasks then who will? None the less, these 'low level' administrative tasks could not be considered significant in terms of leading. The distinction between leadership and management is clear. The principal is the leader while the deputy is left to manage. Cuban (in Bush, 2011) provides one of the clearest distinctions of these terms, linking leadership with change and management with 'maintenance', but stressing the importance of dimensions within an organisation. The current moratorium on recruitment of teachers to middle management positions – posts of responsibility in Irish schools due to budgetary cuts – may be causing deputies to fulfil some of the duties which, in the past, would have been the preserve of post holders. This, however, still does not explain why along with these 'here-and-now' tasks there is not further scope for deputy-principals to engage in a more intentional focus on leading teaching and learning within the school.

Strategic Deputyship

This final typology is significantly different from the previous two, and only two respondents (Paige and Ian) were categorised within it. The dimensions within it are more in line with modern literature, pertaining to effective and sustainable school leadership teams through involvement with instructional and transformational leadership. Deputy-principals within this typology operate at both strategic and managerial levels experiencing to some degree all the job responsibility

characteristics of leadership categorised by Kwan's (2009) Hong Kong study into the deputy-principalship as a preparation for principalship:

1. External communication and connection
2. Quality assurance and accountability
3. Teaching
4. Learning and curriculum
5. Staff management
6. Resource management
7. Leader and teacher growth and development
8. Strategic direction and policy development

Experience of these characteristics within the typology empowers far greater leadership potential beyond the principal, affording voice, autonomy, flexibility and opportunity to the deputy-principal in directing their professional duties. Working in larger urban primary schools with administrative principals has provided these deputies with opportunities to experience the key features of Kwan's study far removed from the first two typologies. A plausible explanation for this difference could be school size. Both respondents in this study come from much larger urban units, they experience leadership far beyond their colleagues in schools with a lower pupil enrolment. They benefit from a school culture which embraces strong communication, collegial support and a sharing in the vision for what can be achieved in order to build on the school's existing success. They have played a key part in building this prevailing culture through their direct involvement and influence in a range of leadership and management functions. The importance of both leadership and management is rescognised. There is a co-ordinated form of leadership distribution described as 'planned alignment'. Planned alignment requires

school leaders to plan their actions together, review the impact of those actions and revise them accordingly (Day, Sammons, Hopkins, Harris, Leithwood, Gu and Brown, 2010).

> *I participate just in the whole development of the school and where the school is going towards, just in the overall planning for the school.* (Paige)

Both respondents are proud of their schools' emphases on collaborative work practices and strong professional integrity. They are supported, affirmed and enmeshed in their roles, with the opportunity to develop their individual leadership skills and talents. The expertise of individual people rather than an individual's formal authority is important within this typology meaning respondents relate well with their respective principals, who model behaviours that are inspirational, with open communication affording plenty of scope for a people-orientated culture to exist. It impacts positively on the principal by removing the isolation described by other respondents in the other two typologies when discussing the principalship where formal authority and position are considered more important than individual autonomy.

Principals in this typology are happy for their deputies to take on extra functions which may need to be undertaken in a reform environment. There is a form of mentoring in operation which facilitates professional development and growth. Terry (1999) maintains that success of the principal is measured by the improvement in performance of others. This is noteworthy because deputy-principals who have a positive relationship with their principal are slightly better prepared for principalship (Retelle, 2010). The principal is using a 'symbolic approach to anchor the faith and

confidence of others, to communicate goals, and to build zealous identification within the school' (Hsiao, Lee and Tu, 2012, 9). The experience provided by engaging with strategic planning and policy development would impact positively on the transition from deputyship to princialship. The principal is the key to improving the deputy-principalship (Gorton, 1987).

There is an opportunity to develop staff and resource management skills, while strategic direction and policy development initiatives will hopefully lead to a positive influence on the overall running of the school. Strategic direction and policy development were the only job responsibilities considered by deputy-principals in Kwan's study as a training ground for principalship. Operating at this strategic level allows the opportunity for respondents to work directly with the other teachers to improve classroom performance and impact on learning outcomes. This has been conceptualised as 'leadership for learning' (Bush, Bell and Middlewood, 2010, 8). There is the scope to impact directly on the educational purposes of the school. While this strategic level of leadership exposure may lead to greater confidence in discharging the duties of a principal in the future; it is not guaranteed, however, as only Ian was motivated for a future principalship.

