

Supporting and Transforming School Principals' Wellbeing and Leadership

Johanne Klap

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

Johanne Klap

December 14, 2020

Abstract

School leadership matters, but many principals are over worked with little space to truly lead. Principal illbeing is an increasing concern with widespread reports of stress, burnout and associated negative health outcomes. Limited research has focused on effective ways to address this, and professional learning opportunities for principals still tend to focus on the technical skills of managing a school, reducing leadership to a suite of behaviours and skill sets, rather than the meta cognitive skills of self-awareness, managing self, emotional and attentional regulation.

This longitudinal mixed method study examined how mindfulness training as professional learning (PL) could support school principals' wellbeing and leadership. Mindfulness programs have become increasingly accepted in workplaces to increase personal awareness, manage stress, promote wellbeing, enhance engagement and performance, and enrich leadership. Participants were 30 school principals who attended a mindful leadership training program (10 x 2-hour weekly sessions over a four-month period) that provided three core elements: secular mind training (mindfulness practice), mental strategy or habits of mind training and mindful work applications. The impact of the PL on wellbeing and leadership over the school year, were examined through interviews and questionnaires collected pre- and post-program and then six months later. Increases in participants' awareness to manage their wellbeing and successfully negotiate work-related stressors were identified and leadership authenticity developed in the six months following the program. There was strong maintenance of the training through to the end of the year. Some gender differences were also identified, with females showing increased benefits over their male counterparts. The results of this longitudinal study provide insight into how mindfulness training as professional learning not only improves school principals' wellbeing but also transforms their approach to being and leading more authentically.

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Abbreviations

NSW	New South Wales
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning Definition
CASEL	Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning
PD	Professional Development
PL	Professional Learning
ASCL	Association of School and College Leaders
MBSR	Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
CARE™	Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education
BPM	Buddhist Psychology Model
MI	Mindfulness Inquiry
MBCT	Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy
ACT	Acceptance Commitment Therapy
DBT	Dialectical Behaviour Therapy
EQ	Emotional Quotient
DoEWA	Department of Education Western Australia
FFMQ	Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire
AL	Authentic Leadership
ALQ	Authentic Leadership Questionnaire
CBMT ©	Corporate Based Mindfulness Training (now called <i>Performance, Resilience and or Innovation Mindset</i>)
MBI-GS	Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey
AWS	Areas of Work Survey
SCS	Self-Compassion Scale

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Chapter One

1

Introduction

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1.1 Introduction

The role of a school principal is well known to be extremely challenging with often competing demands, high levels of public scrutiny, multiple responsibilities, and ultimate accountability for student outcomes and care (Beusaert et al., 2016; Pollock et al., 2017). Principal illbeing has been an increasing concern with widespread reports of stress, burnout and associated negative health outcomes. Numerous studies have highlighted this concern however, there has been limited research on effective ways to address these issues. This study investigates how mindfulness training as professional learning (PL) could support school principals' wellbeing and leadership.

Chapter one provides the purpose and the background for the study. It includes a discussion of the personal and professional challenges of being a school principal and how the role is professionally supported, especially in Australia. This is followed by a personal statement as to why and how the research came about. The potential of mindfulness training as professional learning to support school leaders' wellbeing and leadership is proposed. The research aims, a brief introduction to the methodology and the significance of this research study are presented. The chapter concludes with a definition of terms and a summary of the chapters to come.

1.2 Background to the Study

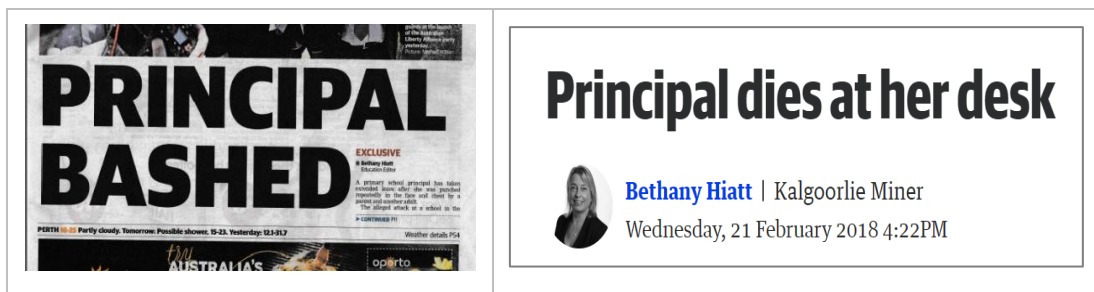
1.2.1 Principal Illbeing

It is widely acknowledged that being a school principal is highly demanding and stressful, and that the role can have detrimental effects on personal wellbeing. Consistent findings from 2011 to 2019 from the *Australian Principal Wellbeing Survey* (Riley, 2012; Riley et al., 2020) report that school principals are more likely than the average population to suffer from wellbeing issues like sleeping disfunctions and health problems (e.g., lack of sleep, burnout, stress, depression, and physical aches and pains), emotional labour, and are more likely to experience an abusive or violent attack, adult-adult bullying, and threats of violence. The 2020 report also stated that more than 40% of principals reported being a victim of physical violence in 2019 compared to 27.3% in 2011, and that the threats of violence toward principals had also increased from 37.8% in 2011 to 51.0% in 2019. In the latest report (2020) 84% of school leaders reported being subjected to offensive behaviour. More locally, Western Australia had among the highest reported levels of physical violence (50%) and threats of violence (50%), causing heightened stress levels amongst those surveyed.

During the course of this study, the West Australian Newspaper front page headline of a *Principal Bashed* (22/10/2015), shared the shocking news of how a primary school principal was punched repeatedly in the face and chest by a parent of one her students, and later in 2018 the same paper reported the sad death of Laverton School principal Trish Antulov in February 2018 (see Figure 1.1). Her husband, Mr Antulov was quoted as saying, in the West Australian Newspaper that it was the long hours she worked that had contributed to her high stress levels. “She just didn’t have time to look after herself properly,” he said. “She was under a lot of stress and terrible pressure just to be successful in her job” (21/02/18).

Figure 1.1

Two West Australian Media Examples of the Challenges of Being a Principal



Over the nine-year period the survey has been conducted, the most common and consistent cause of leadership stress amongst school principals was the “sheer volume of work” and the “lack of time to focus on teaching and learning” (p. 21). The long hours often required in the role of principal, are also supported by data from Riley et al. (2020) where Australian school leaders reported working an average of approximately 55.2 hours a week during the school term, with approximately 97.3% reported working over 40 hours a week, and approximately 72.4% reported working over 50 hours a week. These longer hours are compounded by the increased use of technology which contributes to altering the role to an easily contactable mobile position that blurs the lines between home and work (Pollock & Hauseman, 2018; Pollock et al., 2017). Unfortunately, the nature of the role means that some school principals are constantly distracted by the scope and diversity of multiple tasks making effective time management and prioritising challenging. Schools are complex systems, and the many external and internal demands create tension as to what a principal pays attention to and the amount of time they allocate for tasks (Goldring et al., 2008).

Increased administrative workload is the biggest stressor and prevents school leaders from achieving or even having the time to pay attention to their vital educational leadership responsibilities (Riley, 2017). In Australia, the New South Wales (NSW) Education Department commissioned Deloitte to compile a report on *Principal Workload and Time Use Study* (Deloitte, 2017). The report found that principals were “spending more time leading the management of the school than leading teaching and learning” (p. 4). Analysis of the collected data revealed that: “30% of principal time is spent on leading teaching and learning; 9% on developing self and others; 6% on leading improvement, innovation and change; 40% on leading the management of the school; 11% on engaging and working with the community; and 3% on other activities” (Deloitte, 2017, p. 4). This group of NSW principals also shared how this was having negative effect on their health and wellbeing and that their stress levels had increased “due to a sense of consistent overload and heightened expectations of workload”, which resulted in some principals “questioning their own competence and ability to do their job” (p. 6). Perhaps understandably, for many years it has been challenging to attract potential principals who are hesitant to apply for these overloaded roles and responsibilities in such challenging conditions (Pont et al., 2008).

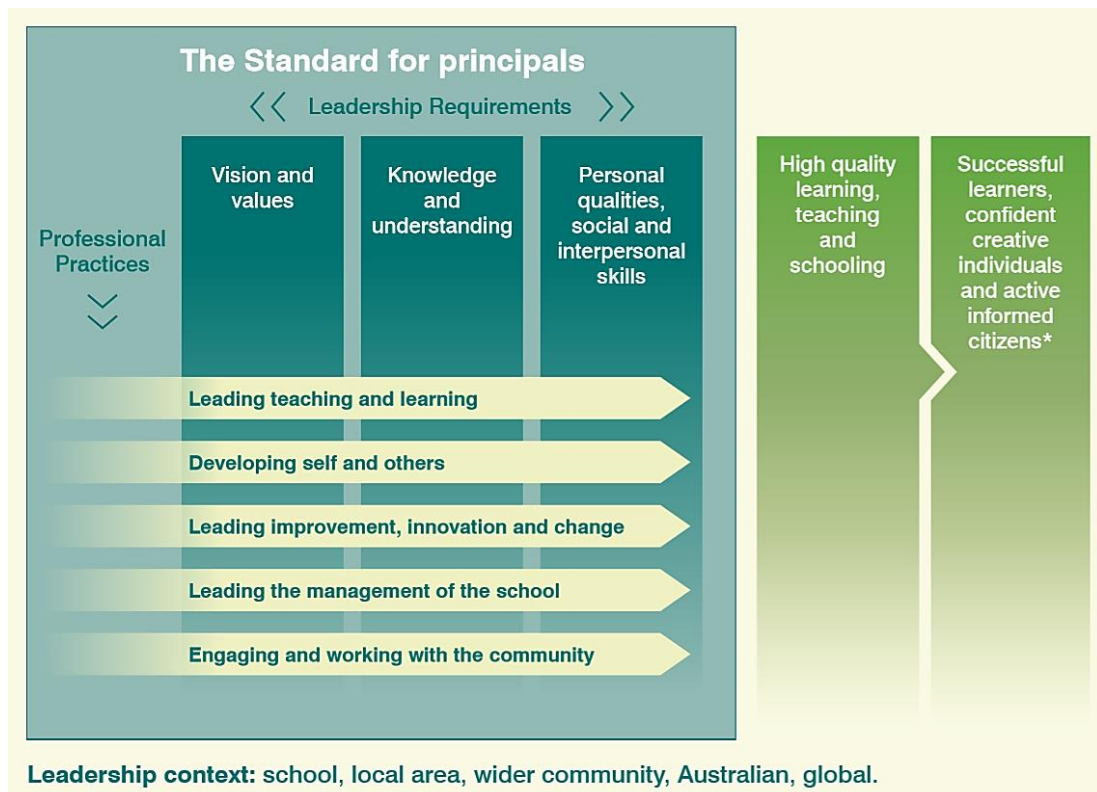
The difficulties of attracting aspiring principals because of the significantly complex and multiple roles, pressures and responsibilities that await them has attracted attention both internationally and nationally. An international 2015 report produced by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) highlighted the enormity of high expectations from the community, staff and employing bodies. The report called for 21st Century principals to be visionary leaders, people motivators, human resource managers, community makers, “savvy” business people, and “creative” fund managers. What is of interest is that the report then concluded by saying that it would be “impossible to imagine” finding someone with all those listed credentials and experience to successfully lead a school (Schleicher, 2015, p. 34). For existing principals, these multiple roles and high expectations from the community result in high levels of work-related stress, competing demands, work overload and burnout (Beusaert et al., 2016). Unfortunately to deal with the heightened work intensification some principals find themselves stressed and working longer hours and this takes a toll not only on their health, but also how they lead.

1.2.2 “Making” a Principal (Professional Context)

In an attempt to support school leaders and their development, a number of formal registration systems and frameworks based on core competencies have provided guidelines to preferred and effective leadership attributes and practices for school principals (Hulsbos et al., 2016). In Australia since 2011 these requirements have been designed and led by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). AITSL have designed a professional framework for school principals that provides guidelines for their professional learning journeys. The Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles (2015) is a “public statement setting out what school principals are expected to know, understand and do to succeed in their work” (AITSL, 2019, p. 3). AITSL’s guidelines have a strong focus on what principals need **to do and have**. Three core leadership requirements are: vision and values; knowledge and understanding; and personal qualities, social and interpersonal skills. These requirements are enacted through the following five key professional practices: Leading teaching and learning; developing self and others; leading improvement, innovation and change; leading the management of the school; and engaging and working with the community (see Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2

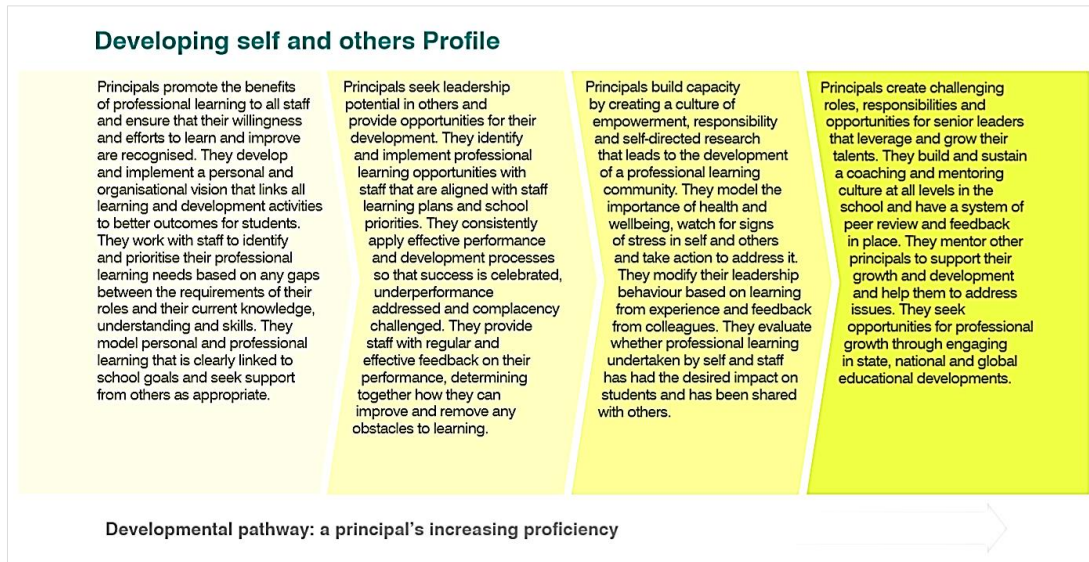
Extract from The Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles (2019) – The Standards for Principals (p. 11)



Regarding the five professional practices, AITSL provide a developmental pathway to achieve these. Please see Figure 1.3 as an illustration of this using the leadership requirement of ‘developing self and others’ as an example.

Figure 1.3

Extract from The Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles (2019) – Developing Self and Others Profile (p. 16)

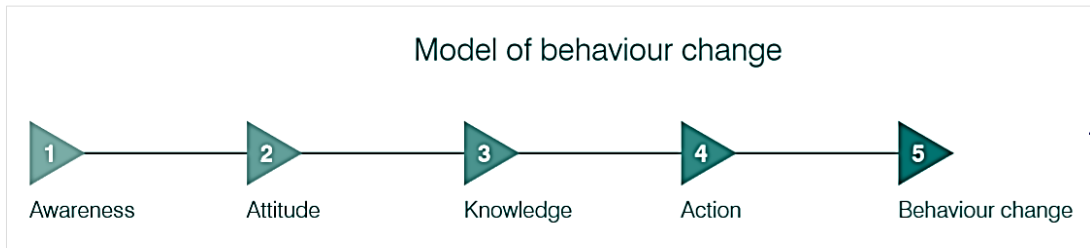


Interestingly, in the AITSL leadership guidelines the only mention of ‘stress’ in the ‘developing self and others’ pathway is a reference for leaders to model the importance of health and wellbeing and to watch for signs of stress in self and others and take action to address it.

In line with ethos of the document and the opening quote by Linda Darling-Hammond, “High-performing principals are not just born, but can be made” (p. 1), the guidelines encourage school leaders to develop and increase their leadership proficiency across these competencies and to engage in behaviour change to achieve this. The model of change (see Figure 1.4) emphasises the importance of starting with ‘awareness’. “Gaining an awareness of the personal benefits associated with making a change is the vital first step towards changing behaviour” (p. 9). This is then followed by having the right *attitude* or intention to change, the *knowledge* needed to design a plan of action, the capacity to *action* the plan to create the behaviour change, and then to practice the *behaviour change* to ensure it becomes automatic.

Figure 1.4

Extract from *The Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles (2019) – Model of Behaviour Change (p. 9)*



This model of behaviour change rests on the assumption that awareness and ability to choose an attitude are given skills. Yet how do leaders become aware? How do they consciously choose an attitude that is going to be of benefit, and then action and sustain behaviour change?

The importance of knowing and awareness of self is evident in another document *Leading for Impact Guidelines for Leadership Development* (AITSL, 2017), alongside the emphasis on improving teaching quality and leading teaching and learning. It describes what it means to be a high performing principal (emphasis added for effect).

High-performing principals consistently demonstrate **sophisticated** personal and interpersonal qualities, which include **self-awareness** and personal wellbeing; **self-management**, including **emotional intelligence**, empathy and **resilience**, and **social awareness** and **relationship management**. They apply these qualities and skills to understand and respond to culture and community, develop strong relationships, inspire and challenge others, and manage difficult situations and conversations. **The development of future leaders should emphasise the growth of these skills** over time and from early in their careers. (p. 10)

The emphasis on the particular social and emotional learning skills (SEL) of self, relationship and social awareness and management is apparent here, yet **how** these skills may be explicitly developed for school principals has not attracted significant attention. According to CASEL (The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) principals have increased their support of SEL and believe it should be explicitly taught in schools (Atwell & Bridgeland, 2019), and there is call for better in-service and pre-service SEL training for teachers (Murano et al., 2019). Although Murano et al. (2019) note that educational leaders should pay attention to SEL training, educational leaders are not included in the call to develop these skills.

The time has come for educational leaders at every level to work toward high-quality training opportunities for teachers, and to advocate for SEL pre-service and PD efforts to be treated with the same importance as mathematics or science training. (Murano et al., 2019, p. 112)

Thus, if high performing principals can “be made” (AITSL, 2019, p. 1) there is a need for professional learning and training that focuses on these SEL skills. It would seem that these high order skills are often assumed by the time a person reaches the principalship. However, given the challenges faced by principals this may not be the case and so could present an obstacle to leadership development.

In response, recent research has called for a “more subtle and less uniformly technocratic understanding and perspective” to leadership development (Crow et al., 2017, p. 274). The suggested approach emphasises the importance of individuals having a deeper awareness of themselves and their surroundings, as well as developing skills to address growth and development. Leaders should:

...learn how to expand awareness to receive real time insights, critically reflect upon these insights to inform new actions and behaviours and transform their way of being so that it grows their authentic capacity and is better aligned with their needs and intentions. (Brendel & Bennett, 2016, p. 410)

This requires knowing who you are and of “being in tune internally” (Kouzes & Posner, 2011, p. 24) with a level of purposeful focus, deeper self-awareness, kindness to self and authenticity.

Given school principals’ unique role (in multiple contexts and with numerous stakeholders) and the diversity of their school and communities, increases in *self-awareness* and more care of their *personal wellbeing* will have beneficial effects in how and what they pay attention to, how they respond to pressure and stress and take care of themselves. This level of awareness can be developed by training in mindfulness, which could create the space that allows for these insights (Salzberg, 2010).

1.3 The Potential of Mindfulness Training

Mindfulness provides a way to be in the world. Mindfulness practices can enable people to develop the capacity to be more focused, calm and clear in their daily lives (Hougaard et al., 2016). Mindfulness is primarily a way to observe self and to choose a considered response, be it towards another person or event, or towards our own internal dialogue, emotions and reactions (Bishop et al., 2004). The ability to respond to a stimulus

(internally or externally) from a place of one's own choosing instead of knee jerk, or habitual reaction, has great implications for decision making, stress levels and how one is experienced by others (Ruedy & Schweitzer, 2011). Mindfulness, in sense "interrupts" our automatic way of being (Lemon & McDonough, 2018, p. 2). Some people are naturally mindful, however for the majority of people, mindfulness may need to be (re) learned or trained.

Mindfulness training for teachers has been shown to reduce stress, improve efficacy, assist problem solving, ease transition to work, improve mental flexibility and enhance job satisfaction (see for review, Lomas, Medina, Ivztan, Rupperecht, & Eiroa-Orosa, 2017). It has also been suggested that mindfulness can provide protection from burnout and have increased benefit for those who are more stressed and ambitious (Abenavoli et al., 2013), possibly providing a protective resilience mechanism against stress and burnout (Shapiro et al., 1998). Mindfulness training in business and organisational literature has shown increases in: staff retention (Dane & Brummel, 2014; Gold et al., 2010); job satisfaction and work life balance (Fortney et al., 2013); task performance (Dane, 2011); decision making (Ruedy & Schweitzer, 2011); focus and concentration levels (Reb et al., 2013) and reduced stress and fatigue levels (Grégoire & Lachance, 2015; Huang et al., 2015).

Principals experience similar administrative issues and stressors to business leaders as they are required to circumnavigate and implement policies as well as manage heightened complexities and levels of accountability (Dinham et al., 2011). Good and colleagues (2016) provided an important integrative review of mindfulness in the work environment and proposed a well-articulated model that explains how mindfulness impacts positive work outcomes (Good et al., 2016). They stated that these outcomes are facilitated by a (mindful) attention that is stable, efficient and controlled, that this then impacts the functional domains of cognition, emotion, behaviour and physiology which then impacts workplace outcomes of performance, relationships, wellbeing and possibly leadership (Good et al., 2016).

It would seem that mindfulness training is well placed to offer a different form of professional learning for school principals in that it both supports wellbeing by providing tools to negate stress *and* improves leadership potential. Research into the effect meditative mindfulness for this group of leaders may provide insight as to how they may be able to face their world calmly, with more focus, crisper clarity, and time to lead. Mindfulness may also provide development of SEL skills and the awareness and mindful

ability to choose an attitude so as to respond with ease in difficult situations and lead more mindfully and authentically.

1.4 Personal Context

This research project came about because I wanted to bring mindful leadership to the education sector. I wanted to explore the potential of mindfulness to support school principals to traverse their challenging leadership landscape successfully and sustainably. I have an academic background in psychology and education and am working both in the education and the corporate sector as an executive leadership coach, professional development facilitator, and corporate mindfulness trainer. Fuelled with curiosity and encouraged by the reported benefits of mindfulness training for alleviating stress, supporting wellbeing and enhancing performance (Lomas, Medina, Ivtzan, Rupprecht, & Eiroa-Orosa, 2017) and the potential for deeper learning of soft skills like communication, ethics and leadership (Kuechler & Stedham, 2018), I set about designing this research to explore whether mindfulness training as professional learning would provide support to school principals wellbeing and leadership.

I started practicing mindfulness meditation in 2000 to be a calmer, more present working mother and partner. Later, I attended several courses to learn how to become a mindfulness trainer so that I could introduce my clients to a different way of working and living, in my work as a leadership coach and facilitator. My clients were willing and curious participants on my learning journey, as I experimented with a couple of programs and methodologies. In 2014 I came across the internationally renowned *Potential Project* and the valuable work they were doing in bringing mindfulness to leaders in the corporate world and helping them integrate mindfulness practice and mindful work techniques. I completed their training later that year.

I have always been passionate about quality education and have also worked in teacher professional development. My Master of Education thesis investigated the concerns of beginning teachers and the findings highlighted to me the value and need of quality ongoing learning and mentoring/coaching for educators. In late 2015 I approached the Western Australian Education Department to discuss how mindfulness training may provide beneficial professional learning for their school leaders. They were keen to trial a program particularly as they wanted to support their school principals' wellbeing and leadership development.

As a mindfulness practitioner and as a leadership specialist I wanted to ensure that we covered as many angles of the principals' experience and captured as much evidence as possible along the way. Even though mindfulness training was becoming available for teachers and students (e.g., Smiling Minds, MindUp, Mindful Schools programs) little attention was being paid to the potential benefits for school leaders. During the writing this thesis, I have continued to deliver the same program used in this research to another 350 school leaders in Western Australia both face to face and online. The program success and results has meant that New South Wales Education Department started programs in 2018.

I have taken a problem-solving approach to this dissertation with the intent to offer some solutions in this dynamic and complex area. Also, I wanted to deeply understand the potential of mindfulness training and its application and sustainability as professional learning, and the implications of that on school principals' wellbeing and leadership. The study has the added nuance of my dual roles, that of project researcher and the facilitator of the mindfulness training program.

1.5 Research Aims and Approach

The overarching aim of this study is to investigate how mindfulness training as professional learning supports school principals' wellbeing and their leadership.

The research employed a longitudinal mixed methods methodology so as to provide a rich palette of data to explore the challenges of being a principal in Western Australia and the benefits of mindfulness for their wellbeing and approach to leadership. The data collection included three time points of quantitative (standardised assessments) and two time points of qualitative (interviews) data. Participants were 30 West Australian school principals who partook in a ten-week mindfulness training program. To the best of my knowledge this study is unique in the field and offers a different approach to supporting the educational leaders in our society.

1.5.1 Research Question

The research question for this study is: *How does mindfulness training as professional learning support school principals' wellbeing and leadership?*

1.6 Significance of the Study – A New Perspective

The significance of this study is that it presents a fresh perspective to principal wellbeing and leadership. The research highlights the important link between personal wellbeing and leading well. To lead well a person needs to be well, and if they are reactive and depleted or have non-existent wellbeing resources this will have negative implications both professionally and personally (Boyatzis et al., 2006). Unfortunately, professional learning (PL) opportunities for principals and other leaders still tend to focus on the technical skills of leading/managing others, “reducing leadership to a particular set of behaviours and skill sets” (Brendel & Bennett, 2016, p. 410), rather than the meta cognitive skills of managing self, self-awareness, emotional and attentional regulation which underscores both personal wellbeing and good leadership.

This research will be significant in determining the viability of mindfulness training as valuable professional learning to both boost wellbeing and support authentic leadership. The study contributes to the evolving literature and will be significant to employers, firstly as a method to address the mental health and wellbeing challenges (and associated costs) of their leaders, and secondly as alternative approach to what constitutes best practice in school leadership and professional learning such that leaders can authentically meet the demands of their role.

There is also limited research and academic literature exploring the influence of mindfulness training on school leaders. Interestingly mindfulness training is being hailed as the next wave in professional learning for teachers, and will thus attract more rigorous empirical research (Roeser et al., 2012), however this study is one of the first to empirically examine the self-reported effects of mindfulness training on school principals’ wellbeing and leadership. However, during the writing up phase a study by Mahfouz’s (2018) was published. In Mahfouz’s qualitative study, thirteen school administrators self-reported improved leadership and emotional regulation skills after attending a mindfulness based professional development program. Data were collected at two time points (pre and post). My study expands the research of this unique cohort (sample of 30) by using a mixed method approach, and by using a longitudinal model of data collection at three time points (pre, post and then 6 months post program).

For the research community, this project offers a unique contribution to the field specifically with regard to methodology (the use of mixed methods) and the added perspective of my dual role enabling me to observe the process of being mindful myself

whilst researching mindfulness. The study will also be of interest more broadly as it contributes to the knowledge regarding mindfulness in workplaces, including leadership and gender differences. This research may also have wider implications and generate interest in the business leadership sector and literature as principals operate at the equivalent level of CEO and general managers.

1.7 Definition of Terms

The three core research fields are Mindfulness, Wellbeing and Leadership. In each of these fields the definitions for this research are:

1.7.1 Mindfulness

Can be conceptualised as both a trait and state (Brown et al. 2007). For this research I am using the term mindfulness as state and suggest that it can be purposefully trained and harnessed by practicing meditation-based mindfulness (Hart et al. 2013) to become a personal attribute. In other words, I can choose to be mindful in what I am doing (state) or I learn to be mindful in everything that I do (trait). More specifically it is to “gain a deeper understanding of the changing nature of one’s own body and mental states” so as to “free one’s mind from the habits and tendencies” that can get us stuck and the cognitive discernment to “recognise wholesome from unwholesome mental states” (Dreyfus, 2011, p. 51) and focus on what matters. Mindfulness, in other words, is a way to be in the world. It is the ability to pay attention to the task at hand, become observant of thoughts, and respond from a place of calmness and consideration (instead of knee jerk, or habitual reactions), resulting in better (and more ethical) actions, choices and decisions (Ruedy and Schweitzer 2011).

1.7.2 Wellbeing

For this research, I am using the overarching term wellbeing to encompass school principals’ mental wellbeing (their levels of mental stress and work stressors) and their capacity to care for self (self-compassion).

1.7.3 Leadership

For this research I refer to leadership as the approach school principals take to managing the challenges of their role and responsibilities. In the educational leadership research ‘leadership’ has tended to be dominated by what leadership style is better suited to **manage** the principalship rather than **how** a school leader needs to be to lead a school.

1.8 Summary of the Structure of the Thesis

The structure of this thesis started with the introduction (chapter one) that provided some background context as to the challenges of school leadership and the professional competencies required, primarily in Australia. It then positioned mindfulness training as a professional learning option and sets the stage for the research aims and significance of the study. In chapter two a detailed review of the literature explores the relevant research on the personal cost of being a school principals', the impact of their role on their wellbeing, and the potential of mindfulness training and its application as professional learning. In the final section, mindfulness is examined more closely to highlight why and how it might work in supporting wellbeing and leadership. Chapter three outlines the methodology of the study and is divided into three sections of mindfulness, wellbeing and leadership and includes more details of the Mindful Leaders program. Chapter four, the results section is also divided into three sections of mindfulness, wellbeing, and leadership with each presenting both the quantitative and qualitative results for that section. The results chapter also includes some further findings that emerged from a deeper analysis of the qualitative data. The findings are discussed in chapter five, drawing commonalities with previous research and highlighting new learnings. Conceptual, methodological, and professional contributions, limitations of this study, some future possible research options and concluding remarks are also presented.

Chapter Two

2

Literature Review

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2.1 Introduction

To introduce the literature and establish context, this chapter will argue that more needs to be done to tackle the reality of stress and feelings of work overload for school principals. The chapter discusses the personal costs of being a school principal and reviews the relevant research about professional learning to support and develop this leadership role. The potential of mindfulness training is discussed including examples from clinical, workplace and education fields and possible suitability as professional learning for school leaders. This includes a short description and justification of the mindfulness training program selected for this research. The three elements that are the focus of this research will then be presented. Firstly, mindfulness to develop self-awareness and how the meditative practice works in developing focus and awareness. Secondly, how the practice of mindfulness might negate stress and rumination through self-compassion and self-care, and finally the potential implications of a mindful way of being to support authentic leadership.

In recognition of the influential impact of leadership on the school community and because it is also becoming increasingly more difficult to attract, recruit and retain quality school principals, educational systems internationally are recognising that something needs to change in how this important leadership role is supported (Schleicher, 2015). School principals have a central and crucial role as leaders of educational communities and are “directly and primarily responsible for the educational outcomes” in their schools (Lazenby et al., 2020, p. 4). A school principal is also most influential in activating the conditions for school improvement, staff motivation, commitment, resilience and working conditions, and they have a major influence on student learning outcomes (Durdađi, 2013; Gu & Day, 2013; Seashore Louis et al., 2010). Being a school principal can be very rewarding, however, it is well documented that it may also come at a personal cost, due to the high levels of work-related stress, competing demands, work overload and burnout (Beausaert et al., 2016). Unfortunately, when personal wellbeing resources are depleted it can be increasingly challenging to be effective, let alone lead (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005).

Determining how to professional prepare and develop school principals to manage personal stress, the daily demands of a school *and* provide good leadership is complex and multilayered, and hence can be challenging. Mindfulness training for school principals has the potential to provide an alternative methodology to address this by remedying illbeing and enhancing leadership.

2.2 The Personal Cost of Being a School Principal

Principals' multiple roles and high expectations from the community (and often themselves) come at a cost to their personal wellbeing and professional performance (Friedman, 2002; Kelchtermans et al., 2011; Oakley, 2012; Riley et al., 2020; Robbins, 2013). As discussed in the previous chapter consistent findings from the *Australian Principal Wellbeing Survey* (Riley, 2014, 2017; Riley et al., 2020) suggest that principals are time poor, overworked, distracted, more stressed, have higher levels of emotional demands and are more likely to suffer from fatigue, rumination and burnout.

2.2.1 Time Poor, Overworked and Distracted

One of the most significant stressors in the role of Principal, has been identified as the sheer amount of work required (Beausaert et al., 2016; Riley et al., 2020). The majority of a principal's time at work is spent on administration/ management and staffing issues and studies have argued that principals would like dedicated time to pay attention to strategic and curriculum leadership, with the opportunity to engage in the broader scope of community issues (Cranston et al., 2003). However, in reality what a principal deems important or pays attention to is highly dependent on "the external environment and the local context of a school" (Hallinger, 2003, p. 229).

The context of a school has a significant influence on Principals' work. Principals working in more challenging context conditions appear to prioritise and focus their attention on specific areas (instructional and student centred). In schools with students from less disadvantaged areas, with higher student and teacher expectations, principals seemed "to spread their actions more widely" (Goldring et al., 2008, p. 349). Goldring and colleagues identified three broad groups of principals based on their dominant level of activity focus; Eclectic (fragmented, focus and time spent on multiple activities), Instructional (focus on teaching and learning) and Student-centred (student affairs and wellbeing). What their study highlighted is that the environment (stimulus) has a significant impact on a leader's reaction to how and what they focus on or pay attention to (consciously or unconsciously). Similarly, in a study of remote school principals in Western Australia, principals described how the principalship was more administratively focused as they tackled the challenges of high turnover rates of staff. They also reported being very stressed as they navigated the constant lack of privacy, "being on call twenty-four hours a day" and having to perform community functions and managing community tensions which added their heightened stress levels (Oakley, 2012, p. 74).

Most principals experience multiple interruptions during the school day, which also makes it even more difficult to stay focused and complete activities that require longer periods of time and attention (Deloitte, 2017). Unfortunately, what happens when people have numerous tasks and responsibilities is they try and cope by attempting to do bits of them at the same time. This is termed multitasking, which unfortunately keeps people locked in an inefficient cycle of habit (Levy et al., 2012). When multitasking becomes the brain's default mode, a person thinks they are dealing with the different sources of information, however they are actually becoming less efficient as they are switching between tasks, and they have reduced cognitive processing abilities (Ophir et al., 2009). Using brain scans neuroscientists have shown that heavy multitaskers have reduced grey matter (Loh & Kanai, 2014), and that it causes physical and psychological stress (Wetherell & Carter, 2014).

Even the most goal-focused leaders will need to skilfully manage the constant distractions that threaten to undermine their best intentions ...(and that) without focus, there is no distraction to recognise, and the routines and crises come to dominate leaders' work. (Robinson et al., 2008, p. 667)

This mindful ability to focus or regulate attention, to recognise distraction and "consciously decide what to do about it" (Robinson et al., 2008, p. 667), is an advantageous skill of principal leadership (Bush & Glover, 2014). Research suggests that high performing leaders can weave and shift their attention and focus according to the current demands (Goleman, 2013). In addition, they can strategically focus time and effort on prioritising practices that have the biggest impact on their schools learning environment and consequently student outcomes (Barber et al., 2010). If effective leaders need space and time to work at optimum levels (Goleman et al., 2009), then learning to be more mindful may benefit stressed principals (Murphy, 2016).

2.2.2 Stress and Emotional Demands

The heightened level of continued stress has been described by some principals as being akin to the after effect of war, or the sense of being 'shell shocked' (Oakley, 2012). For other principals there is an afflictive relationship between high expectations and the 'harsh reality' of the job.

At some point principals learn that they cannot possibly live up to their own performance expectations regarding their various tasks. They become frustrated, exhausted and feel unaccomplished, in other words burned out. Some consider abandoning teaching or school administration while others soldier on and learn to bear the burden imposed on them by their world. (Friedman, 2002, p. 230)

Additional stress can be caused by relentless scrutiny and increasing accountability measures (Riley & Langan-Fox, 2016). League tables and other public comparisons of student learning outcomes as reported in national standardised assessments, can place Principals and schools under additional pressure. This constant visibility and the vastness of their role means most principals work in a ‘*fishbowl*’ (Watson, 2009), under the gaze and inspection of parents, community, and the media (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014).

The lack of attention to the emotional aspects and strains of the role in favour of the mechanics of doing the role can also result in a sense of loneliness and detachment where principals are encouraged to ignore or suppress their feelings. Kelchtermans et al. (2011) aptly titled study “*The lucid loneliness of the gatekeeper: Exploring the emotional dimension in principals’ work lives*” suggest most principals downplay their emotions.

Principals’ professionalism and professional quality are often exclusively defined and emotional dimension in principals’ lives evaluated in terms of efficiency and effectiveness (students measured learning outcomes). This dominant managerial discourse makes it hard for principals to acknowledge that the emotionality they experience in their job is an inherent part of it. Therefore, they often tend to feel that emotions are only idiosyncratic, accidental, temporary, but above all annoying side-effects that need to be controlled and thus played down as much as possible. (p. 94)

If these stressors and emotional demands are not addressed (or just suppressed) this can exacerbate emotional and mental exhaustion, which can then manifest in the intensity of emotional labour required to suppress internal emotions and construct external expressions of coping to appear as one who is managing (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). In the leadership literature this pretending to cope is referred to as ‘impression management’ and ‘surface acting’ and both are noted as the most “*important and most frequently studied depleting self-regulatory behaviours*” as a leader’s mental resources are absorbed with the energy required to portray a self that maybe inconsistent with their inner authentic self and can result in less engagement and higher stress (Weiss et al., 2018, p. 311).

In their 2017 study, Maxwell and Riley reported that 1320 full-time principals they surveyed displayed significantly higher scores on emotional demands at work and burnout. These principals were also more likely to hide their emotions or engage in fake behaviour or surface acting. Using their own and others’ research, Maxwell and Riley (2017) created an example of how this might be experienced:

Principals are expected to appropriately decide when to suppress or amplify negative emotions when confronted with students or teachers who have transgressed rules, or amplify positive emotions; behaving calmly in the face of problems to which they may not know the solution, putting on a fake smile to influence others' emotions and be positive for parents.....Moreover, there is a dominant “display rule” pressuring school leaders to manage personal emotional responses so as to express their most rational selves. (Maxwell & Riley, 2017, pp. 485-486)

The ongoing emotional and mental exhaustion and stress this might cause can also lead to physical fatigue. Unfortunately, being fatigued and not recovering with quality sleep can also compound stress, cause worry or rumination and possible burnout (Geurts, 2014).

2.2.3 Fatigue, Rumination and Burnout

Burnout, the inability to achieve goals, and poorer performance occurs when insufficient recovery time is not allocated (that is not getting enough sleep or quality breaks) (Geurts, 2014). Sleep quality is one of the fundamental pillars of personal wellbeing and accordingly has broad implications for cognitive functioning, mental and physical health, work performance and safety (Barnes & Drake, 2015; Kemper et al., 2015). Lack of sleep or fatigue can be understood by way of ‘effort-recovery theory’ (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). The core assumption of this theory is that expending energy at work has short term costs, and without time allocated for recovery, manifests in burnout.

Compounding this, people who are worried or stressed about an issue tend to ruminate more and this is sometimes exacerbated prior to falling asleep, as their thoughts are basically keeping them awake (Carlson & Garland, 2005). This in turn prevents them from having a good sleep and so they may be plagued by fatigue issues the day after. Unfortunately, rumination and/or negative self-talk can also be experienced during the day and is commonly referred to as the inner critic, self-criticism, or negative internal dialogue.

The inner critic symbolises the strict, inner normative voice that interferes with the individual’s organismic experiencing process. (Stinckens et al., 2013, p. 144)

This challenging internal dialogue can be just as mentally and emotionally exhausting as external stressors. The harsh and critical whispers of the inner critic can also feed self-judgment, holding oneself to high and often unrealistic standards, or to suffer from a form of imposter syndrome (the belief that one is not good enough for the role or one is a fraud or fake) (Coleman, 2016).

2.2.4 Who Cares?

There is overwhelming evidence of the detrimental emotional effects of work-related stress for principals yet very little professional learning has been targeted at preparing school leaders to cope with the stress of their role (Robbins, 2013). A review in the United Kingdom “*Who cares for school leaders?*” concluded that the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) had preparation programs directed at leaders to “manage the stress in their teams, rather than giving them tools to manage the stresses of their own role” (Robbins, 2013, p. 53) and called for explicit education to support principals to manage the high levels of emotional demands. Unfortunately, the focus of much professional learning for principals is still focused on the technical “competencies as a means of demonstrating success defined largely by compliance with the demands” by governing bodies for better student test scores (Crow et al., 2017, p. 265), thus limiting leadership training to what principals should **be doing**, what influences or limits their practice, and best suited leadership approaches or styles (Gumus et al., 2018).

In summary the nature of the school principal role is fraught with conflicting time pressures, large workloads and varied contexts that make it challenging for principals to focus on their priorities. Principals are also weighed down with emotional demands and stressors that negatively impact their wellbeing and the ability to lead effectively. As discussed in chapter one, professional learning for school principals to address their unique needs has mainly been focused on the skills needed to manage school operations. Unfortunately, this has come with an assumption of the meta cognitive leadership skills of self-awareness, managing self, emotional and attentional regulation and the personal and emotional competencies to engage in effective leadership (Daniëls et al., 2019).

2.3 Approaches to School Principals’ Professional Learning

Examining the approaches to professional learning needs for school principals is challenging because of the multifaceted nature of school leadership. Research, however has tended to take a more a singular approach by focusing on principals’ developing a certain model or style of leadership that might have the right combination of elements to address the different facets and challenges of their work (Fisher, 2014; Sebastian et al., 2019). However, despite these “single paradigm models” apparent “technical rigor, (they) provide somewhat simplistic dichotomies or limited accounts of successful school leadership” (Day et al., 2016, p. 254) and come at a cost to other aspects of principal work and experiences (Sebastian et al., 2019).

This dominance has resulted in a narrowing of research perspectives on what it means to be an effective school leader. As the literature has cultivated a focus on support for teaching and learning as the hallmark of good school leadership, other aspects of principals' work have received little attention. (Grissom & Loeb, 2011, p. 1092)

In a comprehensive and rare literature review on leadership and leadership development in educational settings, Daniëls et al. (2019) reviewed single paradigm educational leadership theories that have informed effective school leadership and professional development. These included for example, instructional, transformational, distributed, and situational leadership. From this review, five main categories of effective school leadership were identified (ranked from most important): (1) Effective schools have leaders who focus on curricula and instruction, (2) who are able to have effective communication and maintain good internal and external relations, (3) with the capacity to shape organisational climate, culture, trust and collaboration. (4) They have the ability to define and sustain the school's vision and mission and influence school improvement, provide frequent feedback, reward and recognise success and finally, and (5) they have ability to invest in personnel by hiring and retaining qualified teachers. Even though these categories are a robust example of principals work they have failed to bring attention to the most important aspect of good leadership, namely that effective school leaders have command of their attention so that they are able to purposefully focus and mindfully choose the appropriate course of action.

What is ironic is that regardless of what the literature deems as important to be effective, if school leaders are working from a place of reaction with depleted or non-existent wellbeing resources (Boyatzis et al., 2006), no leadership professional learning list of what they need to do is going to be achievable, in fact it can potentially cause more stress and feelings of inadequacy.

Learning to be more mindful by engaging in mindfulness practices could provide the foundation for awareness so that school principals could bring the most effective attitudes, knowledge, actions and behaviours to their leadership. If school principals' approach to leadership was grounded in the three elements:

1. Of being able to develop and bring awareness to observing and choosing how they regulate their attention so as to manage their energy, time and priorities.
2. By learning more about themselves and developing a self-awareness of their emotional regulation and reactions, and having the ability to practice self-compassion when required,

3. and finally, the space to create congruence with their authentic self and leadership style.

This then would provide a stable platform of **being** for activating the **doing** aspect of leadership.

2.4 A Mindful Approach to Being a Principal

A mindful approach to being a school principal moves beyond the emphasis of *doing* and *having* (i.e. *having* appropriate traits or competencies, or *doing* certain actions dependant on the context) and more to a state of *awareness* and *being* (Fry & Kriger, 2009). Learning to manage one's wellbeing and lead more mindfully includes developing a deeper sense of self-awareness (Clarke, 2016); an ability to focus and regulate emotions (Scott DeRue & Ashford, 2010); compassion including to self (Hougaard & Carter, 2018), and congruence with one's true self or authentic self by acting more consistently with one's own inner thoughts and feelings (Weiss et al., 2018). A mindful approach to being a school principal could be described as:

A secular idea that enables people to sustain effective leadership throughout their lifetimes. It enables them to be fully present, aware of themselves and their impact on other people, and focused on achieving the goals of their organisations. Mindful leadership aims to develop self-aware and compassionate leaders by combining Western understanding of authentic leadership with Eastern wisdom about the mind, developed from practices that have been used for thousands of years. (George¹, 2015)

The benefits of a mindful approach for school leaders has been promoted in the educational field, mainly as a methodology to reduce stress and primarily by academics whose personal experiences of their own mindful practices have informed their teachings, which they have then consolidated into books that offer practical advice and models to make the job of being a principal less stressful (Brown & Olson, 2015; Murphy, 2016; Wells, 2016). Wells' previous research was focused on the stressors experienced by school leaders (Wells, 2013a, 2013b) and her book is aimed at providing techniques to support school administrators who have become "overwhelmed and exhausted by acute and chronic stress" (p. xxi).