Towards a professional form of principalship preparation

Figure 7.1 Principalship preparation framework for deputy-principals in Irish primary schools, 2013
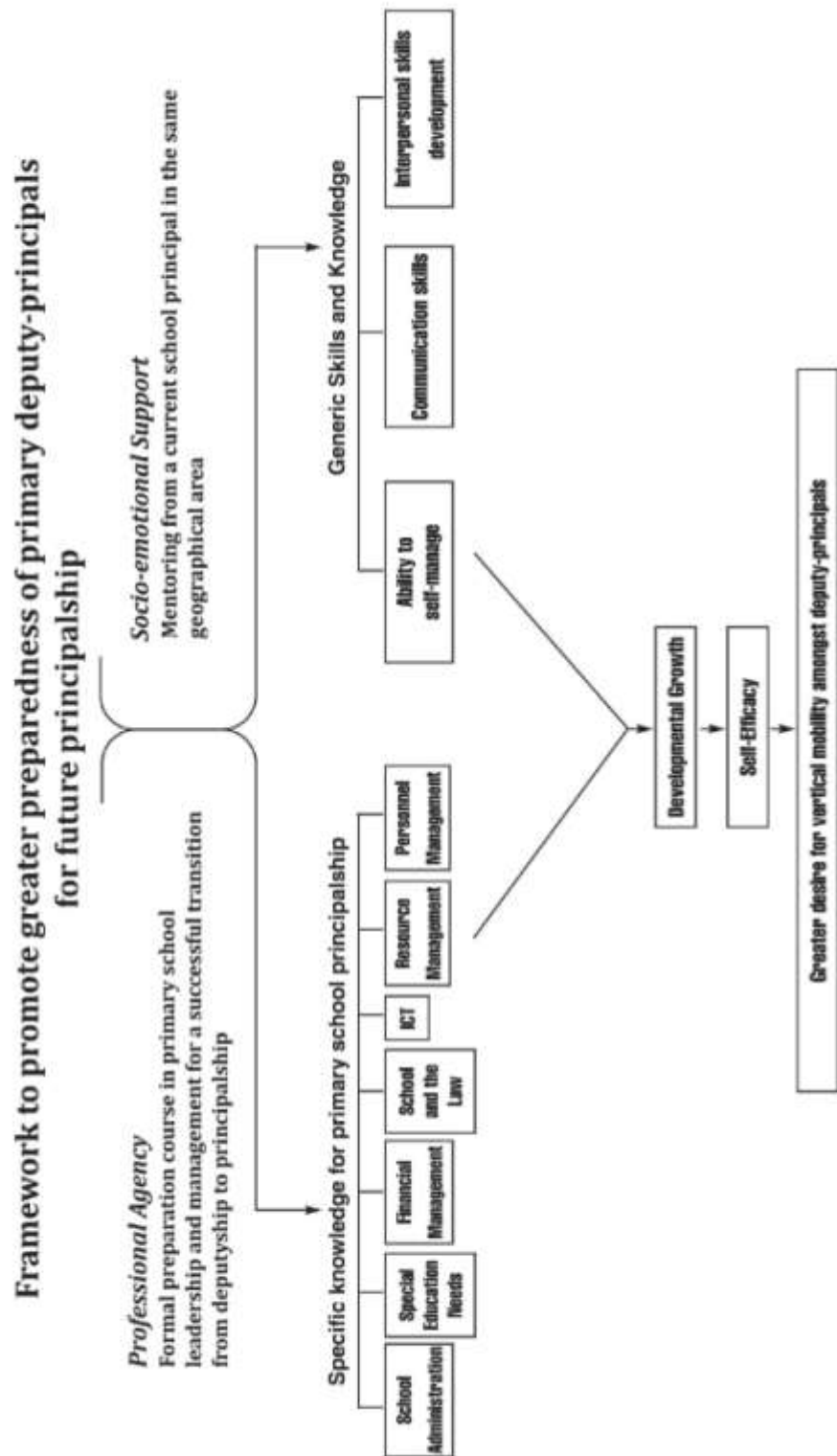
Regardless of which deputyship typology respondents came under, eleven of the twelve respondents asserted a strong desire for a strategic principalship preparation model. This is linked to the research literature in chapter three which found that principal preparation is a source of concern globally. The development of the initial deputy-principalship typologies led to the construction of a proposed purpose-built framework (see Figure 7.1) to support, motivate and equip deputy-principals in their vertical mobility irrespective of the three deputy-principalship typologies. The preparation model proposed is an ideal based on the *strategic deputyship typology* and therefore routes into the prepraration might need to be differently engineered according to the entrant's base category. However without some form of professional development deputy-principals may not be confident to take up a principalship role in schools (Chi-Kin Lee et al., 2009). Deputy-principals categorised under either the *transactional deputyship typology* or *prescribed deputyship typology* would benefit from a greater exposure to all of the components within the framework. Deputy-principals fortunate enough to be categorised under the *strategic deputyship typology* may find that they already experience to some degree many of the individual components included on the framework. They could still benfit from mentoring by another school principal in a different school.

Each element of the framework will be examined in regard to its perceived impact on the level of preparedness of Irish primary deputy-principals for principalship in particular response to the inadequacies of the first two forms of distributed leadership in Irish primary schools. Respondents, regardless of what typology they were categorised under, were largely of the opinion that professional development for principalship may be significantly strengthened by incorporating direct strategies

for formal, systematic pre-service leadership training such as those already well established in North America, Europe and Australia, as a result of education reform and government policy initiatives (Grogan, Bredeson, Sherman, Preis, and Beaty, 2009 in Young, Crow, Murphy and Ogawa, 2009). In providing such training in Ireland to meet deputies' needs, the obvious deficiencies identified in the experiences of deputies show a lack of knowledge of how to run schools at strategic levels. This is supported in literature from the USA finding that, 'one of the great myths of education is that the position of assistant principal is not a proper and useful training ground for principalship,' (Kelly, 1987, 13). This description is over twenty-five years old and yet it still relates to the Irish educational landscape. Literature further asserts that deputy-principals 'spend inadequate proportions of time on tasks that constitute major responsibilities of a principal, such as the supervision and evaluation of teachers' (Kelly, 1987, 14). This finding also emerged as central in this research. Therefore, the tenet of one role being entirely separate to the other was one of the first elements of which the new framework had to take account.

Breaking down this separation to create a co-principalship model could help reduce the level of fear and anxiety this research revealed in the majority of respondents about possible transition to principalship. Respondents identified opportunities that would help both their emotional and professional needs if progressing to principalship. This will be challenging, however, since current professional development practices for school leaders are being queried (Fullan, 2007). Hence, any professional programme must provide knowledge, skills and dispositions (McCarthy and Forsyth, 2009 in Young, Crow, Murphy and Ogawa, 2009) so that

they are groomed for principalship. Ireland's primary school deputies have the right base for this in being both experienced deputies and in positions where they can practise new skills.

Preparation framework elements: formal preparation and mentoring

The structure of the support respondents described is illustrated on the framework (see Figure 7.1) and is in two parts: a formal preparation course with concern for intellectual capital, and mentoring focusing on social capital. This builds on the literature review in chapter three which details the need for career development support. Respondents would value the opportunity to support and be supported by deputy-principals from other schools as they construct their generic skills and knowledge. They were very clear on the need to experience socio-emotional support and encouragement from fellow practitioners in the field, without any interplay of micro-politics, so that they can learn about themselves and their own well-being in the process. Some respondents mentioned having no tangible bond with fellow staff members, owing to the deputy-principal's unique position. As other English research has shown, deputies need opportunities to interact and engage with fellow practitioners to experience peer support (Hobson, 2003). Hence, screening respondents emerged as an important dimension to the training, with deputy-principals alone being in attendance.

The deputies in this research believed a very content-specific course would adequately bridge the gap between their existing skills, knowledge and expertise and those needed to perform the role of principal. The content they identified as necessary for their developmental support focused on *School Administration*, *Special*

Education Needs, *Financial Management*, *School and the Law*, *ICT*, *Resource Management* and *Personnel Management* (see Figure 7.1). These seven components highlight a skills deficit where it is evident that the inexperience of dealing with them evokes feelings of stress, anxiety and discomfort, creating a need to gain new knowledge and improve morale. This leaves respondents feeling unable to lead their school in a different way to how it is currently being led. This is not unique to this Irish research; similarly, in England and Wales, deputy-principals did not feel confident particularly with regard to administrative and financial matters (Webb and Vulliamy, 1995), two of the seven components included in the framework of this research.

School administration was perceived as the cornerstone of successful school management involving the core tasks of running a school. Many routine areas of management, policy development and tasks were related to school administration. On first round coding, controlling, supervising, planning, organising and decision-making processes on the functioning of the school were found, and on second round coding these were categorised in the component of administration and transferred to the framework. A sizeable majority of respondents highlighted financial management as one of the main areas they did not feel competent in, and this is consistent with a similar study by Owen-Fitzgerald (2010) where deputy-principals expressed budgeting as the greatest area of need for professional development. This finding supports that put forward by Lankford, Connell and Wyckoff (2003) that deputy-principals should be better prepared in finance management.

Data analysis cited resource management and personnel management as being significant areas of specific knowledge shortfalls. While engaging with these components to a limited degree, respondents nonetheless perceive themselves to be acutely lacking in confidence when it comes to navigating these tasks independently. Pellicer, Anderson, Keefe, Kelley and McCleary (1988, 39) define personnel tasks as 'duties relating directly to securing and maintaining the human resources necessary to carry out the school's programme'. These responsibilities include designing the teacher schedule, planning induction for new teachers, planning and leading staff meetings and managing substitute teachers (Pellicer et al., 1988). Hence, both resource and personnel management feature as key components on the framework.