¹ See <https://www.billgeorge.org/articles/mindful-leadership-compassion-contemplation-and-meditation-develop-effective-leaders/>

Wells defines mindfulness for school leaders as:

Mindfulness is the practice that can help leaders be fully present in the moment, on purpose, without criticism of self or other. And, by being fully present and developing mindfulness practices. Stress can be reduced and leadership effectiveness increased. (Wells, 2016, p. xxiii)

Murphy's book (2016) synthesises self-compassion, mindfulness, positive psychology, internal family system theory and focusing techniques into practices and exercises to enhance the wellbeing of educational leaders. He presents his model as the MY DANCE framework (**M**ind your values, **Y**ield to now, **D**isentangle from upsets, **A**llow Unease, **N**ourish yourself, **C**herish self-compassion, **E**xpress feelings wisely). Brown and Olsen's (2015) book use story portraits of school leaders who have applied mindful techniques to overcome stressors and challenges. Using body attunement practices and contemplative exercises, Brown and Olsen provide tools for the reader to begin their mindful journey.

What is heartening about these books is that they showcase that there are mindfulness practitioners and mindful school leaders engaging in this approach to leading and that there are communities to support them (e.g., Mindfulness in Education Network). Unfortunately, the academic research that provides evidence of the impact of mindfulness on school principals' wellbeing and leadership is still extremely limited.

2.4.1 Research on School Principals and Mindfulness

Prior to the start of this study specific research on school leaders and mindfulness was scarce, however during the writing of this study a promising qualitative study with school administrators was published. It utilised a mindfulness intervention program designed initially for teachers by Jennings and colleagues (Jennings et al., 2013) called Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education™ (CARE), with a small group of thirteen school administrators and found improvements to self-care, self-reflection, and better relationships after completing the program (Mahfouz, 2018). CARE™ is designed to support wellbeing by developing SEL skills and utilises some mindfulness-based approaches and a form of self-compassion training during a field-based training program of four days spread over a period of four to five weeks (Jennings, 2011). CARE™ was designed initially because of the lack of professional development for teachers to address stress and burnout and to provide techniques to support the *how* of teaching not just the *what*. Referencing policy documents in her country (USA) Mahfouz (2018) also noted that professional learning tends to also concentrate on the *what* principals need to do (the work) and assume that

school leaders come equipped with the ability to self-care and model balanced leadership. Mahfouz warns that:

This is a critical aspect of the educational leadership domain, and until it is documented in standards, school administrators may still prioritise their work over attending to their own social and emotional well-being. (Mahfouz, 2018, p. 615)

Another qualitative study (unpublished doctoral study) followed seven American school principals experience and impact of the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program (Rufa, 2018). This mindfulness program is discussed in more detail later in this chapter; however, the program does include formal relaxation mediation practices. Rufa (2108) concluded that even though the principals had some positive wellbeing outcomes, they were not able to sustain the mind training or practices after the study.

Although not specifically focused on mindfulness, earlier research examined elements of effective leadership and concluded that more effective school leaders shared more ‘mindful’ (considered or reflective) behaviours of reflection and taking time (Kearney et al., 2013). It is important to note that this research defined ‘mindful’ as being the ability to notice the “*novelty*” of the situation or environment in a “*heightened state of involvement and wakefulness*” which then allows for a different approach and perspective (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000, p. 2). (This use of ‘mindful’ is not the same as mindfulness and this definition issue will be discussed later in this chapter). Kearney et al. (2013) suggested that this approach to leading took principals at least three years to develop by listening to more experienced and expert teachers who taught them how to work more effectively with them. These identified mindful leaders’ modelled experimentation, reflection and decentering to their staff, encouraged risk taking, and were patient.

Mindful principals spoke of taking the time to reflect, collaborating with teachers to analyse data on the effectiveness of teaching and learning in specific areas of interest, taking the time to listen, considering multiple voices, integrating them into any definition of a problem or solution, taking time to think and reflect on possible solutions, and avoiding the tendency to rush to judgment to implement quick fixes that might not address the real problem, or worse. (Kearney et al., 2013, p. 10)

Other researchers have called for including the explicit method of mindfulness training for school leaders as an effective way to not only help reduce stress, but also as an “inoculation against burnout” (Maxwell & Riley, 2017, p. 496). An advantageous skill

of principal leadership has also been identified as the mindful ability to regulate attention and choose a considered response to each inimitable challenge (Bush & Glover, 2014).

2.4.2 Research on Leadership and Mindfulness

There is research in organisational or corporate leadership, and mindfulness, however this is also limited and fraught with its own challenges. Where it is available is “highly heterogenous and of variable quality” (Donaldson-Feilder et al., 2019, p. 26). In their systematic review of mindfulness and meditation interventions for organisational managers and leaders, Donaldson-Feilder et al. (2019) identified nineteen empirical studies that had been specifically run for leaders and reviewed their wellbeing and leadership capabilities outcomes (Donaldson-Feilder et al., 2019). Nine appeared in peer review journals (with one in press), six were PhD theses, two were conference presentations and one a business school research report. The inclusion criteria for the nineteen studies (of 2088 results in the initial search) was: design or delivery to leaders or to enhance leadership; aimed to achieve change in wellbeing and leadership related outcomes; inclusion of mindfulness and or meditation; and focused on the workplace. Even though the quality of the studies varied the authors reported “initial promising evidence” that mindfulness and meditation interventions have the “potential to enhance wellbeing, resilience, capacities in keeping with leadership models (e.g. authentic leadership) and capabilities that are related to leadership” (Donaldson-Feilder et al., 2019, p. 25). What the authors did highlight was that it was difficult to compare studies as they all included different population characteristics, contexts (none from Education), intervention design, methodological approach, and data collection points. The intervention delivery, techniques and content also varied greatly, with some studies focused on teaching mindfulness and others integrating mindfulness and meditation in some form. There was also a great difference in how these studies measured their wellbeing, leadership, and mindfulness outcomes. Fourteen of the papers that suggested wellbeing and resilience as an important factor for effective leadership utilised measures to determine stress, others anxiety, and two measured resilience. They all used self-report questionnaires and/or interviews with different tools and not all studies provided full statistical data. In regard to leadership the nineteen papers also varied in how they measured leadership, with some using existing leadership theory (with two examining authentic leadership, although they used different measures to do this), and others using constructs that were deemed important to leadership (including for example relationship focus, self-awareness, decision making and empathy). For mindfulness outcomes only seven papers included a scale (four used Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ),

two used the Mindful Attention Scale (MAS) and one the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (KIMS)). What was also “disappointing” (p. 25) for the review authors was that twelve of the studies did not measure mindfulness and therefore the “lack of information about whether mindfulness levels changed following the interventions” meant they could not judge if any of the other outcomes were associated with changes in participants mindfulness levels (p. 25). Interestingly, there was also variation in the use of language to describe mindfulness, with eleven papers explicitly using the term, four using Transcendental Meditation and other just using mindfulness or meditation related approaches. The “interventions varied enormously” with “no two studies researching the same intervention ... thus making it impossible to deduce which form of intervention is the most likely to be effective in developing management or leadership capability” (Donaldson-Feilder et al., 2019, p. 26).

Popular business book authors and practitioners have also promoted mindful leadership in the corporate world using different mindfulness elements and practices (Carroll, 2007; Goleman, 2013; Gonzalez, 2012; Hougaard & Carter, 2018; Sinclair, 2016). The common ground of these aforementioned authors is they all posit that to become a mindful leader one needs to cultivate a regular contemplative or meditation practice (Senge et al., 2004).

Although academic research in mindfulness and leadership and especially educational leadership is still in its infancy, for background context there is a more robust field of research in the clinical and workplace benefits of mindfulness.

2.4.3 Clinical and Workplace Mindfulness Programs

Secular mindfulness training as an intervention (that includes an element of meditative practice) has a strong background in clinical applications due to the significant positive results experienced by these first-generation psychological-therapeutic programs (especially in stress reduction, wellbeing and coping). Because of this, there has been growing interest in second generation mindfulness’ applications to business and education (teachers and students) environments (Reb & Atkins, 2015; Weare, 2014b).

2.4.3.1 First Generation Programs– Clinical

The first generation of these programs were clinically based to help people deal with the suffering of chronic physical and psychological pain. These types of programs have reached and been appealing to a large and varied secular audience because they are embedded in

science and research and utilise relevant (and American) language (Kabat-Zinn, 2003).

The most widely used meditative mindfulness clinical interventions are:

- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) (Kabat-Zinn, 2013). This is a program that provides participants with the mechanisms to enhance and sustain their mindfulness by developing introspection and metacognitive awareness (Baer, 2003) and is determined or achieved by a set of exercises (e.g., meditation and yoga movements) to achieve a mindful state (Pagnini & Philips, 2015).
- Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) (Segal et al., 2002) that integrates cognitive therapy, mindfulness and meditation.
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) (Hayes & Strosahl, 2004) utilises acceptance and mindful meditation to observe, accept and then act in a way congruent with one's values.

The benefits of these types of first generation clinical interventions have been documented in research with scopes that include: managing depression (Kemeny et al., 2012); tackling alcohol and other drug abuse (Treloar, 2014); reducing blood pressure and improving immune functionality (Jacobs et al., 2011; Wolever et al., 2012); slowing cellular aging (Epel et al., 2009); as a coping mechanism for cancer patients and those experiencing chronic pain (Shigaki et al., 2006) and as a way to improve wellbeing and happiness (Hanson & Mendius, 2009; Harris, 2007).

2.4.3.2 Second Generation Programs - Workplaces

In the business sector organisations are incorporating second generation mindfulness programs as part of their employee wellbeing programs and to improve performance and efficiencies (King & Badham, 2020). These are usually based on version of MBSR, MBCT and ACT however as discussed earlier researchers have not tended to include the details of the type of training utilised for their research (Donaldson-Feilder et al., 2019).

These second-generation programs especially in workplaces have attracted criticisms as well. There have been heated discussions around what these modified programs are possibly leaving out or adapting to suit different audiences. The concern is that the traditional practice of mindfulness incorporates values and lifestyle choices that are not aligned with consumerism and hedonism and that by only selecting aspects of the practice to suit the new audiences, the deeper spiritual value of the practice is cheapened and tarnished. In regards to the integrity of these workplace programs some commentators are

concerned about the dangers of popularising (Clower & Peng, 2014) and commodifying (Hyland, 2015) the practice. Others see it as part of the adaptations and “*mutations*” that have been happening to traditional practices over the “*last two millennia*” (Garfinkel, 2006, p. 4). Garfinkel suggests that these second-generation programs (to appeal to a secular and scientific audience) might be the beginning of a “*new Axial Age*” (p. 19). At the base of this debate he goes on to explain, regardless of where or how one learns about mindfulness is a commonality.

For anyone who thinks, feels, emotes who simply want answers to things that are of such a universal nature ... transcend isms and cut to the soul of what it means to be human... and to make it to the weekend with a little less suffering and a little more happiness. (Garfinkel, 2006, p. 5)

One study that is worth mentioning that sought to gauge the difference between relaxation methods and a meditative approach to combat work stress showed that participants who utilised the meditative mindfulness practice had the most improved outcomes and was a “safe and effective intervention strategy” to improve work stress and anxiety (Manocha et al., 2011, p. 7). The study included a large sample of 178 adult workers participating in an 8-week, 3-arm randomised controlled trial comparing a “mental silence approach” to meditation (n= 59) to a “relaxation” active control (n = 56) and a wait-list control (n = 63).

More recently and in response to including the traditional ethics of mindfulness to these secular programs, a second wave of programs have emerged that have been more explicit about their reference to eastern philosophy and psychology with the intent to produce “transformational change” in participants (King & Badham, 2018, p. 1).

2.4.3.3 Second Generation Programs- Education

In the education field, programs have been adapted (mainly from the MBSR format) and developed for students (for example Mindful schools, MindUP, and Smiling Minds) and for teachers (Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education, Mindfulness Based Wellness Education, and the Mindfulness in School Project). A comprehensive review of programs (Lomas, Medina, Ivtzan, Rupprecht, & Eiroa-Orosa, 2017; Meiklejohn et al., 2012) shows that there are a number of approaches to introduce mindfulness to schools resulting in great benefits for students and teachers (Weare, 2014a). Educational research has linked the benefits of mindfulness to students’ improving academic performance, managing ADHD, improving behaviour management and self-regulation in classrooms

(Zenner et al., 2014). For teachers the literature points to mindfulness as a technique to reducing stress, improving efficacy, assisting problem solving, easing transition to work, improving mental flexibility and enhancing job satisfaction (Chaskalson, 2011).

Roeser, Skinner, Beers, and Jennings (2012) have argued (and are great supporters) of including meditative based training to be included in teacher training because they believe that there is a gap in addressing how teachers develop better habits of mind or mental strategies.

... such habits include the tendencies to gather data through all the senses, to be aware of and reflect on experiences in a non-judgemental manner, to be flexible when problem solving, to regulate emotion and be resilient after setbacks and to attend to others with empathy and compassion. (Roeser et al., 2012, p. 1)

Therefore, in an attempt to address the gap in school principal professional learning, a second-generation training secular mindfulness training program which could be deemed part of a second wave of programs was selected for this study.

2.4.4 A Mindfulness Training Program for School Principals

The mindfulness training for this study utilised a specialised mindfulness at work program, Corporate Based Mindfulness Training (CBMT©) developed by Rasmus Hougaard, founder of the Potential Project². This program has been developed specifically for the work environment and is designed to provide secular mind training (meditation), mindful work applications, and mental strategy training (for example, kindness, non-judging, presence, acceptance) to enhance performance and wellbeing, and is grounded in science, positive psychology, leadership theory and meditative based traditions. The program also draws on traditional eastern contemplative traditions, psychology and teachings (Grabovac et al., 2011) by weaving time tested ancient methods of mental training to practical day to day work experiences (Hougaard et al., 2016). The intent of the training was to enhance the capabilities of mindful habits of mind and/or ways of being (that have benefits both professionally and personally) by developing mindful mental strategies and ways of working, and secondly, the actual acquired skills and process of learning to become more mindful (the mind training practice) to develop meta skills that could act as a catalyst for improved self-awareness, enhanced authenticity and possibly transformation (Baron, 2016; King & Badham, 2020). International companies like

² See www.potentialproject.com

Accenture, IKEA, Lego and Carlsberg utilise their programs. The Potential Project company information states that it is represented in 28 countries and has to date trained over 20,000 people. Their case studies have shown improvement in better focus and prioritising, less multitasking, improved ability to manage work related stress (Näsström, 2015) and improved leadership skills (e.g., self-awareness, presence and communication) (Hougaard & Carter, 2018), making it a highly suitable meditative based training program for this study³. CBMT©'s mindfulness definition (and the working definition for this research project) in achieving mindfulness is described as:

A balanced mind (that) is relaxed, focused, and clear. A mind that sees clearly, views reality as ever changing, as mere potential, and knows the difference between genuine happiness and fleeting pleasure. Valuing ethics means continually discerning what's wholesome and constructive and what is not. (Hougaard et al., 2016, p. 9)

This definition relies on the development of the meditative component or mind training aspect of the program which encourages participants to complete 10-minute daily guided mind training exercises (supported by the programs smartphone App). This practice progressively cultivates the traditional foundations and applications of mindfulness, utilising the two core elements of 'focus' and 'open awareness' training. The focus training aimed to increase mental and physical relaxation, attentional skills (to help avoid distractedness and multitasking) and mental clarity (manage information overload and focus on priorities). The open awareness training sought to develop skills of observation (thoughts, feelings, sensations, and emotions neutrally without engaging), along with three insights of: impermanence (e.g., Is there anything you experience that is unchanging?), genuine happiness (e.g., Does this thought contribute to happiness or suffering?) and potential (e.g., When you are observing your thoughts who/what is it that is doing the observation?).

To have a positive impact this program would need to address the key elements of developing:

- self-awareness and attention regulation by practicing meditative mindfulness,
- the ability to regulate emotions and self-care by the development of self-compassion,
- and the insight of becoming more congruent with one's own way of authentically being.

³ See the Methods section for the full program details)

Given the 21st Century demands on principals, the negative impact that it has on their wellbeing and leadership, and the scarcity of explicit research and training to address this, attention will now be directed to unpack and examine how a program like the one described works by exploring the definition and mechanisms of meditative mindfulness training and how it helps to develop the key elements of self-awareness, attention and emotional regulation (including self-compassion) and creates the building blocks to leading more authentically.

2.5 Defining Mindfulness

The definition and use of the term ‘Mindfulness’ in the academic literature ranges from Western psychological constructs to Eastern contemplative and traditional practices, which in turn have different definitions, approaches and are also based on different models of mechanisms of change which can cause some confusion. There is an ongoing debate in the literature as to an operational definition of the term ‘mindfulness’ as it is sometimes referred to as a trait, state or a practice (Brown et al., 2007; Davidson, 2010). As noted by Donaldson-Feider et al. (2019) review of the leadership and mindfulness literature the term mindfulness was used differently by the different researchers and did not include details of the type, duration, and meditative practices. Likewise, in the majority of research in the broader scope of non-clinical mindfulness programs they sometimes do not detail the program content or practices and this can be confusing to interpret effect and draw parallels to other research (King & Badham, 2020). It is for this reason that this section is going to go into some more detail as to the mind training mechanisms of mindfulness utilised for this project.

2.5.1 Mechanisms of Mindfulness

With the intent of providing clarity the mechanism of mindfulness will be explained using the Buddhist Psychology Model as a framework as it is most aligned with incorporating the traditional meditative practices. The type of mind training (focus and open awareness training) has its roots in Eastern contemplative traditions and is most often associated with a regular meditation practice.

The practice that is cultivated in traditional eastern meditation is the behaviour of the mind to be aware of awareness, or the capacity of the mind to observe (in a detached or bare attention way) to the contents and the behaviours of the mind (Mikulas, 2011). Mikulas describes the content of the mind as the objects (including the object of self and feelings one has about self) that arise in one’s consciousness (perceptions, memories,

thoughts, and feelings). Focus training (or concentration training) is the learned control of the focus of one's attention, and applied to the mind, is the focus on one's awareness on a particular set of contents of the mind. The quietening of the mind that comes with concentration allows for more control of thoughts. This 'concentration' practice does calm and relax the mind, and hence the body, such that in western text, when referring to mindfulness meditation, it is usually in terms of stress reduction or relaxation and that the benefits ascribed to mindfulness, are (according to Mikulas) actually benefits derived from training in concentration or focus. The concentration practice is usually associated with stress and symptom reduction whereas awareness training has the function of "facilitating awakening" (Mikulas, 2011, p. 5). Shapiro et al. (2006) suggests that this flow from self-regulation to self-awareness and the personal awakening is based on an individual's *intention* to learn mindfulness. As meditators continue to practice, their intentions shift along the continuum from initially seeking self-regulation habits, to engaging in deeper self-exploration and eventually to investigating self-liberation behaviours.

2.5.1.1 Focus Training

Traditional focus training is not just about developing attention as an activity in concentration, but rather that three characteristics are brought to the awareness and direct experience of the meditation object (for example the breath) (Grabovac et al., 2011). Participants are invited to not just focus on the breath, but also to bring awareness to the qualities of the breath (for example how it changes, its texture, length, quality). These practices therefore are used in the first instance to prepare and help calm and focus the mind.

An untrained mind is easily distracted by ruminative or narrative thought processes, (and so) attention must be refocused many times. During this repeated refocusing, an attitude of acceptance prevents negative thoughts, such as self-judgment and resultant mental proliferation, from arising and prevents the practice itself from becoming a source of aversion. Without acceptance, awareness tends to become tighter and less flexible and so has more difficulty noticing the arising and passing away of a rapid series of sense impressions and mental events. It should be noted that acceptance, as we are using the term here, is a quality of awareness: it does not involve cognition. As such, it is not equivalent to thinking accepting thoughts about one's self or others. In fact, cognitive forms of acceptance are really a form of attention regulation. An example may help clarify this distinction. When meditating, the meditator notices that their attention has wandered. If the awareness of that wandering has the quality of acceptance, then no judgment arises (and no follow-on mental proliferation arises) and the meditator can redirect their attention to the

object of their meditation without any intervening thoughts. (Grabovac et al., 2011, pp. 159-160)

2.5.1.2 Awareness Training

Awareness training is primarily based on the on the behaviour of the mind to be 'aware' moment by moment and observant of three characteristics (impermanence, suffering and non self) (Grabovac et al., 2011). In the Buddhist Psychology Model (BPM) developed by Grabovac et al. (2011) there is no distinction between the awareness brought by physical sensations (sense impressions) and mental (cognitive) events. Both are worked with in the same manner during mindfulness practice. As attentional resources are limited, individuals can only be aware of one object at a time. With the awareness of any object there is an affiliated feeling tone (not an emotion, but rather a spontaneous affective experience of the awareness), which falls into one of three categories, pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. Due to the constant arising and passing away of these objects or sensations (physical and mental) they can often go unnoticed however they can trigger reactions or thoughts that may lead to distress (suffering). As humans we have habitual reactions to wanting things we find pleasant, and avoiding things we find unpleasant. In Buddhist terms this is 'attachment' and 'avoidance'. In the BPM model it is explicit that this 'attachment' and 'avoidance' is not actually to the object or sensation, but rather to the *feeling* state of pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. This then has a knock-on effect of more mental activity which can then also feed on itself.

Not being aware of how this pattern of attachment and aversion can lead to mental proliferation helps to keep the entire process habitual. (Grabovac et al., 2011, p. 156)

The BPM posits that suffering is a direct result of the attachment/aversion reaction to fleeting feelings and their affiliated mental noise or proliferation. Thereby, wellbeing is improved when sensations (both physical and cognitive) are allowed to rise and fall with no cognitive processing initiated with either attachment or aversion. *Another way to understand this is the tendency to cling* (or grasp) to certain mind content including beliefs, perceptions, images of 'self', expectations, and opinions. Clinging, or holding too tightly to these can commonly cause suffering, resistance to change, distorted perceptions and impaired thinking (Mikulas, 2011).