I think managing people is something that is very big in our school and handling staff meetings and inducting new staff into the school is a definite area that some form of training would be needed. This would be the biggest challenge for any new principal. (Julia)

Special needs education and legal issues have been major catalysts for an overhaul of the Irish education system, and so not surprisingly they both featured prominently as areas that cause tension, ambivalence and angst. There was a general opinion that both areas require a very specific and sophisticated prerequisite knowledge. Ian, Jack, Paige and Sophia spoke about potential dangers that newly appointed principals could be exposed to without having core competencies of special educational needs policy, 'as this is a relatively new phenomenon . . . most teachers have received no specific training' in this area (Humphreys, 140, 2010). The legal responsibilities of schools embedding special education needs provision gravely impact on contemporary school principalship.

ICT has brought considerable reform to the Irish education landscape, with all schools now required to use technology in delivering the curriculum. While acknowledging the benefits of ICT in society, there was a very honest admission of the need to cultivate the skills of principal aspirants in order to harness this resource. This has greatly influenced school administration operations and the requirements on the principal to lead the school in the 'Information Age'. The use of technology 'fosters leadership styles that are less traditional and more transformative and relational' (Grogan et al., 2009 in Young et al., 2009, 399).

Respondents didn't view a programme of leadership preparation as being enough on its own. This is particularly true for respondents categorised under the first two typologies as they experience less opportunity to interact with school leaders outside of their own educational establishments. Fear was expressed that some of the content on a leadership preparation course may not be rooted firmly enough in the local contextual needs of their particular primary schools. The main form of preparation for which respondents see scope is mentoring or coaching from other experienced local principals in a reciprocal relationship; 'Mentoring is an important part of professional development' (Oleszewski et al., 2012, 271). This was a popular idea with respondents, as they demonstrated their awareness of the need to develop interpersonal relationships with key personnel outside their own schools and this builds upon existing research by theorists including Professor John C. Daresh, University of Texas cited in chapter three for promoting the value of mentoring. The increased popularity of the term 'mentoring' has led to it becoming more prominent in education (Barnett and O'Mahony, 2008). This allows for personalised professional learning to take place over time, and in doing so provides collegial

support for the development of the deputy's cognitive abilities and emotional intelligence. This would help their personal and professional growth, so that they can learn from someone who has prior experience, wisdom and knowledge far beyond what they themselves currently possess.

There was an acknowledgement that any form of leadership preparation is incremental. Respondents were not under any false illusions, knowing that participants would not emerge from a course fully armed with all the necessary skills and knowledge, but it would provide an opportunity for them to construct new knowledge. Respondents believed that the specific outcome from this form of preparation should be a pipeline of primary deputy-principals possessing improved confidence, willingness and motivation towards principalship. This should result in greater respondent satisfaction and skill development, in turn resulting in leadership developmental growth (see Figure 7.1) among respondents.

Traditionally, deputy-principals have been ready, willing and eager to take over the position of a former principal (Connelly and Tirozzi, 2008). However, there are also a number of career deputies who wish to remain at their current rank, hoping that they can share their principal's vision, allowing both senior school leaders to work together on furthering the mission and goals of the school. This orientation of deputy may possess a pleasant working environment with no desire to become a principal. The frustration often associated with a career deputy is that success is equated with upward mobility. Notably, Marshall and Hooley (2006) believe that focusing on the deputy-principalship position could help to recreate the position to be more than just a stepping stone to principalship. Regardless of whether deputy-

principals are vertically mobile or not, to develop in their own right they need to learn behaviours that are necessary for professional development through an expansion of their role.

> Leadership cannot be taught, it has to be learnt. The most powerful means of developing leadership is to create an organisational culture, which values the sorts of learning most likely to enhance the capacity of individuals to lead. (West-Burnham, 2004, 5)

As deputy-principals are only trained and taught to be educators then as school leaders they would benefit greatly from professional development activities that would broaden their exposure to a full range of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours necessary to function at a strategic rather than a managerial level. This retooling could come from careful planning with a clear defining of the role leading to deputyship professionalism. Celikten (2001) believes that it is imperative to establish a concrete job definition for the deputyship to ensure effectiveness with the role of instructional leader included in this definition. In redefining the role Oliver (2003) believes it is crucial to involve deputy-principals in leadership roles and responsibilities where involvement and recognition are valued. Oliver (2005) also believes that if deputy-principals are to experience professional growth it is necessary for principals to assign them additional responsibilities associated with instructional leadership or 'leadership for learning' (Bush, Bell and Middlewood, 2010, 8). This would mean that the traditional functions and descriptions, described by Glanz (2004) as mostly clerical tasks, extracurricular activities, and discipline needs could be confined to the pages of the history books. These traditional operational management functions may be readily delegated to other teaching and ancillary staff within a school, thus allowing deputy-principals more focused time on

curriculum leadership. This may relieve the on-going tension between the role of management and leadership at the deputy-principal position. As leadership in the twenty-first century continues to raise the bar of expectations, the role needs to be restructured to include duties such as the hiring of new teachers, teacher evaluation, and serving as change agents for innovation and providing professional development. There needs to be an acknowledgement that the principal has the greatest impact on the deputy-principal role as Celikten's (2001) research found that principals have the greatest influence upon their deputy-principals' instructional leadership activities. The management of this relationship is pivotal to the function of the deputy-principal in a school. Oliver (2003) contends that principals should engage more in mentoring their deputy-principals in ways that value and utilise leadership for learning strategies. The emphasis needs to be placed on shared leadership so that the deputy-principal can develop greater autonomy and experience to formulate openness to innovation of their otherwise latent talents and expertise. This would enable a leadership paradigm shift to take place by the reduction of their full teaching commitment, creating an opportunity to engage solely with their senior leadership position. The support of the deputy-principal will become all the more pivotal as principals continue to be inundated with school reform efforts such as School Self-Evaluation (2012) and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (2011).

> When assistants are included in the decision-making process of the school and work on all aspects of school administration from management to instructional leadership, they are more inclined to feel comfortable in their jobs and wish to remain as assistants... (MacCorkle in Scott, 2011, 113).

Epilogue

This research revealed a majority of primary deputies in this study tacitly and explicitly reinforcing existing routines, failing to look at what leadership they currently exercise from a new perspective thus losing the opportunity to reconceptualise their role to become agents of change. It is worth recalling how one of the deputies in this project described his job, illustrating how much this role needs to be reconfigured as a preparation for principalship:

> *Well the main duty that I have, I suppose, going back years ago, is to look after the roll books. . . . I go out every day at 2 pm when the infants are going home to supervise, because the two teachers teaching those classes aren't from the locality and they wouldn't be aware of grannies and cousins and second cousins and the like collecting the children.* (Jack)

This situation described by Jack mirrors research as far back as the 1970s and 1980s (referred to in chapter two) undertaken in America when the deputy-principal was assigned tasks by the principal that ultimately defined their role. The role described back then is similar to that experienced by a majority of respondents in this Irish study whereby deputies are still given responsibilities that do not transfer to the principalship. This means the duties undertaken by deputies categorised within the first two typologies in this study may not prepare them for positions outside of the deputyship. The fact that Ireland's primary deputy-principals continue to undertake many different duties causes the role to lack a clearly defined list of duties and responsibilities. In Ireland this was highlighted in the 1994 *Report on the National Education Convention* which stated that 'while the role of the principal is relatively well defined, that of the Vice-Principal is rather vague (Coolahan, 1994, 46). We are now nineteen years on and this study shows this still to be the case at primary level.

The findings of this study concur with Allen's (2003) findings which showed the core leadership functions of Ireland's primary deputies to be that of supporting, assisting and deputising for the principal; consulting and liaising with the principal and co-operating with the principal and staff. Regarding principalship itself, there is some evidence provided by more recent research in Hong Kong (2009) and Australia (2002) to show that Ireland's deputy-principals view the principalship in the same way as their counterparts from other countries commenting on similar incentives and barriers involved in taking up this multifaceted job. This international research also highlights similar hopes and concerns about future principalship emphasising a clear need for some level of professional engagement and development in order to successfully make the transition from one position to the other.

The three typologies for deputy-principalship described earlier in this chapter are unique to this Irish research and contribute to our existing knowledge of Irish distributed leadership. The final typology is pivotal in its attempt to move away from the 'heroic leader paradigm' (Yukl, 1999, 292) of principalship to a model where capitalising on the deputy's expertise can help to alleviate or moderate the causes of work overload and stress often associated with principalship. It may be pertinent to remember that the typology of *strategic deputyship* may not automatically create any greater desire for principalship than the other two models.

A practical, immediate outcome of this research – particularly for deputy-principals like Jack in the quotation above – has been the suggested framework for principalship preparation, the first of its kind in Ireland, to facilitate a journey of educational learning. The focus is on the relevant operational aspects of principalship

not encountered in deputyship to be achieved through both a formal course and personal individualised mentorship. The next stage must be to see if it can be accepted by the Irish Government.