The ability to train the mind to choose its focus, to become observant of thoughts and to be able to react to them from a place of choice is the foundation of being mindful (Harris, 2007). Mindfulness, then could be simply stated as the ability to pay attention to the task

at hand, whatever that task is (physical or cognitive) (Hougaard et al., 2016). This present-moment awareness has been shown to facilitate adaptive stress-responses (Donald et al., 2016) which in turn may have positive implications for personal wellbeing and leaders' work (Apple, 2015).

Sustaining ongoing awareness practices supports leaders in attaining the steadiness and flexibility needed for addressing the adaptive problems of our world. (Goldman-Schuyler et al., 2017, p. 86)

Simply stated, if we apply a focus (or concentration) behaviour of 'mindfulness' we may be more able to train our minds to pay attention, to be calmer, more focused and clearer. When we apply the *awareness* behaviour, we can become observant and discerning of our thoughts as they arise and fall, (recognise their impermanence, our attachment or aversion to them), and therefore more likely to respond with calmness and consideration and thereby make better choices and decisions (Baer, 2003; Ruedy & Schweitzer, 2011). Neuroscience researchers have found that this kind of practice heightens the activity in the regions of the brain that regulates our attention (Goldin & Gross, 2010) and emotion (Hulsheger et al., 2013) and whose benefits can then carry over into daily life. The science of neuroplasticity has also discovered effects on cortical thickening (Lazar et al., 2005) and increased brain density (Hölzel et al., 2011). Research in this area is ongoing and becoming more sophisticated with deeper exploration into the neural processes that occur that allow for the ability to purposefully relax (bottom-up neural processing) (Grecucci et al., 2015) and emotional regulation through the processes of cognitive appraisal, for example reframing negative thoughts (top-down neural activity), which are vital for psychological wellbeing. A detailed review of the neuroscience of mindfulness literature suggests that:

... mindfulness practitioners may be able to experience negative emotions and sensations without adding further negative valence brought on by past experience or concern for the future, ... (that) engagement in intentional mindfulness deactivates the "default mode" network of the brain, which has been found to correlate with increased self-referential processing and to be overactive during the experience of rumination and worry. Instead, it appears that engagement in intentional mindfulness activates areas of the brain that are associated with focused attention on present moment sensory experiences. (Wheeler et al., 2017, p. 1484)

In summary, the mindful ability to manage one's attention, to be focused with an open awareness (the awareness of one's mind that monitors focused attentiveness and distractions), present in the moment, accepting of change and kindness to self (habits of mind), has potential to support a way of being that might restore equilibrium and

provide stable pathway for principals to sustainably meet the demands of their role and their wellbeing issues by becoming more self-aware, self-caring (or self-compassionate) and authentic.

2.5.2 Self Awareness

Mindfulness training is a pathway to develop self-awareness (Park et al., 2020). Self-awareness is a unique predictor of leadership behaviour (Reilly et al., 2014) and is key to authentic leadership (Avolio et al., 2004). Nesbit (2012) argues that underpinning effective leadership development is self-leadership, which in turn is dependent on the integrated operation of three meta skills. The “ability to manage emotional reactions to feedback, to carry out effectively the practice of self-reflection, and to enact self-regulatory processes for development (Nesbit, 2012, p. 203). All these meta skills are enabled by self-awareness and have the potential to create deeper learning experiences.

A new relationship to self emerges as one learns more about one’s self; as normal development is accelerated, as one becomes responsive rather than reactive to people and situations, as other ways of knowing and wisdom develops, and as a sense of connectedness emerges or is strengthened. (Healy, 2000, p. 2)

A recent study (Park et al., 2020) concluded that self-awareness training was paramount to preservice teacher training and that mindfulness training allowed participants to be more self-accepting and willing to engage in self-development. This was captured in quotes from one of their participants:

Not only does mindfulness allow you to become aware of your personal qualities, but also it allows you time to think about and accept them too. Then, you’re able to focus on what you need to work on. I have become more aware about how hard and negative I am on myself and learned that I need to learn to be more positive. Without self-awareness, there can be no self-improvement! (Park et al., 2020, p. 188)

Unfortunately, most school principals still “struggle to find ways within their control to improve their self-care behaviour” (Ray et al., 2020, p. 431). The benefit of improved self-awareness for school principals is the realisation of the necessity to take care of self, so that they can take care of others and responsibilities. Self-compassion is paramount to personal wellbeing and helps negate stress (Gilbert, 2010). Mindfulness can assist in promoting self-compassion as it “helps you see ‘it’ coming earlier – whatever the ‘it’ happens to be ... (it also means) you will be better able to practice self-calming, when needed” (Schoeberlein & Sheth, 2009, p. 102).

2.5.3 Self Compassion

People who are able to employ a nurturing and compassionate understanding to self (self-compassion) are also less likely to be caught up in negative self-talk (inner critic) and are less stressed or impacted by it (Gilbert, 2010). A person who applies self-compassion if and when they perceive any personal inadequacy, would then engage in soothing and positive self-talk (Neely et al., 2009). Their inner conversation then is “gentle and encouraging rather than harsh and belittling” with a focus on taking care of self (Germer & Neff, 2013, p. 2). A suggested way to develop self-compassion is through mindfulness training and practice (Gilbert, 2010; Neff, 2004).

Self-compassion or relating to self with kindness is a healthy form of self-acceptance and has three components: being gentle and understanding the ability to recognise that others struggle; and to be able to place personal struggles into context (Neff, 2003). In order to give oneself compassion, one must be able to turn toward, acknowledge, and accept that one is suffering. Meaning that mindful awareness is a core component of self-compassion as “*sometimes we first need to hold ourselves before we hold our experience in tender awareness*” (Germer & Neff, 2019, p. 2). The practice of mindfulness has the potential to enhance a person’s automatic relaxation response. Higher levels of mindfulness (that is acting with awareness, non-judging, and non-reacting) and self-compassion can also have positive impacts on fatigue and existing stress levels (Heffernan et al., 2010) and are associated with better sleep, less rumination and better psychological outcomes (Garland et al., 2013). In addition, formalised mindfulness-based interventions have been shown to have clinical importance by possibly serving to remediate sleep problems, and this effect appears to carry over into reducing sleep-related daytime issues (Black et al., 2015).

In the context of the role of school principals, this seems to suggest that if principals were able to purposefully look after themselves (Hassed, 2014), so that they could be their best for others, the potential implications could impact their performance and personal wellbeing and could possibly provide them with the energy and the “*space to lead*” (Marturano, 2014, p. 1) in a more authentic and sustainable way.

2.5.4 Leading Authentically

Mindfulness is at the core of leading authentically and ethically. In the leadership literature Authentic Leadership (AL) has been positively associated with mindfulness (Baron, 2016) and mental wellbeing (Weiss et al., 2018), and those that had a

“contemplative or meditative practice were more prone to experience authentic leadership moments” (Skjei, 2014, p. 106).

Mindfulness is neither a new leadership tool, nor a new “management by technique”; nor is it a reformulated blend of last year’s business literature. Rather, this technique is one of the techniques that have been employed since ancient times for developing the mind in the first instance. Nevertheless, performance enhancement, better health parameters, and formation of altruistically oriented, ethical behaviour may arise as by products. (Sauer, 2011, p. 303)

Being authentic has been described as:

A process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organisational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviours on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development. (Luthans & Avolio, 2003, p. 243)

Authentic leaders have been characterised as those that:

Exemplify directness, openness, commitment to the success of followers, a willingness to acknowledge their own limitations, transparency and a commitment to be held accountable for their actions and reward honesty and integrity. (Avolio et al., 2004, p. 807)

Authentic leadership is still a relatively new field of leadership research, however scholarly research in this construct is expanding, as are different definitions (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). The majority of these definitions however are based on the empirical psychology research of Kernis and Goldman (2006) who grounded their multicomponent conceptualisation of authenticity in the foundational work of Rogers’ and Maslow’s theory of self-actualisation (a fully functioning individual who is open to experience, can live life fully in the moment, trust their inner experience, experience freedom and are creative in their approach to living). Their model suggests four interrelated components: awareness, unbiased processing, behaviour, and relational orientation. Kernis and Goldman (2006) work examines how authenticity relates to diverse aspects of healthy psychological and interpersonal functioning, including verbal defensiveness, coping styles, self-concept structure, social-role functioning, goal pursuits, general well-being, romantic relationships, parenting styles, self-esteem, and mindfulness.

This construct has been adopted, operationalised for leaders and validated through the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ), which comprises of four components that

include self-awareness, relational transparency, internalised moral perspective, and balanced processing (Walumbwa et al., 2007).

There is a positive relationship between authenticity and mindfulness (Kernis & Goldman, 2006), however it is important to recognise that even though they share similar aspects the aspects are operationalised quite differently. For example, to be mindfully aware is to attend to one's immediate experience, to be aware in the construct of authenticity is to be aware of one's personal values, beliefs and emotional (Lakey et al., 2008).

These relationships suggest that an open and trusting stance toward one's self-aspects goes hand-in-hand with tendencies to observe internal and external stimuli, competence in describing one's internal states, ability to focus one's attention on the task at hand, and a non-judgmental stance in general. (Kernis & Goldman, 2006, p. 312)

Improved mindfulness as an additional outcome has also been associated with the development of authentic leadership. Baron's (2016) longitudinal study evaluated a three-year leadership training program which aimed to show how action learning principles (which call for internalisation of attitudes and behaviours), safe participation and a learning community can foster authentic leadership. Baron's program did draw on elements of Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT), which teaches mindfulness techniques like acceptance of emotions, presence and acting according to ones' values, however it did not use specific formal mindfulness training or meditations. He found that as participants evolved through the leadership development program, self-reports of authentic leadership and mindfulness increased significantly, and that mindfulness was positively associated with authentic leadership. It seems that as his participants become more authentic, they also became more mindful. This program took three years to purposefully build the personal awareness and trust required to develop authentic leadership skills you cannot technically just teach authenticity (Gardner et al., 2005).

2.6 Summary

One of the primary aims of this study was to explore the effectiveness of a meditative mindfulness training as professional learning for principals to support their wellbeing and leadership. The literature reviewed provided evidence of the unique challenges' principals face, the impact on their ability to lead, and on their wellbeing, and the possibility of mindfulness as an approach to mitigate this. Mindfulness program interventions include a mind training component (meditation) which allows access to improved attention and awareness, with mindfulness providing wellbeing and work related benefits. There are three elements that pertain to supporting principals to manage their wellbeing and leadership, namely developing the skills of mindfulness, the flow on effect of self-compassion to improve wellbeing, and the potential of authentic leadership.

Chapter Three

3

Methodology

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In this section the method of inquiry is described. This includes details of my positionality as researcher, as I am both the facilitator and researcher in this study. The chapter also details the design approach, that is based on longitudinal mixed methods. The details of the data sources are listed including detailed information of the questionnaires selected and why. This is followed by data sources and construction procedures, the implementation and priority of data, and the methods of analysis. A full description of the mindfulness training program is also included.

3.1 Researcher Positionality – Mindfully Inside and Outside

As the researcher in this study, I wore ‘two hats’. The first hat of an observer/researcher of the process, and the second hat as the training program facilitator. My position differs somewhat to what scholars have referred to as ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ inquiry (Evered & Louis, 1981), where a researcher is either embedded in the context, or observing from a distance. These two different positions may impact their views, methods of analysis, and their findings. The psychology literature further notes that an observer/researcher may also be classified by levels of participating in the observed group, with observations varying from non-participatory, passive, moderate, active through to completely participatory. This along with the researcher’s discipline interests, shapes and biases what they see as important or research worthy. However, with this study these two distinct perspectives of inquiry overlap or intersect somewhat, to create some degree of messiness in my roles, which I needed to be mindful of. I was both researching the process and was also a key “actor” in the intervention process as the program facilitator.

Research and facilitation are widely regarded as serving different purposes with different goals and outcomes; however, some intersections can be highly productive while also being stimulating, uncomfortable, energising, conflicted, puzzling, and revealing. Simultaneously occupying facilitator and researcher roles requires greater mindfulness of one’s actions and emotions than if one is occupying only one role. (Herbert, 2010, p. 681)

There is not much guidance in literature about how to manage this balance, however Herbert (2010) provides the “metaphors of “politician,” “magician,” “trader/traitor,” and “ventriloquist” to examine the kinds of pressures and choices involved in anticipating and coping with the process of facilitation and research simultaneously” (p. 682).

The “politician” is a cynical metaphor of an “egotistical self-serving personality” and represents the need for awareness of the variety of stakeholders and the kinds of power

embedded in the project. The “magician” metaphor highlights the need in being both facilitator and researcher to control “the space around themselves as performer and the audience, and thereby create a bubble wherein all the elements of a successful performance are coordinated in a flawless flow” (Herbert, 2010, p. 687). Basically, managing and “juggling” all the practicalities and challenges. The “trader” metaphor alerts that a form of trade happens in a research process (e.g., participants giving of their time and ideas with the expectation of a ‘good’ program). The “traitor” metaphor is about participants possibly not being represented as they imagined, and the facilitator becomes a traitor of their story. The “ventriloquist” metaphor suggests that while making the space for all participants’ voices the researcher ultimately gets to choose which voices to represent and that they should “be mindful of the effects of their choice” (p. 691).

Herbert suggests that by bringing awareness to the four metaphors, researchers in this position will be more aware of how their choices affect the process. Her suggestion to researchers is to respond to a series of questions and include the answers in their research. These are presented in Table 3.1 showing Herbert’s questions to researchers (Herbert, 2010, p. 691) and how these are addressed in this study.

Table 3.1

Herbert’s Questions to Researchers (Herbert, 2010, p. 691), and how These are Addressed in this Study

Herbert’s Questions	Responses as addressed in this study
Which stakeholders are the most important to please?	The participants and the research are my two most important stakeholders. As a passionate advocate of quality educational leadership, I wanted to balance the desire to provide a rich learning and professional learning opportunity for school principals <i>and</i> provide new insights of the impact of mindfulness on leadership and wellbeing. The most important stakeholders to please thus were the participants and their learning experience, followed by the requirements of the research.
How authoritative or empowering should I be as facilitator?	In regard to my role as facilitator, and also core to this research is the awareness of the fundamental concept of mindfulness that requires one to be present with open awareness. I was acutely aware of the challenge of working “with” and “on” the participants, in an “ <i>evolving, dynamic and interactional process</i> ” (Finlay & Evans, 2009, p. 6). I was also aware of the filter of my own bias and preconceptions (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Prior to each training session I would centre myself with a mindfulness practice focusing on being present, and the key learnings of the session. As much as possible my main focus was on delivering an excellent training program so that the participants benefited from the professional learning.

Herbert's Questions	Responses as addressed in this study
How do I keep facilitating the process and generating reliable data at the same time?	In relation to facilitating the process and gathering data at the same time, I was aware that as a researcher I am required to separate myself from the 'subject' so as to remain 'objective'. However, in this study I needed to be mindful of my impact on the research, my desire to do a good job in delivering the program, and the responsibility of making participants' learning valuable and ensuring that the collection of data was consistent. Formal data collection procedures were put in place and are discussed further in this chapter.
How do I, as both facilitator and researcher, communicate about the different roles?	To address this, prior to consenting to participate, principals were informed that during the training program I would be consciously only wearing the program facilitator hat and that data collected would only be examined after the training program phase. I would be consciously switching and "making known my membership identity" (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 52) at each phase. My university supervisors were also present at the training days to provide any help regarding research issues and to be in a sense the ambassadors of the research so that I could maintain the role of trainer/ facilitator. See Appendix A for a full timeline representation of the different hats.
Can the research and the facilitation effectively serve different interests?	In this case the researcher and facilitator can serve different interests as the design of the study allowed for clear boundaries by using explicit delivery phases. For example, during the time that principals were attending their training I stayed in my role as facilitator – it was only prior and after the mindfulness training program that I took on my researcher role.
In what ways can trying to do both roles impose limitations on either role?	The limitations of trying to achieve both roles was kept at a minimum, however as the facilitator I wanted participants to have a good experience, and as a researcher I knew I needed to allow for the possibility that that this might not be the outcome for all. This does require mindfully holding the process lightly and with a level of acceptance and open mindedness.

3.1.1 A Mindful Perspective

Whilst exploring Herbert's questions and considering my responses another question emerged for me: "*what might it mean to conduct mindfulness research from a mindful perspective?*"

As a researcher's world view underlies their chosen research approach and as my own experience of mindfulness will impact this research (Guba & Lincoln, 2004), I also wanted to remain cognisant of how my mindfulness practice might be affected or cause effect. The process of Mindful Inquiry (MI) provides an avenue to inform the research as it combines the Buddhist concept of mindfulness with phenomenology, critical theory and hermeneutics in a way that puts the inquirer or researcher in the centre (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 171).

... your research should be intimately linked with your awareness of yourself and your world... and the intellectual awareness and reflection that are woven into your research affect or should affect one another. Good research should contribute to your development as a mindful person, and your development as an aware and reflective individual should be embodied in your research. (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 5)

MI provides a holistic approach for inquiring into complex, multi-layered interactions and provides an approach that supports scholar-practitioners engaging in searches for knowledge that they can then put into practice (Nagata, 2003). The perspective from MI literature that a researcher needs to be accepting and non-judgmental of self, and to trust the process added to how I viewed myself as researcher.

Although I did not use the MI process formally, it reminded me to include in my descriptions of procedures, my mindful preparation and mindfulness practice, the use of partnering terms such as ‘participants’ rather than ‘subjects’, and the awareness that the act of researching not only has potential to transform the participants but also transform the researcher in the process.

3.2 Method of Inquiry

This study is grounded in a pragmatic approach to inquiry. Pragmatism seeks to understand and resolve problems that occur in a changing and uncertain world. The basic tenet of a pragmatic study is to conduct research whose results can be translated into practical ends. This often involves policy recommendations or other real-world solutions (Duram, 2010, p. 1073).

Pragmatists recognise that causal relations are “transitory, contextually bound and hard to identify” and that the researcher’s values are crucial in interpreting casual effect and mechanism (Teddlie, 2016, p. 214).

For pragmatists, values and visions of human action and interaction precede a search for descriptions, theories, explanations, and narratives. Pragmatic research is driven by anticipated consequences ...Beginning with what he or she thinks is known and looking to the consequences he or she desires, our pragmatist would pick and choose how and what to research and what to do. (Cherryholmes, 1992, pp. 13-14)

A pragmatist researcher’s choice of inquiry needs to be congruent with their personal value systems (Teddlie, 2016) and guided by four key elements: Accepting chaos in

interrelationships among variables; seeking an understanding based on human experience; viewing a problem as a complex problematic situation; and as an outcome for the research, promoting activism, democracy, and policy formulation (Duram, 2010). Pragmatism is a “philosophical champion of the mixed methods arena” which purposefully sees a “dynamic interplay” between quantitative and qualitative data (Greene, 2008, p. 8) as the design can simultaneously look at causal effects and causal mechanisms, and according to Teddlie (2005) is a “powerful methodology” for conducting causal studies of educational leadership (Teddlie, 2016, p. 216).

The pragmatic approach thereby allows for exploring “useful points of connection” between school principals’ leadership and wellbeing and the practice of mindfulness (Morgan, 2007, p. 71) in the way it “mixes and deals with quantitative and qualitative data in an abductive–intersubjective–transferable” methodology (Morgan, 2007, p. 73). This approach (which in some literature is termed a paradigm or perspective) is based on my values and beliefs of the world (Shannon-Baker, 2016) and is focused on outcomes and my way of trying to understand or determine meaning (Morgan, 2007), and seeks a pragmatic solution to the challenges school principals face.

3.3 The Design Approach

The design approach was informed by the research question: *How does mindfulness training as professional learning support school principals’ wellbeing and leadership?* A longitudinal mixed methods intervention design was selected as the question benefits from the triangulation of both numeric trends from quantitative research and the finer details of qualitative research (Creswell, 2009); Creswell et al., 2003). This approach to data collection is able to deal with the complexity and scope of the project and to accommodate different world views and assumptions (Creswell, 2009) and in this study. includes quantitative measures from validated questionnaires, which include open-ended questions and qualitative data from interviews. A mixed method approach:

Actively invites us to participate in dialogue about multiple ways of seeing and hearing, multiple ways of making sense of the social world, and multiple standpoints on what is important. (Greene, 2007, p. 20)

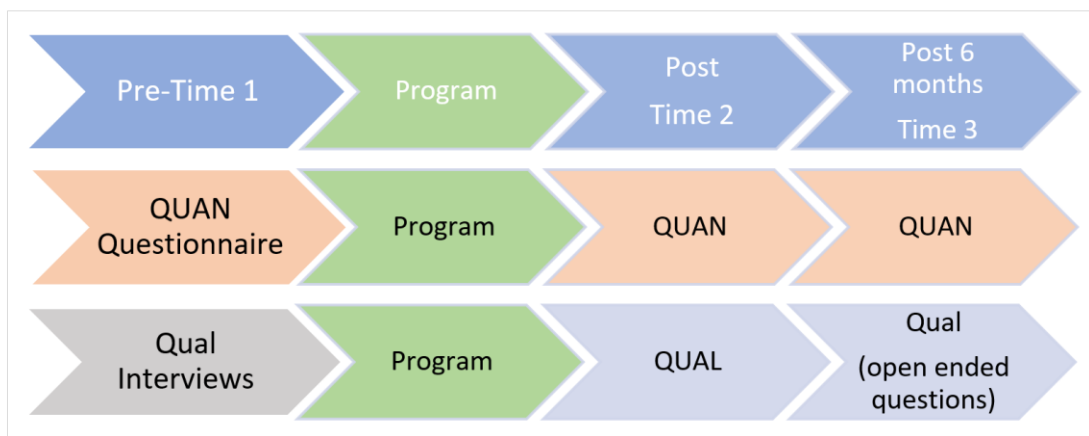
The reason for using multiple data sources was to provide a rich palette to be able to make “meaningful and purposeful proposition” (Mathison, 1988, p. 15) to corroborate and confirm (using quantitative measures and surveys) and explore and conceptualise (using qualitative data) the findings.

Although there was no active control group, time 1 measures (beginning of the school year, when principals would be expected to be rested after the long summer break) are considered as the baseline, with the principals acting as their own control. However, as Teddlie argues, having a control group in educational leadership research is somewhat challenging:

In educational leadership studies, random assignment of treatment to sampling unit is hardly ever possible owing to ethical and practical issues. ...In educational leadership studies, there is no group that could be logically designated as the control. Part of the reason for this is that educational leadership is typically conceptualised as a continuous variable, while experimental treatments require the “presence” or “absence” of a treatment. Since the control group requires the absence of treatment, there would have to be “no leadership” for that condition to exist. (Teddlie, 2016, pp. 217-218)

The longitudinal intervention design involved pre- (time 1) and post-program (time 2) measures which were repeated six months after the program (time 3). Both QUAN and QUAL data (as represented in Figure 3.1) were collected/constructed concurrently at three time points pre, post and 6+months post, and hence follows a multiphase concurrent mixed methods design.