There is an imperative need for the implementation of a formal pre-service principal preparation model. The assumption that qualified teachers are equiped to assume the mantle of principalship is dubious. Policy makers internationally are placing more pressure on school principals as the impact of education reform and school improvement becomes more evident leading to a global focus on actively seeking ways of building capacity for school level leadership (Hallinger and Lu, 2013). This has resulted in the acute and timely need to identify and replicate effective in-service programmes to produce highly qualified school principals (LaPointe, Meyerson and Darling-Hammond, 2006). Increasing attention is being paid internationally to developing high-quality school leadership programmes (Barber, Whelan and Clark, 2010) which have adapted methods drawn from other domains of professional education (Hallinger and Ku, 2013). LaPointe et al. (2006) indicate that effective principal preparation programmes have curricular coherence, are research-based, provide authentic experience, use mentors, and structured collaborative activities between the programme and schools. The inclusion of mentoring from experienced and grounded practitioners as part of a principal preparation framework lends credibility and relevance to its ability to equip participants for principalship (Walker, Bryant and Lee, 2013). This level of coherent principal preparation and development can successfully equip potential principals for their work by emphasising instructional and organisational leadership (Bush and Jackson, 2002).

While the need for this level of principal preparation has been recognised in the USA for decades it is still a more recent phenomenon in other jurisdictions (Bush, 2008).

Appendix 1: Interview schedule

<u>*(Prompts for questions are shown as bullet points)*</u>

Background Information

A. **Can we begin by you telling me who you are and something about the school you work in?**

How do deputy-principals view the deputy-principalship?

1. **Can you tell me about your role as deputy-principal?**

   Is there a difference between what you think you SHOULD do and what you ACTUALLY do?

   - *Participation in the articulation of a vision for learning*
   - *Promoting a supportive learning culture*
   - *Interacting with pupils and the partners in education*
   - *Managing the human facilities and resources of the school*
   - *Supporting the work of the principal*
   - *Deputising for the principal*
   - *Capacity building in school*
   - *Curriculum leadership and planning*
   - *Mentoring new teachers*

2. **Did you feel adequately prepared to assume the role of deputy-principal?**

   What training initiatives / previous experience helps to prepare teachers for the role of deputy-principal?

   - *Experience as a class teacher*
   - *Member of the in-school management team (held a post of responsibility)*
   - *Undertook continuous professional development*
   - *Participated in school development planning initiatives*
   - *Gained a postgraduate qualification in education*
   - *Self-consciously engaged in leadership development*
   - *Member of a school board of management*
   - *Being well-informed on policies and practices*

3. **What do you like about your role as deputy-principal?**

   What don't you like about your role as deputy-principal?

   - *Supporting the principal in their management role*
   - *Being a member of the senior management team*

How do deputy-principals view the principalship?

4. What do you see as the role of school principal?

- *School leader*
- *Responsible and accountable for what happens in school*
- *Chief Executive Officer*
- *Undertaking a complex and demanding role*
- *Carrying out a dual role of teaching and school leadership*

5. Could you tell me what particular knowledge, attributes and skills you think school principals need in order to be successful?
- *Inspiring, envisioning change for school*
- *Have strong interpersonal, people skills such as negotiation, communication and collaboration*
- *Personal attributes*
- *Leadership capacity*
- *Capacity to delegate and empower others*
- *Being an effective manager and administrator*
- *Managing change for self and others*

6. What recent initiatives have impacted either positively or negatively on the role of the school principal?
- *Legislation*
- *Whole School Evaluations*
- *Policy changes – schools becoming more inclusive (pupils with special educational needs and newcomer children from other countries)*
- *Educational cutbacks – embargo on filling vacant posts of responsibilities in schools*
- *More support through the IPPN and continuous professional development opportunities*
- *Development of school leadership training initiatives*

What factors influence deputy-principals career motivation to apply for a principalship?

What aspects of the principalship role are attractive?

7. Do you want to be a principal?

Why / Why not? Is it personal (own circumstances) or the principal's professional role or both?

- *Extra remuneration*
- *Desire for promotion after doing the same job for some time*
- *Enhanced autonomy*
- *Receiving and giving support*
- *Positive contribution to the local community*
- *Chance to work with diverse individuals and groups in the school and wider community*

8. **Do you think that you might be discriminated against in any way if you applied for a principalship position of a school?**
- Gender
- Age
- Academic qualifications

What aspects of the principalship role are unattractive?

9. **What particular aspects of a principalship would you perceive to be unattractive?**
- *Carrying out dual role of teaching and administration*
- *Increasing demands of society on the personal and professional life and time commitment of the principal*
- *Stress*
- *Longer working day*
- *Bureaucracy*
- *Enlarged managerial and accountability functions*

What form of leadership and management preparation could encourage career preparedness and career motivation amongst deputy-principals for a future principalship role?

10. **What aspects of your current role as deputy-principal have prepared you for a principalship if you wanted to apply?**
- *Member of Irish Primary Principals' Network*
- *Deputise for the principal*
- *Member of board of management*
- *Member of in-school management team*
- *Planning and policy development*
- *Well-informed on policies and practices*

11. **What do you think would help you to successfully prepare for a principalship?**

    Can you give me any examples of forms of preparation you would like to avail of?

- *Work-shadowing*
- *Coaching*
- *The use of 'critical friends'*
- *Networking*
- *Mentoring from other principals*
- *Courses run by the Leadership Development in Schools initiative*
- *Member of Irish Primary Principals' Network*
- *Member of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation Principal and Deputy-Principal Forum*
- *Undertaking postgraduate study*

12. What future leadership and management areas would you desire professional development in?

- *Financial management*
- *Leadership – change management, team building*
- *Various aspects of management – information technology skills, legislation / policy, time management, assessment procedures, special educational needs*

13. Is there anything you would like to mention about the principalship or deputy-principalship that hasn't already been mentioned in the course of the interview?

Appendix 2: Information sheet for research study

Kilmore Central National School,

Farragh,

Ballinagh,

Co. Cavan.

Telephone / Fax: (049) 4332661

My name is   and I am currently studying part-time for a Doctorate in Educational Research and Development with the University of Lincoln, England.

As part of this course of study, I am undertaking a research study entitled: <u>Deputy-Principals' Perceptions of the Principalship and Deputy-Principalship: Making the Transition to a Principalship</u>.

The purpose of this study is to look at the experiences to date of deputy-principals in Irish primary schools and focus on their individual career paths, with a view to discovering why some choose to seek promotion to principal while others prefer to cap their careers at the rank of deputy-principal. The experiences and interpretations of deputy-principals involved in this study will provide important information about the possible transition from deputy-principal to principal.

Your participation in the study is entirely voluntary and it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. You will be given this information sheet to keep. If you choose to take part, you can change your mind and withdraw from the study without giving a reason.

I am intending to interview a total of twelve deputy-principals from schools in the midland and border counties. If you choose to participate your interview will take about sixty minutes to complete and will take place in an educational setting at a convenient time. With your consent it will be audio recorded so that the information given can be transcribed afterwards. A copy of the transcript will be forwarded to you for your verification prior to beginning any data analysis. This will afford you an opportunity to amend, add or delete something that you may have said. Your anonymity, and that of your school, will be maintained at all times. Any data gathered will be held securely and in confidence.

Your participation in this study should lead to a deeper understanding of the role of the principal and deputy-principal in Irish primary schools. This study may be published upon completion in an educational journal or some other educational document with the results and findings being shared with individuals and organisations who have an interest in the area of school leadership. However, please note participants' anonymity and confidentiality will be assured throughout all stages of the research.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to share your thoughts and experiences.

Appendix 3: Consent form

Kilmore Central National School,

Farragh,

Ballinagh,

Co. Cavan.

Telephone / Fax: (049) 4332661

My name is   and I am currently studying for a Doctorate in Educational Research and Development at the Centre for Educational Research and Development, University of Lincoln, England.

As part of this course of study, I am undertaking a research study entitled: Deputy-Principals' Perceptions of the Principalship and Deputy-Principalship: Making the Transition to a Principalship.

Name of Principal Supervisor: Dr. Howard Stevenson, Centre for Educational Research and Development, University of Lincoln, England.

- I confirm that I have been given and have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have asked and received answers to any questions asked.

Please initial [   ]

- My participation in the interview is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without my rights being affected in any way.

Please initial [   ]

- I am free to refuse to answer any questions at any time.

Please initial [   ]

- I am free to refuse to have my voice audio-recorded during the interview.

Please initial [   ]

- I understand that the researchers will hold all information and data collected securely and in confidence and that all material will be anonymised.

Please initial [   ]

- I understand that the researchers may publish this research and its findings upon completion, and that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained in any publications.

Please initial [   ]

If you are satisfied having read the above to proceed with being interviewed, please sign this consent form.

| Name of Respondent | Signature | Date |

| Name of researcher | Signature | Date |

Appendix 4: EA2 Ethical approval form: human research projects

EA2

Ethical Approval Form:

Human Research Projects

Please word-process this form, handwritten applications will not

This form must be completed for each piece of research activity whether conducted by academic staff, research staff, graduate students or undergraduates. The completed form must be approved by the designated authority within the Faculty.