Figure 3.1
Representation of Data Collection



In the study the quantitative instruments (QUAN) were in the form of validated scales (questionnaires) that were consolidated to form one online questionnaire (using SurveyMonkey software) and were used to measure the relationships between school principals’ mindfulness, wellbeing and leadership. To understand this unique group of school principals’ experience more in depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted

at time 1, and time 2, including data from open ended questions at time 3 as part of the online questionnaire (QUAL).

3.3.1 Participants

3.3.1.1 Recruitment

Potential participants were invited to attend an information presentation hosted by the West Australian Department of Education's (DoE) Leadership Institute. For equity purposes the presentation was videoed/recorded by DoE so those unable to attend on the day still had the opportunity to participate. Approximately 70 school leaders attended the open introductory seminar, *Mindful Leadership and Mindfulness in the Workplace*. Information packs were available electronically, upon request. Principals then expressed interest in participating in the training and research program by requesting an information pack, which included time frame; procedures and letter of consent (see Appendix B). All principals requesting an information pack provided their name and contact email to the researcher for follow up and possible confirmation. Participants were allocated a place in the program on a first come, first served basis until 30 places had been filled. Thus, all participants were self-selected volunteers.

Thirty school principals (20 females, 10 males) participated in the 'Mindful Leaders Program', involving 10 workshops. They were aged from 30 to 60+ years and included new and experienced principals working in government schools.

3.3.1.2 Ethical Considerations

The study received approval from Murdoch University's Human Research Ethics Committee and permission to conduct the research was also received from the Department of Education, Western Australia (Appendix C). Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants in this study. Ethical considerations included creating boundaries between the two roles of the researcher as mentioned in the response to Herbert's question earlier in this chapter.

Given that the principals would be sharing personal information two main challenges needed to be addressed. Firstly, the nature of the study included a form of self-reflection which could possibly evoke sensitive and personal issues for the participants. As I hold psychology qualifications and work as an executive coach, I was well placed to advise participants if at any point they required assistance to discuss or manage any difficult

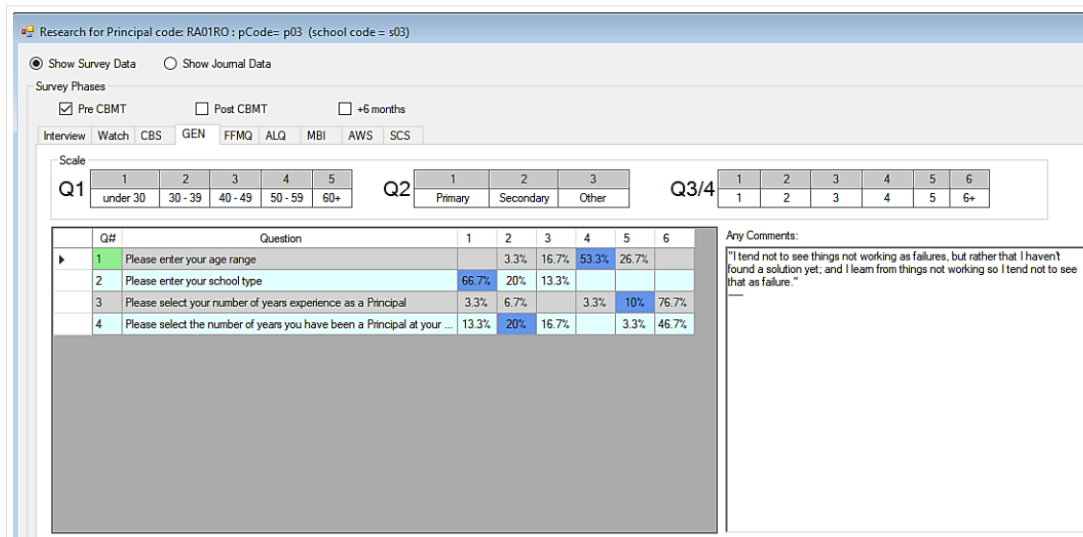
feelings that may arise, and that they had access to counsellors from an employee assist program that were provided by their employer, the Department of Education WA (DoEWA).

Secondly, the ethics board and the DoEWA was very insistent that the participants had identification codes and that their identities and school identities were kept separately from the research data. I created two databases to accommodate this. One database contained participant contact and school details and their research identification, which was the letter “P” followed by a number between 1 and 30. Participants were not informed of their research identification. The second database contained participants research identification and all the data gathered for the study.

3.3.1.3 Data Storage

All the data were collected and stored concurrently, in line with the ethics and methodological requirements to only be accessed after the program completion (after time 2 and then again after time 3). Data were stored on a purpose-built database which allowed for organising and storing the data in systematic way (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2
Example of Individual Data Card for Participant



3.3.1.4 Using Pseudonyms

As the research is about real people, I changed the participants’ identifying code (P 1-30) to a pseudonym during the writing up of the qualitative results. I wrote a list of 30 common names that did not include any of the participants’ first names and assigned according to gender (see Appendix D for list of P codes and corresponding names). It was

only when I came across a paper entitled *A Rose By Any Other Name Is Still a Rose? Problematizing Pseudonyms in Research* (Lahman et al., 2015) did I realise the impact of this. In the paper they draw attention the power of names and how that can impact people’s interpretation of the data and the ethics of assigning names. I went back and looked at the name list for cultural or ageism issues and found none. The majority of the names assigned to the participants are traditional Australian English names (Anglo – English) which reflects the group’s background. In order to keep participants’ identities as anonymous as possible I did not record cultural background in the demographics.

3.3.1.5 Participation

Although all principals participated in the program, the final sample for the longitudinal study comprised 23 principals who completed all components of the quantitative research at the time 3 (see Table 3.2). The 23 participants are representative of the original cohort of principals with regard gender, age range, years of experience and school type. The quantitative section includes interview and question data from all participants.

Table 3.2
Participant Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Time 3 Number (%)
Gender	Male	8 (35%)
	Female	15 (65%)
Age Range	30-39 years	1 (5%)
	40-49 years	5 (22%)
	50-59 years	13 (56%)
	60 years +	4 (17%)
Years’ Experience as a Principal	1-3 years	3 (8%)
	4- 5 years	3 (8%)
	6+ years	17 (74%)
School Type	Primary	15 (66%)
	Secondary	5 (22%)
	Colleges (combined Primary & Secondary)	1 (4%)
	Special Education Centres	2 (8%)

3.3.2 Procedure

There were three main phases of the research project:

1. Establishment Phase
2. Training Phase
3. Sustainability Phase

3.3.2.1 Phase 1: Establishment Phase

This phase includes the recruitment of participants (previously discussed) and the initial pre-program survey and interviewing.

In February 2016, the 30 participants completed the online survey (comprising of 5 questionnaires) in their own time and were also visited at their schools by the researcher for a face-to-face pre-interview (approx. 60-90 minutes long).

3.3.2.2 Phase 2: Training Phase

This phase commenced on Tuesday 8 March 2016 with the first training session and ran every week for 8 weeks, with a two-week break to accommodate school holidays (as shown in Timeline Event table in Appendix E). The training sessions were hosted at Murdoch University and a light breakfast was provided, funded by the Department of Education (DoEWA). A full explanation of the program based on the Potential Project's Corporate Based Mindfulness Training Program (CBMT©), is discussed later.

On completion of session 8, participants responded for a second time (time 2) to the online survey (comprising of the same 5 questionnaires as time 1). The participants were also interviewed face to face again at their respective schools (approx. 30 – 70 minutes).

One participant did not complete the post program (time 2) survey as she was not able to attend the majority of the program, due to annual leave.

3.3.2.3 Phase 3: Sustainability Phase

The participants then attended two follow up sessions; one, two weeks later and one, four weeks later to support sustainability of mindfulness practice. After a further six months (from the last training session) participants were contacted via email to complete the online survey (comprising of the same 5 questionnaires as time 1 and 2) for a final time (time 3).

3.3.3 Data Sources

Data were gathered via quantitative and qualitative methods as specified below.

3.3.3.1 Quantitative Data

Quantitative data were collected at three time points, pre training program (time 1) and post training program (time 2) and 6 months post the training program (time 3). Six participants did not fully complete the final questionnaire and so only 23 sets of quantitative data were used for the research. All survey questionnaires used were validated scales and appropriate licenses and approvals were sought for use in this study (see Appendix C).

All survey questionnaires were combined to form one online questionnaire utilising SurveyMonkey software (see Appendix F). This included the demographic questions of gender, age range, years' experience as a principal, and school type. There were five survey questionnaires - Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire, Self-Compassion Scale, Maslach Burnout Inventory, Area of Worklife Survey, Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (see Section 3.3.3.2 for details). Time 3 questionnaire also included open ended questions.

3.3.3.2 Instruments

Five validated scales or survey questionnaires were used to measure principal's mindfulness, wellbeing and leadership. The next section explains the *details* of each of the measures, their *appropriateness* for the study and their uniqueness, or *point of difference* the measure might add to research in this field.

Mindfulness

Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ)

Details: Mindfulness was assessed using the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) (Baer et al., 2006) comprising 39 items developed from five independently validated mindfulness surveys. The five facets are observing (e.g., "I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind in my hair or sun on my face"), describing (e.g., "I can easily put my beliefs, opinions, and expectations into words"), acting with awareness (e.g., "When I do things, my mind wanders off and I'm easily distracted), non-judging to inner experiences (e.g., "I criticise myself for having irrational or inappropriate emotions") and non-reactivity to inner experiences (e.g., "When I have distressing thoughts or images I

am able just to notice them without reacting”). Subscale scores and a total score were calculated with the higher score indicative of greater mindfulness (scores range from 39-195 or averaged 1-5). Published Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the subscales range from 0.75-0.91 and alphas in the current study were comparable (0.89-0.94).

Appropriateness: The FFMQ is well supported and referenced in the literature providing an opportunity to relate this study’s findings to a larger pool of research (Hart et al., 2013).

Point of Difference: The FFMQ has to date not been used with this population or in relation to the combination of authentic leadership and wellbeing.

Wellbeing

Three questionnaires were employed to understand principals’ wellbeing. These focused on:

- Feelings of being emotionally over extended and exhausted by one’s work, Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS) (Leiter & Maslach, 2003);
- Perceptions of work setting qualities that play a role in whether they experience work engagement or burnout, Area of Worklife Survey (AWS) (Leiter & Maslach, 2003); and
- Ability to self-care and put struggles in context, Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) (Neff, 2003).

The Maslach Burnout Inventory

Details: The Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey MBI-GS (Leiter & Maslach, 2003) has 16 items with three subscales: professional efficacy (e.g., “In my opinion I am good at my job”); emotional exhaustion (e.g., “I feel emotionally drained at the end of the workday”) and cynicism (e.g., “I doubt the significance of my work”). Each subscale average is computed from a score range of 0-6 from 0 (*never*), to 3 (*a few times a month*) and 6 (*everyday*) and each subscale is calculated without calculation of a total score. Cronbach’s alphas published in the manual ranged from 0.76 to 0.86, and for this study were 0.70 to 0.90.

Appropriateness: The MBI was selected as mindfulness has been shown to support emotional regulation and mitigate burnout in teachers (Flook et al., 2013; Roeser et al., 2012) and other professionals (Brooker et al., 2013; Epstein, 2014; Leiter & Maslach, 2003; Schultz et al., 2015).

Point of Difference: Principals experience high levels of emotional exhaustion (Friedman, 2002; Riley, 2014). At the time, mindfulness training with a cohort of principals to alleviate stress had not yet been researched and given the research in other fields possibly had the potential to reduce this population's levels of stress and burnout.

The Area of Worklife Survey

Details: The enduring relationship school principals had with their work was assessed by the Area of Worklife Survey (AWS) (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). The AWS was created to assess employees' perceptions of work setting qualities that play a role in whether they experience work engagement or burnout. It produces a profile of scores that permit users to identify key areas of strength or weakness in their organisational settings. The AWS comprises 28 items that produce distinct scores for each of the six domains of work life: workload (e.g., "I don't have time to do the work that must be done"); control (e.g., "I have control over how I do my work"); reward (e.g., "I receive recognition from others for my work"); community (e.g., "People trust one another to fulfil their roles"); fairness (e.g., "Resources are allocated fairly here") and values (e.g., "My values and the organisations values are alike"). Each item is assessed on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*), through 3 (*hard to decide*), to 5 (*strongly agree*). Scores produce a profile showing the degree of experienced congruence between the person and six domains of their job environment (Maslach et al., 1996). The greater the congruence the more likely the individual will experience work engagement, the less congruent the more likely they will experience burnout. The six domains were scored and reported separately. Cronbach's alphas for the subscales published in the AWS manual ranged from 0.67 to 0.83 and were comparable in the current study (0.67-0.92).

Appropriateness: AWS provides snapshot information about participants' perceptions of their work settings, how this impacts them and how it relates to other researchers' inquiry into challenges that principals face at work.

Point of Difference: The information gathered allows opportunity to measure effect of the different work setting climates/environments that principals are operating and leading in.

The Self-Compassion Scale

Details: The Self Compassion Scale (SCS) (Neff, 2003) measures people's emotional wellbeing on three levels:

- being able to be gentle and understanding with oneself;
- the ability to recognise that others struggle too; and the
- ability to place personal struggles into context.

The SCS (Neff, 2003) comprises of 26 items with 5 subscales: self-kindness (e.g., “I am tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies”); self-judgment (e.g., “When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself”); common humanity (e.g., “I try to see my failings as part of the human condition”); isolation (e.g., “When I fail at something that is important to me I tend to feel alone in my failure”); mindfulness (e.g., “When something upsets me I try and keep my emotions in balance”) and over identified (e.g., “When I am feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong”). The items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never or rarely true*) to 5 (*often or always true*) with higher scores indicative of greater self-compassion. Subscale scores and a total self-compassion score were calculated. Published Cronbach's alphas for the 26 item SCS subscales ranged from 0.75 to 0.81 and alphas for this study (0.66 – 0.91) were comparable (Raes et al., 2011).

Appropriateness: Self compassion is a way of reining in a person's “inner critic”, and replacing it with a voice of support, understanding and care. In the medical and care industries it has shown to mitigate stress, fatigue and improve wellbeing (Dzwonkowska & Żak-Łykus, 2015; Ferguson et al., 2015; Heffernan et al., 2010; Hofmann et al., 2011; Jennings, 2015; Kemper et al., 2015; Neely et al., 2009; Waldron & Ebbeck, 2015; Zessin et al., 2015).

Point of Difference: To date principals' self-compassion has not yet been measured or researched. The data provide a valuable insight into levels of self-care, personal coping, and wellbeing.

Leadership

The Authentic Leadership Questionnaire

Details: The Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) (Walumbwa et al., 2007) was used to measure participants' leadership approach. There are currently no validated mindful leadership scales or measures available, however the ALQ is the most aligned to the elements of mindfulness and the new mindful approach to leadership (Baron, 2016). The ALQ has 16 items that refer to how people perceive their leadership style. Items produce four scores that refer to levels of: Self-awareness: To what degree is the leader aware of his or her strengths, limitations, how others see him or her and how the leader impacts others self-awareness (e.g., "As a leader I know when it is time to re-evaluate my position on important issues"). Transparency: To what degree does the leader reinforce a level of openness with others that provides them with an opportunity to be forthcoming with their ideas, challenges and opinions (e.g., "As a leader I admit mistakes when they are made"). Ethical/Moral: To what degree does the leader set a high standard for moral and ethical conduct (e.g., "As a leader I make decisions based on my core values"). Balanced processing: To what degree does the leader solicit sufficient opinions and viewpoints prior to making important decisions (e.g., "As a leader I solicit views that challenge my deeply held positions").

Participants are required to judge how frequently each statement fits their leadership style on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (*not at all*), through 2 (*sometimes*), to 4 (*frequently if not always*). A level is deemed "very high" if the score is between 64-80, "high" if score between 48-64, "low" if score between 32-48, and "very low" if score between 16-32. Total and subscales scores were recorded. Cronbach's alphas for authentic leadership in the current study are 0.75 to 0.77 and were comparable to alphas (0.76-0.93) found with similar participants (Bird et al., 2012).

Appropriateness: Authentic leadership has been linked to employee improved engagement, job expectations, and areas of work life (workload, control, rewards, fairness, sense of community and values congruence). Employees with authentic leaders feel empowered and supported in their job, can heighten others self-awareness and self-regulatory behaviours, self-confidence and positive self-development (Bamford et al., 2013; Begley, 2006; Bird et al., 2012; Leroy et al., 2013; Wang & Bird, 2011). All the above aspects related favourably to mindfulness.

Point of Difference: Although there has been work done in relation to teachers' perception of principal authentic leadership (Wang & Bird, 2011), to date no work has looked at how mindfulness training might impact these skills in principals.

3.3.3.3 Qualitative data

Interviews

In order to gain a deeper and more personal aspect of the impact of the mindfulness training one on one face to face interviews were recorded pre (time 1) and post (time 2) the training program intervention. The majority of interviews took place at the principal's school except for one at the DoEWA office which was more convenient for the participant. One time 2 interview was conducted via phone as the principal was on leave.

The semi structured interview was designed to prompt more open-ended natural responses from the participant; however, a set of themed questions formed a semi-formal structure to keep the focus on mindfulness, wellbeing and leadership. Interview length ranged from 45 minutes to 90 minutes.

Time 1 interviews

The time 1 interviews were designed to establish a relationship and understand the participants background and expectations. The time 1 interview allowed for the opportunity for participants to share their story, explain their approach to leadership, and their personal description of their wellbeing.

Time 1 semi structured interview questions included:

- What does mindfulness mean to you?
- What is your previous experience of mindfulness?
- How do you describe your leadership?
- How do you describe wellbeing?
- What are you hoping to learn by participating in this program?
- What three adjectives best describe your leadership style?
- How would being more mindful impact your leadership and wellbeing?
- How will you gauge whether the training has been beneficial/ successful?
- Do you have any other questions or comments?

Time 2 interviews

The time 2 interviews centred around the impact of the program, and the participants perceptions of their mindfulness, wellbeing, and leadership.

Time 2 semi structured interview questions:

- Please discuss if there has been any impact of the training for you?
- The participant was reminded of their personal pre-program success gauge of program from their time 1 interview and asked if it matched or whether they had different outcomes?
- What if any outcomes have you experienced in regard to mindfulness, wellbeing and leadership?
- Have you any other experience/ insights/observations/feedback about the learning experience?

As part of my personal preparation for these interviews I would do a small mindfulness practice to ground myself in the present, set my intent to listen in an accepting and non-judgemental way. It has been suggested that this mindful process may allow for a more trusting conversation (Simpson, 2008).

Time 3 Survey Additional Open-Ended Questions

At time 3 the participants were not interviewed, but a series of open-ended questions were included as part of the 6 months post-program questionnaire. It included a question on the continued frequency of their mindfulness training (few times a month, a few times a week, most days, or every day) with the option to add a comment.

Time 3 open-ended questions included:

- If you have managed to keep your practice going, what has helped you?
- What have you noticed about your wellbeing since completing the program 6+ months ago?
- What have you noticed about your leadership since completing the program 6+ months ago?
- Have you managed to maintain your mindful practices?
- Do you further or other comments?

3.3.4 Data Analysis

This section is divided into two sections: the quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis.

3.3.4.1 Quantitative Analysis

The data were scored according to the relevant questionnaire manuals and the descriptive analysis conducted to determine general trends. Full datasets of the pre (time 1), post (time 2) and six-month post (time 3) program of the measures for 23 participants were used in the analysis. A series of time (3) x gender (2) repeated measures MANOVAS and ANOVAS were conducted using SPSS software to examine changes in principals' mindfulness, wellbeing and leadership over the school year, and any gender differences. Where a significant main effect for time was found, time 1 vs. time 2, and time 2 vs. time 3 contrasts were carried out (where violations to sphericity occurred, the Greenhouse-Geisser correction was used).

Subscales and total scores were examined for skewness and outliers. The subscale of *professional efficacy* in the MBI was skewed so was transformed by a log base 10.

3.3.4.2 Qualitative Analysis

All the qualitative data (time 1 and 2 interviews and time 3 open-ended questions responses for surveys) was collected, recorded and transcribed. Each data source was then read and checked for accuracy in order to get a general understanding and scope of the data. To further refine the process and immerse myself in the data all interview transcripts were checked in a sequence of listening and reading each participant pre-interview and then their post interview. This was completed in one sitting per participant to really gauge an individual's pre- and post-experience. Key concepts were identified, and any obvious connections or insights recorded. This was handwritten in a large A3 sketchbook with facing pages for pre- and post-to create a visual representation of their interviews, "making these memos becomes an important first step in forming broader categories" or themes (Creswell, 2009, p. 207). Two examples are shown in Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4 using P30's pre (time 1) and post interview (time 2) initial analysis.

Figure 3.3
Example of Time 1 Interview Data Analysis

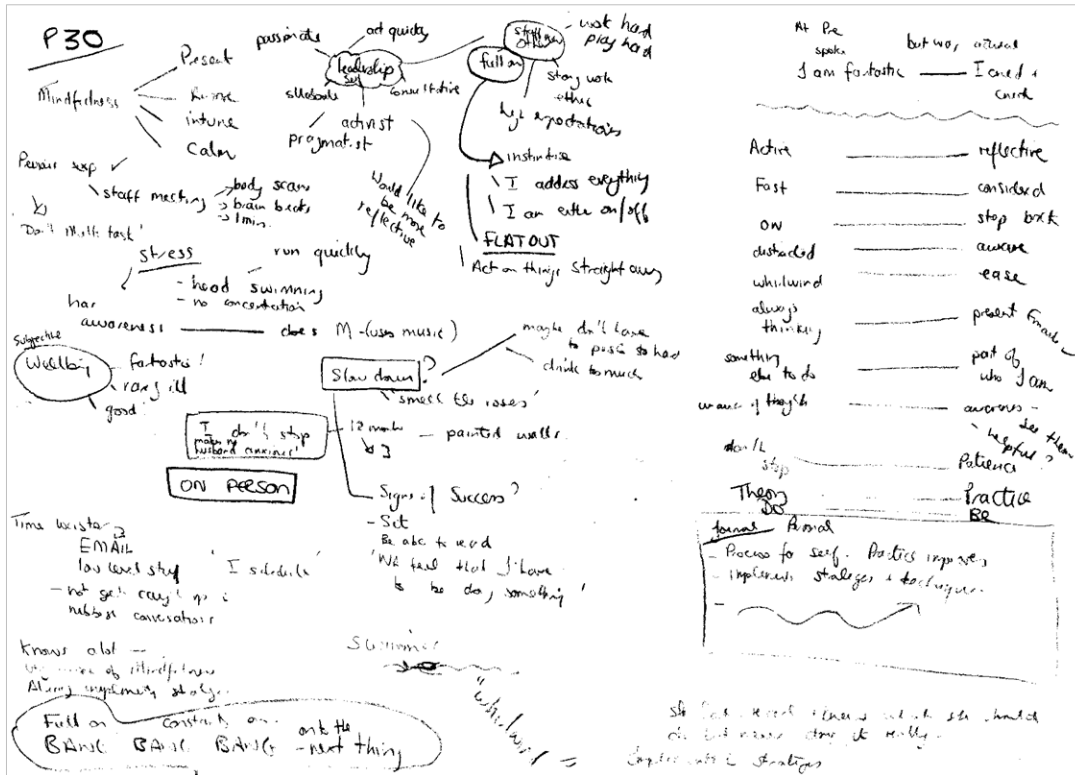


Figure 3.4
Example of Time 2 Interview Data Analysis



During this process I was also aware of the filter of my own bias and what I might be listening out for (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). So, prior to reviewing each set of pre- and post-interviews I would do a short mindfulness practice to centre myself and attempt to listen with a beginner's mind (a mind that is purposefully attuned to noticing things as if for the first time). These immersive reviews assisted me in familiarising myself with the full content and range of the interview materials before formally analysing utilising NVIVO software.

Using NVivo software for analysis I coded sections and labelled them to form a node, such that other sections of text can be coded to themes and sub themes. The software also maps these nodes (using coding stripes that are coloured bars) that show how the content has been coded and the density of the code. This allows for an ongoing visualisation of the richness of the themes across the data. All interviews, and time 3 open ended questions were coded for common themes. This was initially completed with the methodology of triangulation in mind, and the awareness that the common themes needed to emerge on their own merit, rather than limiting them in attempt to create convergent or supportive data to that of the existing quantitative data (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

Once initial coding was completed, each node was reviewed and if appropriate sub coded, or merged to form clearer themes – this process allowed for topic nodes that had emerged later in the coding process to be held up against previously coded interviews as a check measure that all perspectives had been covered. The NVivo codebook (example in Appendix G) allows for an overview of the topics and includes the number of sources and the number of times the theme was referenced (frequency). Once the data had been recorded with themed nodes and sub nodes the data were revisited using the NVivo codebook to ascertain which node topics had the most sources. The analysis was then extracted and examined to identify any convergences or inconsistency with the subscales of the questionnaires used in the quantitative datasets.

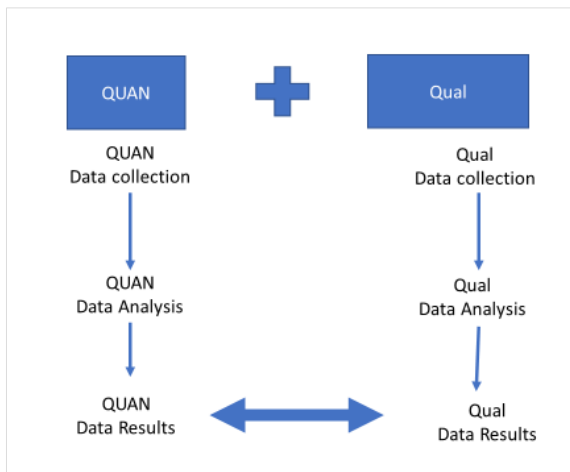
3.3.5 Priority of Data and Integration

To determine the priority of data, at what point the data were integrated and “mixed”, and how the findings would be reported, I needed to return to the research question: *How does mindfulness training as professional learning support school principals' wellbeing and leadership?*

The research question therefore lends itself to utilising a mixed methodology of quantitative (determining effect) and qualitative (explanatory or understanding why?)

methods. As explained previously the data were collected concurrently at 3 time points, however during the analysis the data had different points of integration. In the first instance the quantitative data from time 1, time 2 and time 3 were analysed to determine any statistical significance. Secondly, the interviews from time 1 and 2 and the open-ended questions from time 3 were then analysed for themes and frequency to allow for what Mathison (1988) explains as the opportunity to notice convergence, inconsistency and contradictions within the different methods, which will add to the tapestry and plausibility of the research. I employed Morse's (1991) simple coding to represent which data set had more or equal priority to the analysis process. The code uses capital letters if "dominant" (QUAN) and lowercase if not as dominant (qual). Figure 3.5 illustrates the design and the priority and dominance of the data sets for this study.

Figure 3.5
Priority of Data Integration



The next section takes a closer look at the program.

3.4 The Mindful Leaders Training Program

The Mindful Leaders Program utilised a specialised "mindfulness at work" program, CBMT© (Corporate Based Mindfulness Training© program) whose philosophy is founded on contemplative traditions and has been successfully used over the last decade in corporate settings (Hougaard et al., 2016).

As an experienced and accredited trainer, I facilitated the training which comprised a 2-hour introduction session, 8 weekly 1.5-hour sessions, and two follow up sessions each of 1.5-hour sessions spaced at a two-week and then a one-month interval. The program was delivered starting at the beginning of the school year and had an attendance rate of

92%. Each session provided three core elements: secular mind training; mental strategy or “habits of mind” training; and mindful work applications. The sessions involved a short presentation, discussion of key concepts, experiential activities, collaborative practices, and group discussion. Participants were encouraged to keep a reflection journal as well as action and experiment with the mind training practice, mental strategy and work applications between sessions.

Mind training: Participants were encouraged to complete 10-minute daily guided mind training exercises (supported by the programs smartphone App) that progressively cultivated the foundations and applications of mindfulness, utilising the two core elements of “focus” and “open awareness” training. The focus training aimed to increase mental and physical relaxation, attentional skills (to help avoid distractedness and multitasking) and mental clarity (manage information overload and focus on priorities). The open awareness training sought to develop skills of observation (thoughts, feelings, sensations and emotions neutrally without engaging), along with three insights of: impermanence (e.g., Is there anything you experience that is unchanging?), genuine happiness (e.g., Does this thought contribute to happiness or suffering?) and potential (e.g., When you are observing your thoughts who/what is it that is doing the observation?).

Mental strategy training: The mental strategies of patience, presence, kindness, acceptance, balance, letting go, joy and “beginners mind” were explored as alternative strategies for approaching daily issues and challenges, and to assist participants to understand the nature of their minds and habits or patterns of thinking.

Mindful work applications: Work applications provided practical tools to integrate mindfulness into work activities and included ways of working differently, managing others, managing self, leading change and developing sustainable work practices.

Participants received a program manual, textbook, journal, weekly emails with supporting materials and further reading suggestions. Table 3.3 shows the timetabling of the training and the components of each weekly session.

Table 3.3
Program Overview

Session Number	Foundational Practice	Quality/Insight	Mental Strategy	Mindful Work Application
1	Focus training	Focus	Patience	Working differently (mental effectiveness, goals, priorities, planning)
2	Focus training	Relaxation	Acceptance	Wellbeing (managing energy and performance breaks)
3	Focus training	Focus	Kindness	Daily work (emailing and meetings)
4	Focus training	Clarity	Beginners mind	Managing others - Communication
5	Open awareness training	Awareness	Joy	Creativity
6	Open awareness training	Impermanence	Balance	Managing self – emotional balance
7	Open awareness training	Genuine happiness	Presence	Leading change
8	Open awareness training	Potential	Letting Go	Sustainable work – managing work life balance
9 & 10	Focus & open awareness training	All qualities and insights	Recap and revisit all strategies, Q&A opportunity	Challenges and maintenance and ongoing learning plans

3.5 Summary

The design of the research was a longitudinal mixed method intervention study, which included validated questionnaires and individual interviews. Thirty school principals participated in the mindfulness training program selected for the research.

The next chapter reports the findings of the study, with analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data, and their integration.

Chapter Four

4

Results

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4.1 Introduction

This chapter communicates the findings of the research. The research utilised a mixed method approach and so this chapter is organised to take advantage of bringing the two sets of data together with the intent to explain and elaborate each other. The chapter is divided into two main sections.

The first section presents converging findings from the quantitative and qualitative data for the three main research areas: mindfulness, wellbeing, and leadership. In each of these sections, the quantitative results from the time (3) x gender (2) repeated measures MANOVAs and ANOVAS are presented first and include the descriptive statistics. Interactions with gender, are reported next followed by the a priori contrasts for time. These results are based on two contrasts using the three time points, contrast one is between time 1 (pre-program) and time 2 (post program) to capture effect of the program. The second contrast is between time 2 and time 3 (six months post program) to identify sustainability of effect. Where appropriate participants' quotes are included to provide a more nuanced perspective.

This is followed by the findings from the qualitative data highlighting the major time 1 and time 2 themes. The main themes that have been included are the themes that at least 30% of the participants discussed. At the end of each section a short summary of the results from the time 3 open ended survey questions is presented.

As a reminder the quantitative data presented, is the results for 23 participants who fully completed the survey questionnaires at time 1, time 2 and time 3. Data of all participants (n=30) are included for the qualitative data from time 1 and time 2. As the time 3 qualitative data were gleaned from optional open questions embedded in the time 3 quantitative questionnaire this is presented as a separate section called time 3 reflections. Participants' quotes are referenced using pseudonyms (see Appendix D for coding) and where possible any other identifying features have been removed.

The second section explores evidence of another level of experience not accounted for in the previous analysis. The focus is on the strong theme of the experience of learning mindfulness (or process of learning), that the majority of participants discussed in their time 2 interviews, and how this may have contributed to the changes they experienced.

 SECTION 1 – FINDINGS FROM THE QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA

4.2 Mindfulness

4.2.1 The Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) Results

The participants' self-reported mindfulness was measured using the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) resulting in scores for total self-reported mindfulness and each facet. As shown in Table 4.1, total mindfulness (FFMQ) increased over time (main effect for time $F(2,42) = 19.61, p < .001$) and females reported higher levels of mindfulness (main effect for gender $F(2,21) = 6.190, p < .05$). The increase in mindfulness occurred between time 1 and time 2 ($F(1,21) = 19.04, p < .001$). Three of the five facets at times 1, 2 and 3 reported gender differences (see Table 4.1).

Interestingly, in the initial interviews both Trish and Karen identified that females might need more mindfulness as “*women are really critical on themselves, much more the men*” (Trish) and that “*female leaders tend to take on more instead of helping build capacity*” (Karen). Female principals reported higher levels of *observing* ($F(1,21) = 4.41, p < 0.05$) and *describing* ($F(1,21) = 11.3, p < 0.01$) than male principals over time, and were less likely to be *non-judging of inner experience*. There were gender differences in changes for *non-judging of inner experience* (time x gender interaction, $F(2, 42) = 6.68, p < 0.01$), with male principals reporting no change in non-judging and females increasing in non-judging.

Even though no change in males was recorded, Tom, the only male participant who discussed “non- judging” at time 2 interviews spoke about it in relation to the benefit of what mindfulness had opened for him and how that might benefit others:

Hopefully, what mindfulness does for them, is what it's done for me. It can give them a platform and base from which to springboard their empathies. To springboard their understanding of other people. To understand situations better, rather than knee jerk reactions. Understand parents and children a lot better. (Tom)

Table 4.1

Time 1, 2 and 3 Gender Difference Means and Standard Deviations for Principals' Mindfulness in the Total and Three Subscales of Observing, Describing and Non-Judging of Inner Experience (FFMQ)

FFMQ	Time 1		Time 2		Time 3	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Total FFMQ	3.33	0.55	3.75	0.52	3.84	0.47
Females	3.43	0.59	4.01	0.43	4.04	0.41
Males	3.19	0.54	3.33	0.44	3.53	0.45
Observing	3.26	0.85	3.72	0.66	3.86	0.62
Females	3.38	0.22	3.98	0.14	4.06	0.15
Males	3.05	0.30	3.23	0.19	3.48	0.20
Describing	3.63	0.78	3.91	0.77	3.91	0.83
Females	3.94	0.17	4.23	0.16	4.22	0.18
Males	3.04	0.24	3.31	0.23	3.33	0.26
Non-Judge of Inner Experience	3.38	0.79	3.82	0.68	3.99	0.67
Females	3.35	0.21	4.03	0.16	4.23	0.15
Males	3.44	0.28	3.44	0.22	3.56	0.21

The remaining two facets (*acting with awareness*, and *non-reactivity to inner experience*) showed increases over time but no gender differences (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

Time 1, 2 & 3 Means, Standard Deviations and F Scores for Principals' Remaining 2 Subscales of Mindfulness (FFMQ)

FFMQ	Time 1		Time 2		Time 3		F Scores
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Acting with Awareness	3.08	0.87	3.60	0.55	3.66	0.73	10.334***
Non-Reactivity to Inner Experience	3.30	0.59	3.69	0.53	3.78	0.50	8.132**

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The next section explores each of the five facets (or subscales) of the FFMQ in more depth.

4.2.1.1 Subscales of the FFMQ

Each of the subscales or facets of mindfulness increased between time 1 and time 2 and were maintained at time 3 as shown by the significant time 1 vs time 2 contrasts and non-significant time 2 vs time 3 contrasts. Apart for *non-judging of inner experiences* the trends are the same for females and males. These are explained as follows:

Observing: The subscale of observing is about the ability to pay more attention to sensations ($F(2,42) = 11.469, p < .001$). Participants reported improvements in observing, for example at time 2, Sue described feeling that she took better notice of everyday things: *I can actually walk and stay and look at the lake, and I've actually seen trees rustling for the first time. I can have a shower and actually think, "God, this water feels so good"*.

Describing: The subscale of describing is about being better able to put beliefs, opinions and expectations into words ($F(2,42) = 3.957, p < .05$). Participants reported improvements in describing, for example Tanya at time 2, explained being able to make connections to noticing and then describing her thought process to determine how she felt: *Because you have to be clued in to notice. What does that mean? What does that look like? What do you have to do? And when you start noticing, you just get calm. Well, I do.*

Acting with Awareness: The subscale of acting with awareness is about being less distracted and more aware of both surroundings, thoughts, and feelings ($F(2,42) = 10.334, p < .001$). Participants reported that this had increased, for example at time 2, Sonya felt her improved awareness allowed her the opportunity to be more present: *It's being more aware, consciously aware of what you say, how you act and actually what you're doing - when I'm here, I'm here, wherever I am, I'm actually there.*

Non-Judging of Inner Experience: The subscale of non-judging of inner experience, means that one is less likely to criticise one's own emotions. Female participants reported that this had improved, for example Karen at time 2, was able to tune into her inner dialogue and respond differently and with more kindness: *I've had key issues and key things happening that day, and I've been overthinking getting ready for them, and I've been annoyed with myself. But then I've been telling myself, "Why are you being so unkind to yourself?" So, the self-talk has changed and I'm making myself more accountable for my self-talk. I'm being kinder to myself, but I'm not there yet, I'm still on the journey.*

Non-Reactive to Inner Experiences: The subscale of non-reactive to inner experiences, means that participants reported they were better able to deal with distressing thoughts

($F(2,42) = 8.132, p < .01$). For example, at time 2; Tanya felt that she was now able to take a step back from her own feelings of frustration and respond differently: *“Give myself that valuable second to observe and chat with myself: “Come on. You are not going to engage in this nonsense anymore. You’ve moved on from here.”*

The next section will present the major themes from the qualitative data in the form of face-to-face interviews and additional open-ended questions from the time 3 questionnaire.

4.2.2 Major Mindfulness Themes from the Qualitative Data

The previous section used some of the qualitative data to illustrate how the five facets of mindfulness might have been experienced by the participants (quantitative data). This section shares the full analysis (description in methodology) of the time 1 and time 2 qualitative data (from the overarching coded theme of mindfulness), where participants were asked open ended questions in semi-structured interviews as to their experience learning more about and/or practicing mindfulness and includes reflections from the time 3 open ended questions as part of the questionnaire.

4.2.2.1 Time 1

At the time 1 interviews participants were asked what they understood mindfulness to be and whether they had any previous experience of mindfulness. The participants had attended the introduction session and so had some prior knowledge as to the purpose of the training program. A majority of the participants shared that for them, mindfulness was about being present, in the now, focused and centred. Only one participant said he was unsure how to define it. In terms of experience, nineteen participants indicated that they had different levels of knowledge or experience of mindfulness. Five participants said that they had read about mindfulness, with one saying that this is sometimes *“too religious and so he gets turned off”*. Four participants said they had done some yoga which included a little bit of meditation and only one principal reported that she had a long-standing practice of a daily breathing and stretching yoga session for 15 minutes. However, she commented that the benefit of that was that *“I might not be calm, but I look it”*. Another seven participants mentioned that they had a few wellbeing professional development sessions for staff, and interestingly another two commented that they had run professional development sessions at their school but did not attend, *“it was just for staff”*. One participant commented that she had been introduced to mindfulness meditation as part of her a significant health treatment, and said she thought it

was good idea, but did nothing about it, and finally one principal had meditated before but had struggled to make it a habit and was hoping this “*time it would be different*”.

4.2.2.2 Time 2

At the time 2 interviews there were five major themes that were discussed by a third or more of the participants. These included from most discussed:

1. The benefit of the 10-minute mindful practice training (24 participants).
2. The enhanced capacity to bring awareness to an experience (14 participants).
3. The ability to pause and breath, observe and notice self, thoughts and the world around them and redress the situation (10 participants).
4. The felt sense of a new calm (10 participants).
5. The felt sense of personal control (9 participants).

Each of these major themes is explored in order of most discussed and includes examples of participants’ comments.

The Benefit of the Practice

Most participants at time 2 also reflected on the experience of the practice (the 10-minute mind training) (24 participants, 49 references) and how it benefitted them. Sue recognised that scheduling her 10-minute practice in the morning when she got to school allowed her to make it a habit, that had benefits for the rest of her day:

I do it every day when I get to work. And I normally get here somewhere between 7.15am and 7:30am. So, I just spend ten minutes, just shut the door. Then it just starts to become part of your day. You know, it just starts to be part of who I am.

Tom also had made it a habit by nominating a daily time to close his office door and do his 10- minutes which seemed to benefit his stress levels and brought a level of restfulness:

I’ve got to a point where I’m saying it’s 11.50am. I close my door. I say, “I’m going to do my ten minutes of peace and quiet.” I follow my breathing. I find that exceptionally beneficial. Especially afterwards I feel quite light. Like a whole lot of tension is being released. The awareness, opening your mind to all the different thoughts that come through and I allow those to come through. I find a pattern coming through but then I focus back on the breathing. ... At the end of it I feel quite light and relieved. What it is I can’t really put my

finger on. Whether it's the fact that I've been so rested. The restfulness I feel right throughout the body, so obviously I'm doing it right.

Andrea described how her practice gave her clarity to deal with her work and impacted her wellbeing and happiness:

I now no longer see certain things as something I have to do, but things that I really want to do because it's important to me. And the 10 minutes every day of meditation has allowed that clarity. That's what's assisted me along the way. So that sense of well-being is really quite evident to me. I actually feel happier. I had no idea how much impact that had across the whole school, because you think you're doing your job in your office, but you're impacting on people all the time.

Tanya likened her practice as a gift to herself:

It's a bit like the gift of time to yourself. This is my gift to me. And yeah, I really loved that.

Trish also described the practice as a gift to herself. She recognised that she could do her practice anytime, anywhere and that becoming conscious of how you want to spend time means that you might choose to do a practice instead of just fill the time, as she shared about her recent trip on a plane and visiting the chiropractor:

So I can open my laptop and do work, or I can take a moment, chill out, read for a bit and then actually do some mindfulness training on the plane, because what else do you do for ten minutes on a plane? Or when you're waiting for the chiro because they're running late, so you're going, "All right. How do I want to spend these 30 minutes? Do I want to read this trashy mag, or do I just want to spend 10 minutes giving something to me in the space of this really busy day?" So I've been trying to do a lot more of that as well as the regular 10 minutes.

Jean also used different times during her day to do her practice and was surprised at the reaction of her staff:

I was at a professional learning with my staff and during the lunch break I went and sat in the park and did my ten minutes. And when I came back and I told them that's what I'd done, their response was, "That's fantastic!" Not, "You dopey idiot!" Which is what I would've thought.

William shared how the practice helped him stay focused during the day and was able to employ the mindful breathing technique to calm himself when he was confronted by challenges:

The breathing and the counting of breathing, that's helped me stay on track. It's changed when I'm dealing with people and stressful times, I can feel myself breathing and counting in the back of my head. That's been the biggest change I've seen during the day. I suppose that's my go-to train of thought to get back in touch with whatever's happening to my being.

Even though the majority of participants recognised benefits of the practice, nine participants did discuss the challenges of maintaining the practice at their time 2 interviews. For Paul it was quite frustrating, because he recognised from a theoretical point of view the benefits of doing the practice, however what had made more of an impact on him were the mental strategies and work applications. He also struggled moving from the focus practice (counting breaths) to the open awareness training (letting go of the focus on the breath and opening one's awareness to whatever arises):

Where there are times of stress and tension, it may be three hours after I've done my 10 minutes. Then this is the reality where I'm experiencing it. The 10 minutes then becomes irrelevant. I can recall back that, "I did that," but did it make a difference? No, because the reality is the present. Has it made a difference so far? I don't think so. That's a real, practical, physical thing. Whereas interestingly, the theory and putting the theory into practice, not the breathing, but all the other information, I've probably benefited from it more so than the practical, physical stuff. I want the physical stuff to work. I really do and I do know that ... in the first four weeks or five weeks when we just did the breathing and concentrating on the breathing, I thought I was getting pretty good at that.

Sue was determined to get into a habit of 10-minute practice but struggled with distractions and wanting to do it "right". She described the importance of being patient with the process:

When I first started, you had to count the breaths, and then go back to one? I couldn't go past about two. And then I thought, "I'm not going back to one anymore, I'm just going to go to ten. And it doesn't matter whether I think of other thoughts or not." Because I was too frustrated with myself. I often stopped before ten minutes. I used to stop and check my phone at three minutes, and it'd be at five minutes, about seven, I'd get to eight and go, "Come on, close your eyes again and go to ten." Now, I can go to ten minutes sometimes. This morning I went to ten minutes. And I said, "Be patient with it, Sue. It's okay, the ten minutes will go." But I've been stopping mainly at eight minutes now. Just having a quick thinking, "Oh, two minutes left. Okay." So, I'm getting there.