Please complete all sections. If a section is not applicable, write N/A.

1 Name of Applicant	Derrick Grant
	Department: Faculty: CERD
2 Position in the University	EdD Student
3 Role in relation to this research	Principal Investigator – EdD Student
4 Brief statement of main Research Question	The research aims are: • To explore deputy-principals' perceptions of the deputy-principalship. • To explore deputy-principals' perceptions of the principalship. • To explore which features of principalship might help or hinder the future supply of deputy-principals seeking to become principals. • To identify successful forms of leadership and management preparation that would ensure a supply of deputy-principals moving into principalship roles.

The specific research questions of this study are:

5. How do deputy-principals view the deputy-principalship?
6. How do deputy-principals view the principalship?
7. What factors influence deputy-principals career motivation to apply for a principalship?
   a. What aspects of the principalship role are attractive?
   b. What aspects of the principalship role are unattractive?
8. What form of leadership and management preparation could encourage career preparedness and career motivation amongst deputy-principals for a future principalship role?

In answering these questions I hope to ascertain how the conceptualisation of the principalship with regard to contemporary school leadership may impact either positively or negatively on the career motivation of deputy-principals in primary schools to apply for and take on this pivotal leadership role in the Irish education system.

5 Brief Description of Project	This research has not been commissioned.
	The research aims to look at the experiences to date of deputy-principals and focuses on their own individual career trajectory with a view to discovering why some choose to seek promotion to that of school principal while others prefer to cap their careers at the rank of deputy-principal.
	The experiences and interpretations of the participants involved in this study will provide rich and detailed data pertaining to the possible transition from their current deputy-principalship to a principalship.
	The approach to this research will be an interpretative, qualitative one using semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with 12 participants.
	All interviewees will be adults.

	Approximate Start Date: Approximate End Date: October 2011 December 2011
6 Name of Principal Investigator or Supervisor	Supervisor: Howard Stevenson
	Email address: Telephone: hstevenson@lincoln.ac.uk 01522 837333
7 Names of other researchers or **student investigators involved**	None
8 Location(s) at which project **is to be carried out**	The 12 participants will come from primary schools representing those that have a teaching principal and those that have an administrative principal. Both male and female deputy-principals will be chosen as gender may have an impact on the willingness / unwillingness of applicants to apply for a principalship. The participants will be chosen from both urban and rural schools in the midland counties of Ireland and other members of staff working in the schools will not be included in the study. Purposive sampling will be used as the study will focus on a specific category of participant i.e. deputy-principals who are qualified to take on the role of school principal. It will be essential that the participants fulfil this criterion in order to be considered suitable for this research. Participants chosen for this study will not come from my own school. This means that I

	will not be strictly involved in insider research but I am none the less closely linked to the issues as a practising principal teacher interviewing deputy-principals. My own workplace will not be my research site and I will be able to avoid, 'the hidden ethical and methodological dilemmas of insiderness' (Labaree, 2002 in Mercer, 2007, 3)

9 Statement of the ethical issues
 	
  involved and how they are to
 	
  be addressed –including a risk   assessment of the project based on the vulnerability of participants, the extent to which it is likely to be harmful and whether there will be significant discomfort.
 	
  (This will normally cover such issues   as whether the risks/adverse effects
 	
 associated with the project have
 	
 been dealt with and whether the benefits of research outweigh the
 	
  risks)
	The project will be conducted according to UL guidelines for conducting research with humans, and also according to the Revised Ethical Guidelines published by the British Educational Research Association (2004).
	
	Within these guidelines a number of areas are identified and are pertinent to this project:
	
	Informed consent – all participants will be provided with a written project summary prior to their interview. This will also make clear that participation is voluntary. The summary will set out a number of consents relating to the taping of interviewees (the default, unless consent is not provided), the use of data and the right to anonymity and confidentiality. It will also make clear that participants are free to withdraw at any point in the process.
	
	Privacy – all participants and schools will be anonymous. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout.
	
	Security – all data will be stored securely on password protected computers and recordings of interviews will be stored securely.
	
	Risk assessment – working within the above guidelines it is not considered that there are any risks that may be considered exceptional. All interviewees are adults, and the focus of the research is not a sensitive issue. Due regard will be given to the possibility of sensitive disclosures and any such instances will be managed in a

way that prevents harm or damage to others.

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Ethical Approval From Other Bodies

10 Does this research require the approval of an external body?	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☒
	If "Yes", please state which body:-
11 Has ethical approval already been obtained from that body?	**Yes** ☐ **-Please append documentary evidence to this form.** **No** ☐ **If "No", please state why not:-** **Please note that any such approvals must be obtained and documented before the project begins.**

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