Bringing a New Awareness to Experiences

The participants spoke of ‘bringing a new awareness to experiences’ (14 participants, 37 references). As explained by James, mindfulness increased his attention to his previously unchecked distractions and emotions and thus provided him a moment to pause and become aware:

You have an awareness of the things around you that you were allowing yourself to be distracted by and also the time to be still. And the things, like during the day, when I am aware of my emotions, and I am allowing myself the opportunity to engage mindfulness, purely simply by taking, it might be a minute. It might be a couple of breaths. But just by actually getting that oxygen in.

Similarly, Sonya related how she had improved her awareness of “being” and was thus able to become more present:

I don't know what it is, it's just being more aware, I think being consciously aware of what you say, how you act and actually what you're doing. I think just being present.

I don't know what that looks like, but I suppose it's just awareness, just making sure that when I'm here I'm here, wherever I am, I'm actually there.

Likewise, Karen who shared that she was quite an observant person before the training, but that now her awareness had more clarity:

So, for me, my awareness of people is phenomenal now. My awareness of what she's doing and saying has just become so sharp. And my awareness of the trouble a couple of my leaders are feeling about themselves in their leadership - it's just so clear. I've got huge clarity around it.

In addition, mindfulness helped Trish have a better awareness of what was going on internally for her, and that by bringing an awareness to physical signs she was able to respond to anxiety differently:

I'm actually much more aware of my physical response to situations, so taking that breath to change where you're at. So even this morning, I felt the anxiety and the chaos in my stomach start to come back, and so I'm aware of what's happening to my body, and I take a step back from it, to take a breath and say, “You're becoming anxious or you're getting this feeling, and when you do, you're not present, you don't do things well. Stop, it's okay, the world's not going to end if you don't respond right in this moment.”

Pause and Redress

Other participants described how they felt that mindfulness had allowed them to become better at consciously pausing and creating a little more time for a considered response, rather than a knee jerk reaction in times of stress. This was described as learning to literally take a breath, so that they responded rather than reacted. This theme of the ‘ability to consciously take a pause and readdress the situation’ was discussed by 10 participants (with 14 references). For example, Laura reflected on how she may have behaved in the past and how taking a mindful breath gave her the opportunity for a different approach. She described having more clarity, and being able to consciously respond and manage her emotions more effectively:

I think it allows you just to see things a little bit more clearly for how you manage it, as well, as taking the time. I know there's been a couple of instances where normally, I would've reacted straightaway, but I've actually taken a breath, come back in, had a bit of a think about it, or talked with (a colleague) a bit more about it, and then taken a slightly different approach, particularly with one teacher. I guess in the past, it would've been, "Got to manage it now. Got to get in. Got to do that," but it was, "Let's take a breath, let's strategise, let's get calm about this. What can we effect, and how are we going to manage it, instead of getting angry about it?" Take it from more a patient point of view.

This choice to pause and observe, to notice and observe self, thoughts, and the world around oneself meant that for Karen and Karina felt more able to notice their damaging and critical inner dialogue. Karen described her inner dialogue as reprimanding and unkind:

I am thinking completely differently about me, even just the last two nights, where I've had key issues and key things happening that day, and I've been overthinking getting ready for them, and I've been annoyed with myself. But then I've been telling myself, "Why are you being so unkind to yourself?" So, the self-talk has changed and I'm making myself more accountable for my self-talk. I'm being kinder to myself but I'm not there yet, I'm still on the journey.

Karina recognised that when she reviewed her performance in activities, she thought she was being reflective, however through mindfulness she recognised that she was actually highly critical of herself:

I thought I was highly reflective, well I was. Highly critical of myself. So, I found that to be a profound difference in my thinking. I've always considered myself to be open to what I did wrong, how to do things better, how to improve, you know, I've always tried to learn, just finished my Masters, all those sorts of things and it happened on one of my ten-minute sessions, I sat there and there was just this whole awareness that I wasn't being reflective, I was just being doggedly critical and not nicely.

Sense of Calm

A number of participants spoke of a 'sense of calm' (11 participants, 16 references) or the capacity to bring calmness to a situation. For example, Trish explained feedback that highlighted her improved sense of calm:

I'm feeling a lot calmer. I've just spent a week working in another school and one of my friends is actually a Deputy Principal in that school, and she said to me, "You seem different in a positive way. You seem to be a lot calmer, despite all of the challenges and the constant challenges that you have." So that was some nice feedback. So, it's made me a lot calmer, I'm able to balance things, really focus on what can I control and what can't I control.

Rebecca's daily 10 minutes a day training meant that she was conscious of how she wanted to be when she got home, and how changing her driving routine allowed a quietness that translated into a calmer state:

About taking that ten minutes a day. I would generally be driving home, and I'd have a million phone calls, because I think, "This is the time to do my phone calls, in my car on the way home." I've actually taken the time to just not have the radio on, nothing on, just have that bit of quiet time driving home, and it's amazing how calm you get out. Instead of being like, "Oh, my gosh. I've got all these things running through my brain. I'm getting home, and I've got to get tea ready, and get a load of washing in." You just get out of the car feeling a little bit like there is this space there.

Emma realised that her approach to serious incidents had changed. Rather than just going into a mode of lots of doing, she checked in with herself and changed how she was being and altered her approach. Emma felt that mindfulness had helped her address these types of incidents with a sense of calmness:

Dealing with complex things and again, thinking about today, we've got a critical incident that occurred this morning. Sometimes having those things, plus all the other things that have gone on in the day, the reaction is, "Right, I've got to get this done, I've got to get this done, I've got to get that done", but actually being able to remain calm. This is part of the (mindful) work; this is how we'll approach it. We'll stay in control of those things and how we react.

Gaining Personal Control

A sense of knowing and bringing awareness to what was in one's sphere of influence, was experienced and discussed by the participants as a 'sense of gaining control back' (9 participants, 12 references). Sue described feeling how her sense of personal control was improved and that she had regained her self-control and purpose:

I would say the job of a principal is never ending, and sometimes it can seem overwhelming at times. And the reason for doing it (mindfulness) is to get the control back. So, you have the sense of control over yourself, over your work, over who you are, and where you're headed. That's what it does.

4.2.2.3 Reflections on Mindfulness Training and Practice at Time 3

Six months after the program was completed, in the time 3 questionnaire, 22 of the 23 participants reported still practicing their mindfulness training. As represented, in Figure 4.1, five were practicing a few times a month, eleven were practicing a few times a week, four were practicing most days and two were practicing every day (including weekends). The challenge of maintaining practice was acknowledged. For Janet it was difficult to take the time:

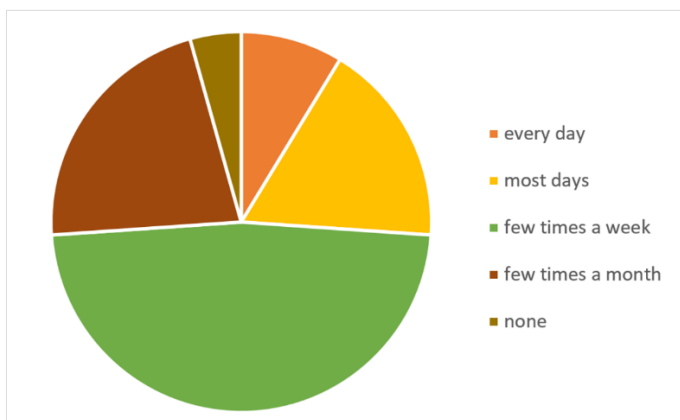
Easy to return to default position and not give myself the gift of a practice, although (I am) aware of so much more and less critical of myself.

Whereas for Jenny the practice had become a daily habit because she recognised and reminded herself of the benefits:

Knowing that it makes me feel better, I am much calmer and know that I control the level of stress I may be presented with.

Figure 4.1

Amount of Times a Week the Principals did Their Mindfulness Practice at Time 3



Three principals, in their time 3 reflections, revealed experiencing significant stress during the previous six months post the program, and that their mindfulness practice had provided them with some strength. For example, Jack, revealed that his practice allowed him to maintain a better mental state and that his practice also provided him personal comfort:

Although when confronted with major issues recently my initial response was fight or flight; however, when I overcame these responses and used the mindful practices, I was able to regain my peace of mind and thus improve my well-being. Unfortunately, since completing the program I have been assaulted with a significant number of major crises in a short period of time. Without being aware of the mental strategies and using them to focus on I am quite sure I would have fallen into depression by now. As bad as I feel at times, I am pleased to say I have avoided becoming deeply depressed and I feel my mindful practices have comforted me enormously and allowed me to respond and manage these crises.

Similarly, Ruth also had found her last six months of the year challenging and mindfulness practice had allowed her to notice and navigate her stress in a more productive way:

I am a little more stable under stress. I think I stay away from tipping over a perceived edge now. I recognise what and when it is happening.

At time 3, Karen was struggling to make time for the practice, and even when she did, she found it difficult. However, she did recognise that mindfulness practice was important as it helped her energy levels to deal with the challenging and underappreciated role of being a school principal:

I haven't found it easy. Making 10 minutes has been difficult and I've been very thoughtful about why. Stressors have been so extreme these past few weeks that I've made myself do a few minutes, but each time have let stressful thoughts consume me and affect the practice.

My understanding about how I think and manage my thoughts has become much more evident to me. That has helped me address some highly stressful circumstances. "The last few weeks have been tough for me. However, I have adopted some strategies which will be exciting for 2017. Nobody would know the inner turmoil I've been undergoing because of the huge pressures of this role, a role I love, but one which is undervalued and taken for granted by so many. As I embark on the summer break, I feel confident I will increase my mindfulness practices. They need to be embedded in my day each and every day no matter what because I know how much my energy levels benefit. This principal has limped across the finish line that is the end of term, completely exhausted. I'm so thankful I have an understanding family.

4.3 Wellbeing

Principals' wellbeing was measured by three indicators. Their self-reported levels of stress using the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey MBI-GS (Leiter & Maslach, 2003), whether they experienced work engagement or burnout using the Area of Worklife Survey (AWS) (Leiter & Maslach, 2003), and their ability to take care of self, or their levels of self-compassion using the Self Compassion Scale (SCS) (Neff 2003). The results from these surveys are reported and discussed in turn.

In the qualitative sections data are drawn from both time 1 and 2 interviews and time 3 open ended questions from the final questionnaire. Where the data are available to illustrate in more depth and experience or comments from an individual over the research time period, these are included in the form of mini case studies.

4.3.1 The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) Results

Participants' feelings of being stressed, emotionally over extended and exhausted by one's work, was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS) (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). As the MBI does not use a total score an overall MANOVA was computed. The results showed significant effects for time ($F(6,14) = 4.032, p < .05$) significant effects for gender ($F(3,17) = 4.683, p < .05$) but no time x gender interaction ($F(6,14) = 1.346, p > 0.05$). See Table 4.3 and Figure 4.2 as an illustration of subscale scores and Table 4.4 for the gender differences for the subscale of cynicism. Note that the scores for *professional efficacy* increased while those for *exhaustion* and *cynicism* (for males) had reduced by time 3.

Table 4.3

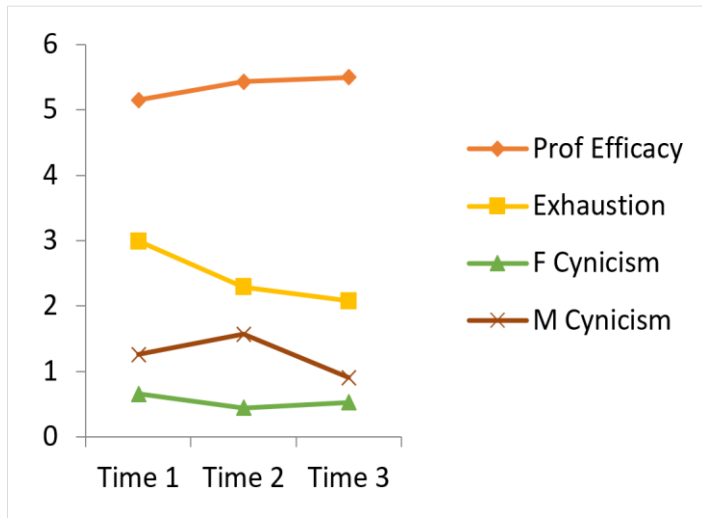
Time 1, 2 & 3 Means, Standard Deviation and F Scores for Principals' Subscales of Professional Efficacy and Exhaustion (MBI)

MBI	Time 1		Time 2		Time 3		F Scores
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Professional Efficacy (1,19)	5.15	0.99	5.43**	0.84	5.5	0.51	5.476**
Exhaustion (1,19)	2.99	1.29	2.29*	1.10	2.08	1.16	6.246**

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 4.2

Time 1, 2 & 3 Score for Principals' MBI Scores Including Gender Difference (F & M) Scores for Cynicism



As shown in Table 4.4, males reported higher cynicism ($F(1,19) = 7.655, p < .05$). There were no other gender effects.

Table 4.4

Gender Differences Time 1, 2 & 3 Scores for Principals' MBI Scores of the Subscale Cynicism

MBI	Time 1		Time 2		Time 3	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Cynicism	1.03	0.98	1.00	1.22	0.96	1.12
Females	0.66	0.35	0.44	0.40	0.53	0.40
Males	1.26	1.23	1.37	1.35	0.91	0.59

4.3.1.1 Subscales of the MBI

Each subscale is explored in more detail.

Professional Efficacy: The subscale of professional efficacy means that an individual believes that they are good at their job. The participants reported that they had higher levels of *professional efficacy* ($F(2,38) = 5.476, p < .01$) over time with an increase occurring from time 1 to time 2 ($F(1,19) = 10.254, p < 0.05$). For example, Robert at time 2 shared, *I am more effective, (it) helps me work with my work problems more easily, but it's been a bit more than that, I think. It's discovering the joy.*

Emotional Exhaustion: The subscale of emotional exhaustion captures how emotionally draining work might be. These participants reported lower levels of *emotional exhaustion* ($F(2,38) = 6.246, p < .01$) over time with a decrease occurring from time 1 to time 2 ($F(1,19) = 6.16, p < 0.05$). For example, at time 2, Alan noted that: *I'm now conscious of not letting things drag me down and make me feel as though there's no way out. So, when people are coming in, talking to me, I'm not being weighed down by their concerns or their worries.*

Cynicism: The subscale of cynicism represents that one might not feel their work is of significance. There was no change over time in cynicism for the group as a whole, but there was a gender difference (as reported above) and cynicism featured as a minor theme in the interview data. In reviewing the time 1 interview data there was a general cynicism (not of the insignificance of what they do or contribute), but more directed at the larger education department in regard to “systemic compliance” and “non-authenticity” (5 participants, 5 references). For example, James expressed concerns about the level of trust the department had in principals as leaders:

I would like to actually be the principal of the school and not have every single micro decision examined. ... They don't have that capacity to fully say “I trust that principal and I trust what that principal's decisions are”.

At the time 2 interviews cynicism surfaced more on how the Department might “use” this program or its “real” reasons for doing it (9 participants, 12 references). For example, Karen worried that it might not be used by the administration (or suits as she termed them) for its intended purposes:

I keep thinking about where this will go and it's ultimately none of my business, but I keep thinking about the “suits” mustn't get hold of this. If it's going to be sustainable, the “suits” have got to respect it and not bring the ego to it.*

* suits: the corporate administrative arm of the Education Department

4.3.2 Major Stress Themes in the Qualitative Data

The previous section used qualitative data to illustrate the quantitative data results, however this section explores the full analysis (description in methodology) of the qualitative data at all three time points. This section will present the main themes, and will include all time points data as it pertains to:

- The level of stress experienced by participants
- The type or causes of their stress

- The impacts of their stress
- Their coping mechanisms

4.3.2.1 Levels of Stress and Burnout

Prior to the program at time 1 interviews a majority (24 participants, 37 references) of principals shared that they were stressed, and a couple of them shared that they were close to burnout (3 participants, 3 references). Trish had received her results from the ‘National Principal Wellbeing Survey’ and they had highlighted that she was showing signs of potential burnout:

So, for me, burnout is something that came out in my principal survey as being ... I'm at high risk of burnout. So, I guess it's that, "Well how do you deal with that?"

Likewise, Leigh also had some indications that she might be close to burnout by recognising some of her symptoms in an article she read:

I thought I was close to some burn out, but I read an article on the difference between burnout and I can't remember what they called it – but I was a step before, I wasn't actually. But I thought I was getting close, which meant that you aren't quite burnt out.

Alan explained how for him the pressure turned to stress, and then anxiety, and how he felt that hindered his decision making:

I feel the pressure. I feel I do get very stressed. I worry. And then I get quite defensive. I think I have reasonably high anxiety level. And when I'm in those states of mind, I find it hard to make decisions.

It is worth noting that the program had a particularly strong impact on Alan who at time 2 described how mindfulness allowed him not to get caught in the spiral of stress and that he was able to not let things drag him down:

I'm conscious of not letting things drag me down and make me feel as though there's no way out, or where I'm going to go, how I'm going to deal with this.

Ironically at the time 2 interviews another three participants reflected that were near burnout prior to the program but didn't feel comfortable sharing this or were unaware as to how stressed they were. For example, Tanya reflected that prior to the program she was suffering from an anxiety to have all the right answers and that was causing her great stress:

I was at such a burnt out and unbalanced phase that if I was given a question under pressure or thought I had to have the right answer, the anxiety. What I've discovered now is that I had that classic burn-out, just white noise, literally couldn't think through it. Whereas I'm now able to take a moment, and it does just take a moment, and by taking a slightly different tack on it, even if it's not the right one, I can actually still respond, whereas before I felt embarrassed, you know?

Or as Sue recognised that her constant drive to work harder to fix things was adding to her levels of stress and that mindfulness had now transformed how she worked:

This has been the best thing I have ever done. I reckon I was heading for burnout, at the beginning of this year. I was at a stage where I thought, "I can't keep doing this." (Now) I'm working as I hard as I did before. But my whole world in myself has completely changed. Completely. I'm not letting this go. It really, really has transformed how I think. Absolutely.

4.3.2.2 Types of Stressors

In the time 1 interviews the things that caused the most pressure and stress for 30% or more of the participants ranged from the effort of a being a school principal 24/7 (16 participants, 22 references), the amount of administration and emails they received and need to respond to (12 participants, 13 references), and the challenges with parents (10 participants, 12 references), and staff (9 participants, 11 references).

Challenges of Being a Principal

In the time 1 interviews the challenges of being a principal were discussed and consisted of some common themes of the effort of a being a school principal 24/7 (and how that impacts work life balance), always feeling 'on', no time to think or prioritise, and constantly being interrupted and distracted (16 participants, 22 references).

Both Robert and Ben spoke about how the challenges of managing the working load meant they had to work at night and still find time for their families and roles as fathers which didn't leave any time for anything else. Robert commented that he needed to be "on" at home, and that just like work, people were constantly wanting something from him too:

"Dad, can you do this, dad." And this is not fair of me, but, "Dad, could you, dad, dad, dad." And once I said, "stop". People ask of me all the time, and I need me time now". My boys are older now so it's not so bad, but I have to be on at home as well.... I need off time.

Likewise, for Ben, even when he thought he might have some “off” evenings – other school commitments absorbed that time:

Sunday afternoons were never my favourite afternoon because I was always thinking about or preparing for work. I would work most nights until quite late. It would be a very unusual situation if I was not working, but then there would be something that would happen, like P&C meeting or there's a board meeting. So, in terms of my work life balance, I've put elements of life on hold because work's in there, so there'd be compromises. I think I end up putting my kids in, so they got their bit. And yeah, active supportive dad, but the balance was probably not quite right.

Ben's desire to do the right thing by the students' families meant that he also spent a lot of the time considering and worrying about best solutions for them:

I think it's about lists and prioritising instead of actually ticking things off ... having it in some sort of order so that I feel like I'm in a position to bite things off. ... I guess it's worrying or thinking, considering, I guess. It's different to deliberating, as I am considering all factors, and looking for fair balance that I'm happy with. Typically, I would be spending quite a bit of time thinking is there another solution, have I thought about this? What might be the driver for that family? How I might we be able to find a situation that addresses this unusual set of motivators for that family? So yeah, lots of considering.

Jack described constant disruptions which meant that he didn't get time to achieve what he wanted to:

I can often get through to 3:00pm and have not really sat down to do anything, because I've had people coming in, just wanting my time. And of course, I give them my time, and then I think, “Well, what happened to this job, this job, and this job?”

Challenges with Amount of Administration and Emails

In the time 1 interviews ten participants discussed the stress caused by high levels of administrative work and emails, especially the volume of emails they had to respond to, and the perceived urgency attached to them. For example, Jean, like a number of principals, referred to the amount of email correspondence they received from the department that required immediate responses:

I know everyone says, “Turn them off,” but the Department of Education has this habit of sending you an email from regional, and you have to answer by 3:00 pm or mid-day the next day, and the information you have to send needs to be quite detailed.

Or for Simone who was frustrated not only with the volume, but the amount of time sorting emails took from her day:

It's just that every Tom, Dick and Harry seems to have access to our email addresses, and it's not just our business. It's advertising catalogues and all sorts of stuff. I was talking to someone about this yesterday and I said: "They don't seem to realise that it comes through and it's delete, delete, delete, delete. You don't even open them." But it's just the hassle of having to sit there and go through that process. Obviously, one has to be careful you don't delete something from the regional office or the central office.

4.3.2.3 Impact of Stress

The major theme that emerged on the impact of stress was about participants' sleep quality and the level of worrying and ruminating at night (11 participants, 13 references). For example, Leigh at her time 1 interview recognised that she did not get enough sleep, but felt that there was too much to do, and that people who went to sleep on time couldn't possibly achieve everything that needed to be done:

I don't probably get enough sleep, which is really not something that's good for my anti-aging regime either, not getting enough sleep. I don't know how people fit it into their day. I really want to know how people go to bed at 9:30 at night, how they actually get anything done.

Laura explained how stressful ruminations kept her from sleeping:

I woke up in the night and I had the dialogue. I'm normally really fantastic at sleeping, my sister says I could sleep in the middle of a nuclear war ... And, really, I could. I can go to sleep like that if I'm tired. If my mind is busy, that's when I can't sleep. So, Sunday night's often the worst. It starts gearing up.

Likewise, Beth in her time 1 interview shared how the worry of an incident at school kept her awake because she was trying to work out the best solution:

I do agonise about things. I'll lie awake worrying about something ridiculous, like a teacher will say something to me, "This happened." And that will be my thing for the night, trying to work out how to help with whatever the thing was, and it's ridiculous, worrying through the night about it.

Interestingly, in her time 2 interview Beth felt that mindfulness had helped improve her sleep as she had become more able to manage worrying thoughts:

My head is not full of random thoughts. I remember things better. I don't worry about things I can't change, better sleep. I also think my general health is better.

Challenges with Parents

In the time 1 interviews ten participants discussed the stress they felt caused by their interactions with parents of their students. Tom noted that he did not get particularly stressed by work, but that parents caused him a level of stress, especially when they have fixed mindsets:

The only real stresses that come through are the different parents that come in and demand. I don't have stress levels with staff. But some parent issues become very, very curly. And dealing with parents and trying to offer assistance when they're not listening is very, very difficult. A lot of times it's a personal thing with some parents rather than the issue at hand. It's not the child, it's the parent. ...But once parents have a mindset, it's very hard to shift. But I'm learning quickly, because I know the parents here. It's gotten a bit easier. But we got new ones coming in, and they have a bee in their bonnet, or someone says something, or someone doesn't get their own way, or their child doesn't get put into the class that they want them put into.

Kate shared how some of the school family issues also caused an enormous amount of extra work that added to her stress. She shared the incident of how documents about one of her students had been subpoenaed by the courts, which required them to work solidly for a week to prepare the material, and that it was these types of incidents that divert from the core business of teaching:

It's for a child who left here two years ago, the state's children judge has put a subpoena on all the documents. We've already been subpoenaed twice for that family and now we're being subpoenaed again. Every single thing. Diaries, anecdotal notes, all the behaviour, all the attendance in years. He did his whole seven or eight years here in different semesters. That's a week of work and that happened yesterday. That's not my job, but now we've got to go back through everything. We've got to go archiving.... Somehow or other we've got to find the paperwork from about ten years ago when he started here. I mean, is that not crazy? So that's one example and I could give you 100 examples that happen every week that take you off your core business.

Harry explained the stress caused by a tragic incident at his previous school which he felt put his personal safety at risk:

It's a nice community. It's gone through its own ups and downs. Well, the reason I left there, was one of the students died suddenly and one of their family members, took it out on the leadership team. And, what tipped me over the edge to get out of the place was, I was riding home one afternoon, and the family member was following me. So, it scared the shit out of me. The next time I was with the boss, I said, I've gotta go. So, that's why I came back here. So, that was an issue that I knocked the bejesus out of me, sort of thing.

Laura reported the challenge in the amount of time spent helping parents understand their child's progress, or discussing issues with their child when the parents did not see it that way:

The really big, obvious, obvious, obvious thing is when people are difficult or unreasonable like that, and I just have to invest volumes, and volumes, and volumes of time. And, it's like throwing that into a bottomless pit. So, most of the time, if parents and kids work with you, it's fine. I think the biggest time waster is when you're working with people who are in denial about whatever you're trying to do. So, if you're trying to work with their kid it's; "No, there's nothing wrong with him," so you invest all this time and energy... it takes ten times longer to do something or achieve something to help someone. If I knew the parents were on board with you, and say; "I can see that there's a problem here, yeah, let's work on it," we could do this in one tenth of the time, but we're having to come back because they are not open to the fact that their child needs some help, or that their child has anxiety, or whatever.

Challenges with staff

In the time 1 interviews nine principals discussed the stress caused by dealing with staff challenges. Sonya described challenges she had with communicating new professional teaching requirements for staff, and even though she understood their perspective she was frustrated that they didn't understand her intent:

I get where teachers come from, because teachers come from a quite angry place sometimes, "Why do we have to do it this way?" And I explain, this is why we have to do it. But I get it, because teaching is such a private thing. It's like you go in the classroom and you shut your door and that's your work environment. So, I get that they want what they want, but sometimes I find it difficult to get the message that I have to do what I have to do for all of you, for you and the kids and the community. I'm not just doing it for me and those little kids. It is a very difficult thing.

Rebecca had come into a new school and sensed that the long-term teaching staff were not happy about her appointment. The stress of trying to engage people and shift them to a new teaching requirement caused her very high levels of stress and also impacted on her health:

We have 60 to 70 year old teachers that have never seen outside their own classroom for a long time, that don't know really what's going on. And all the new changes that will come through. Especially the classroom observation model absolutely drove them to working with the union, "you can't make us do this". I'm sorry but it's actually, it's mandatory, but we haven't even gone to that yet. We've given them time. We haven't touched it. We're just trying to be very gentle. They think they're being judged. Less and less now, would be truthful to say, I think you'll find they said that stuff at the beginning, and now, I think they would be two different views. But still there is this core group of them and us, saying "I'm an experienced teacher. This is saying you don't believe I'm professional. I'm doing my job, you shouldn't need to ask me".

This level of stress was also having health related issues for Rebecca:

My GP a while back just said "your blood pressure is really getting very high and you don't need medication, its actually being caused by your levels of dealing with the stress at work and things. You need to be doing some other things apart from just work".

Likewise, for Paul who also discussed how the staff culture made it difficult to lead and the challenge and stress of having to rise above the issues:

People. It was people. It was very much a divided staff which brought with it many, many issues, because I had to stay above all that even though I was part of it. It is a very complex situation, and it is still ongoing there with the person that took my position and then the new person that came in last year, and now they got a new person this year. It is ongoing. The reality is that it was a difficult location.

4.3.2.4 Coping with Stress

From the time 1 interviews a third of the principals (10 participants, 19 references) spoke of how they coped by keeping feelings of stress internal, so as to appear as if they were managing. This is noted in the literature as, *surface acting* and/or *impression management* (Maxwell & Riley, 2017). Other participants mentioned not feeling good enough (3 participants, 4 references), and how the challenges of perfectionism (2 participants, 3 references) also caused them stress.

In the time 1 interview analyses principals reported that they felt that to do the job successfully, they needed to appear a certain way, regardless of how they were feeling. For example, Alan felt that being a principal required presenting a positive front even if you were feeling bad and that he needed to cover up his feeling at work:

Even if you're feeling crap, as a principal you can't let people see that. Can't let people to see that you're down and so on. I'm different than when I'm at home, I believe I am. I believe I try to cover it up more at work. I don't believe I express my feelings as much at work as I do the home.

Likewise, Laura shared that the image of a principal who was coping well was important for staff:

The last thing you need is your staff seeing you going, I can't do this, I can't do that. Or that I'm feeling stressed, they don't need to hear that... I think we need to look like we're doing okay.

Ben at time 1 was already reflecting and questioning himself as to what alternative there was to “swallowing” his emotions:

I think that I manage my emotional situation, certainly around here. I rarely fly off the handle at people and they typically would get a measured and reasonable response. Every now and then, I would sort of like to know is that just because I'm swallowing it all. Is it better that I deal with it a different way than trying to keep the water smooth on the top?

For some like Maggie, she shared that the type of leadership that had been model to her as an indicator of strong leadership, was all about appearing to be “smooth” and “unruffled”:

I could never be her for example, because she would never burst into tears. She has herself together, whereas I don't always, and some people go, “Oh, that's just you. You've got to be you.” But I think you can learn to manage it a bit, so that's what I would want to do more of, is being able to manage, just smooth it out a bit, the big ups and downs.

Simone also tried to present an image of calm to others because she felt that was what is needed:

I work really hard not to show any of that externally...I think I need to present a level of calmness. As much as I can, all the time.

Likewise, Jenny described how keeping feelings internal allowed her to appear calm:

Most people would find me a very calm person. But internally, that doesn't mean there's not a lot of stuff going on. I'm pretty good at keeping it internal.

Paul described how this created an emotional tension as he tried to give people the impression that he was managing well:

(It is) a constant tension and I give that impression and I say the things that will allow other people to think, "He's dealing with this really well and that's not a problem. Internally, that may not necessarily be the case, so there's the tension."

Kate had been managing a difficult situation with a parent for three years and had been trying to help her and her child, however this parent also pushed every one of Kate's "buttons" and it had become highly stressful and she shared how she tried to contain herself:

If that woman had walked into my office, I might have said something that I had regretted. Instead, I contained myself.... I actually went on duty and did a big lap around the school with the kids, so that was how I got rid of it and when I got back in, I wouldn't have thought about it again. You know, I don't hold grudges.

Compounding this, three principals mentioned "not feeling good enough" (3 participants, 4 references), and how their desire to do things perfectly also caused them stress.

Jenny who had high expectations of herself commented:

I think it stems back to how you were brought up and the expectations that your parents placed on you and I still remember the comments around, "Well, you got 95%, why didn't you get a 100%." Rather than "Well done on the 95%." ... I guess I've always tried to achieve at a high level so that must be just something that I want to do.

Trish also recognised the high expectations she put on herself:

My problem is I don't think that I'm ineffective, I think that I just do too much because I want everything done and done well. Back to, it isn't good enough.

Wendy found believing that she was good enough was a challenge even though she had received positive feedback from others:

I think I am comfortable in my own skin as a woman and person of a certain age. I think as principal, as a leader, I do think there are people in the community who think I'm pretty good. I would like to feel that actually deserve

that...I don't intend to die, but wouldn't that be terrible? To die without knowing that. I am enough and made enough effort, contributed enough.

This was also a strong theme in time 2 interviews (13 participants, 23 references). It became apparent that as participants reflected, they recognised that they had previously used ineffective ways to cope with their levels of stress, in dealing with the pressures and emotions of being a principal. In deeper analysis of the contributing factors in the time 2 interviews principals identified that their stress levels had reduced because they felt they no longer needed to repress difficult emotions to appear a certain way, and/or manage the impression of themselves. Some principals even shared that in their first interview they had felt guarded and did not want to admit to burnout. Others (6 participants) reflected that they had become aware that they “*were putting on a show*” (Alan), “*hiding their emotions*” (Sonya), “*like a duck swimming on the pond*” (Harry), “*pretending to be calm*” (Anne) and all the while feeling like “*an imposter*” (Karen) or a “*fraud*” (Trish). Andrea recognised that mindfulness had allowed her “*to show her vulnerability*” and Karina recognised that she had thought principals needed to be appear a certain way with a “*corporate edge*” – and that she was “*not going to be doing that anymore*”. Louise had also “*stopped suppressing that she was unhappy and frustrated*” and for James this new awareness allowed him to seek professional help:

*With my honesty and authenticity to put up my hand and say I need help...
There is a truth that you find by allowing yourself the space to breathe.*

4.3.3 Areas of Work Survey (AWS) Results

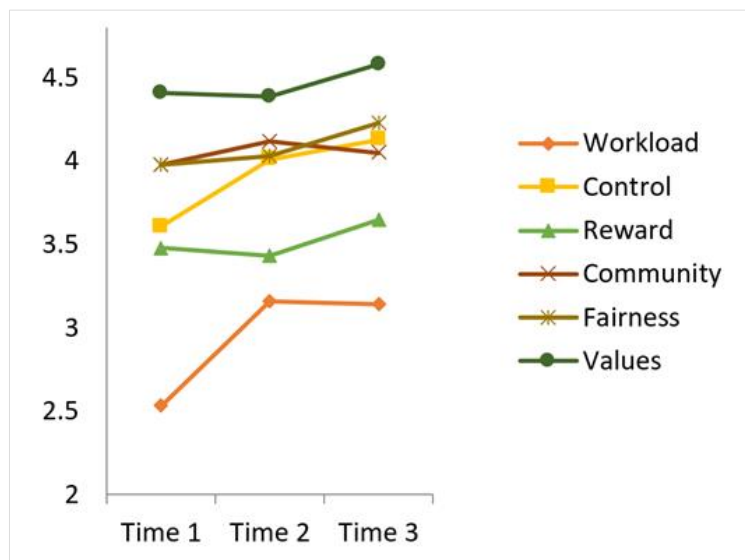
Principals’ perceptions of their work setting played a role in whether they experienced work engagement or burnout. Scores from the questionnaire Areas of Work (AWS) show the degree of experienced congruence between the principal and six domains of their job environment (Maslach et al., 1996). The greater the congruence or match between how the participant perceives their experience of work the more likely the individual will experience work engagement, the less congruent the more likely they will experience burnout.

The overall MANOVA for AWS (see Table 4.5 and illustrated in Figure 4.3) showed that over time principals were better able to optimise the match with the reality of their work environment (or in other words greater congruence) ($F(12,10) = 3.390, p < 0.05$). There were no gender differences (main effect for gender, $F(6,16) = 2.542, p > 0.05$; time x gender interaction, $F(12,10) = 0.513, p > 0.05$).

Table 4.5*Time 1, 2 & 3 Means, Standard Deviation and F Scores for Principals' Engagement at Work Scores (AWS)*

AWS	Time 1		Time 2		Time 3		F Scores
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Workload	2.53	0.72	3.16	0.73	3.14	0.61	10.362***
Control	3.61	0.73	4.01	0.68	4.13	0.61	7.874**
Reward	3.48	1.02	3.43	1.01	3.65	0.79	1.646
Community	3.98	0.66	4.12	0.62	4.05	0.64	.449
Fairness	3.98	0.43	4.03	0.54	4.23	0.42	2.518
Values	4.41	0.47	4.39	.043	4.58	0.39	2.571

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 4.3*Time 1, 2 and 3 Mean Scores for Principals' Areas of Work*

4.3.3.1 Subscales of the AWS

As the AWS does not utilise a total score the subscales will be explored in more detail.

Workload: The subscale of workload means that when there is a congruent score, workload is more sustainable. For this group of principals their higher score meant they felt their workload was achievable ($F(2,42) = 10.4, p < 0.001$). The increased match was from time 1 to time 2 $F(1,21) = 12.798, p < 0.01$ and these effects were maintained at time 3. For example, as Tanya noted at time 2 even though there was the same amount of work, she felt that she was working smarter and with more clarity and energy:

I have relaxed and taken control of my distractions, choices, and tasks. By slowing down, I am working quicker and smarter, I am certainly getting no less done and am achieving outcomes quicker and with more clarity. Personally, I have felt re-energised and renewed from previously feeling burnt out and weighed down. I have returned to looking forward to coming to work.

Control: For the subscale of control, higher levels of *control* match, means that there is more autonomy, greater job satisfaction and commitment ($F(2,42) = 7.87, p < 0.01$). The increased match was from time 1 to time 2 $F(1,21) = 8.366, p < 0.01$ and these effects were maintained at time 3. At time 2 Sue, for example, felt that mindfulness had helped her feel more in control, by being more focused and better able to prioritise tasks:

I think the other thing is work and getting a huge volume of work done is really important to me. And to be able to really notice your distractions, to be able to go, "Am I okay to go with this?" To be able to shut down emails and only open them for three blocks a day. To do that sort of stuff, I honestly feel I've got my life in control. I felt, at work, I had no sense of control. None. Now, I feel like I have that sense of control back.

Reward, Community, Fairness and Values: There were no changes over time for these subscales, however it is worth noting that the baseline scores (pre-program scores) for *community, fairness* and *values* are high (75th percentile) based on measurement of the scores for a normative sample and may be subject to a ceiling effect (Maslach et al., 1996). In the qualitative data analysis of the time 1 interview data, it was evident that this group of principals did have high levels of community support as they discussed their ways of coping with stress, at least half of them mentioned that they had supportive staff (14 participants, 17 references), family (9 participants, 13 references) and friends and others (8 participants, 10 references) who helped them navigate their roles. As Sonya explained in her time 1 interview, she, and her husband (who also worked in education) created time in their day to support each other:

My husband and I always make time, Thursday night's our date night. We walk just about every night and that's our time where we can get a sounding board.

At time 2 Jack noticed he was able to be more supportive to his partner (who also worked in education) as they had started creating time to be together differently:

Normally when we come from work, we'd crash on the couch. And then we'd get up and make dinner, have that and then crash again. Not a very social way to be on most occasions. But now we are taking more time out. We've been out for coffee every day since.... We do that sort of thing now. It's really good.

The full analysis of the qualitative data pertaining to principals' engagement with their work is now discussed.

4.3.4 Areas of Work Major Themes in the Qualitative Data

As discussed in the previous section of stressors for principals at time 1, the majority of these stressors were work related. In the time 2 interviews the major themes that emerged for at least 30% of the participants regarding "engaging with work" was that for this group of principals' mindfulness had allowed for the opportunity to work more mindfully. This was experienced as:

- Being better able to prioritise work (15 participants, 22 references), and this included the minor themes of being less likely to multitask (5 participants, 5 references) and an improvement on their work life balance (7 participants, 7 references).
- Attending more mindfully in meetings and in communications (14 participants, 31 references), especially emails (6 participants, 6 references)
- Engaging differently in their approach with work (12 participants, 18 references)
- A sense of having "permission" to work differently (12 participants, 16 references)
- Better decision making (9 participants, 11 references).

4.3.4.1 Working Mindfully by Prioritising

The sense of working more mindfully was discussed by the majority of participants at time 2 and encompassed the ability to better prioritise work (15 participants, 22 references). This was also captured in the minor themes of the tendency to multitask less (5 participants, 5 references), which also had a felt sense of improved work life balance (7 participants, 7 references). Tanya who was a very experienced principal, reported that working more mindfully changed her working style. She felt more able to prioritise her strategic thinking, and have more energy to focus on what was important:

What I've been able to do is separate strategic thinking from the day-to-day tasks, and I can go to strategic thinking easily and just go, "Yep, I've still got that in control. Tick. Tick." I'm not carrying a bag with everything in it. I'm able to put more focus and energy to it, but not more time. Does that make sense?

I'm still really surprised at my work performance. I just didn't think I could get more done, but I am and with less energy. It's like one of those miraculous things that you can't really explain to people. And yet it's so simple that when you sit back and reflect on it ... Now, no change is simple, particularly undoing habits, but the concept is so easy to connect with. And I have found that really invigorating. It's been just great.

Little indicators like, I have my work list, my task list, and I gradually tick them off and then suddenly I look and think, “They’re all gone.” Instead of it taking two or three weeks, it’s a week. And a week without the stress about, “I’ve still got this to do. I’ve still got ... ” I don’t have in my head, “I’ve still got this to do.” So the two words, focus and clarity, have been really important to me. And it has really changed the way I practice in this office. And it’s really helpful.

Working more mindfully meant that for Kate it was about how she was engaging in her day-to-day work, by creating breaks and keeping a better work life balance:

I find it really hard to be present all the time. And some of the monotonous stuff, I really do switch off. But I am getting better at it. But I think it’s because I’ve actually sat back and structured my day... So, my diary’s back to back, but with gaps. And then you take a little breather in between. I’ve been getting up and getting a lot more active in the school, as in terms of having breaks. I’ve been trying to get home early. I haven’t been sending emails at ridiculous times, I haven’t been looking at my screen before I go to bed. And that’s actually better. I got that from week one.

4.3.4.2 Mindful Communication and Meetings

Just under half (48%) of the participants felt that at time 2 they were able to attend more mindfully in meetings and in communications (14 participants, 31 references). For example, Robert reported perceiving that his relationships with staff and his ability to consciously listen and be more aware of others point of view had improved:

It’s helping me structure my day to be a more effective principal, ... I am beginning to develop more genuine relationships with staff. It’s increased my awareness. I’ve been able to accept different points of view; I suppose there’s a beginner’s mind in that to resolve issues. I do listen, but it’s consciously being aware of what you’re doing. So that makes you become a better leader.

Likewise, Sonya described how mindfulness had impacted her communication with her staff. She described how she had brought a mindfulness practice to her meetings and how that positively changed the dynamic and brought a sense of calm. Her staff also saw her as more approachable and were encouraged to take the mindfulness activity to the whole school:

In the meeting we actually did a mindful minute and I talked to them about it, ... about my journey ..., I didn’t feel as though I was a leader talking to my staff, I felt as though I was a friend talking to friends ... even my deputy said I spoke differently, and I felt it, I felt as I was just sitting around having a conversation with all my friends.

I said, "Look, I'd like to do this mindful minute." and I talked to them about and I said, "You can join in or you don't have to." and they all did it and then at the end they were all like, "Oh, that was so good." And then they said, "We would like to do this at every meeting, but why don't we do it for a minute after that when the kids come back so we do it as a whole school thing."

I think staff have an expectation that you will support them, but they forget that you need support as well and they've always got this barrier that you are the principal, you are the leader, and I didn't break that down. So, I'm finding that my conversations now are a lot different with the staff, it's not as leader to staff, if you know what I mean.

Kate felt that her listening skills had improved, and that she was more present and listened purposefully:

Now when I am listening, listening with purpose. Because I've told you before, I find it really hard to be present all the time. And some of the monotonous stuff, I really do switch off. But I am getting better at it.

Alan felt that mindfulness had improved his awareness and so was more prepared to deal with his inner feelings and reactions during a difficult conversation:

We had a discussion the other day. I could feel, it was probably one of the few times I've actually thought, "Mindful. Mindful." Because I could feel myself, and I have no doubt that those in the meeting would have seen my reaction. So, it still would've been outward that I wasn't happy, but I certainly didn't react. I just listened, and I said, "Oh, we'll have a look at that."

4.3.4.3 Permission to Self to Work Differently

At least 40% of the principals at time 2 discussed how the program had given them motivation to give themselves permission to change how they worked. For example, Tom described how he had changed the foundations of how he worked:

I think, to put it bluntly, I think it's given me a different platform from which to come from. It's given me a different base.

Leigh felt the mindfulness training had provided the space for school leaders to notice how effectively they were using time:

It's giving people permission to work differently and see the difference between being productive, what is productive and non-productive time. People need that break.

Or as Andrea realised through the process, she could rescript what her role was:

I've been known as the fix it principal. You go in, you chop a few toes off, you do this and this, and I saw myself as that, as the fixer. And now I don't. So, it's re-imagining who you are.

Likewise, Beth gave herself permission to employ someone to help her and the courage to address an issue that had become challenging in one of her professional associations:

So now I'm paying someone, and this has given me permission to say "Come organise my files for me and I want them to look like this and I want these sections, and I want you to put a header, and I want you to go through all the documents and remove all the double documents." She's done all my files, all the student files and she did it in under a week, and I've never been able to give myself permission to spend money on my role before. I have changed the way I think, and I have changed the way I do stuff both for school, for home. I'm doing aesthetics differently for home and for my professional association, giving myself permission to say, "I'm going to have to get a new person." I don't know whether I could've done that and dealt with the fallout from that, ... So here you go. It's fine.

Karen also felt inspired to employ a marketing expert to take her school vision and business plan to the next level by giving herself permission to trust her own instincts:

It wasn't coming together, it was like this cold, clinical document that had no heart and then a few things happened in the summer break and then I came to your program and suddenly, the words came, and the thinking came. My board wasn't entirely thrilled but I said "This is going at a certain pace and it's alright because the school hasn't stopped because we haven't got this document. All the key strategies are in place, the vision's in place. The document doesn't determine that, but this is a three-year document that I want to speak a little more about who we are and what we do then what could be doing." So now, I've just met with the marketing person yesterday. I've given myself permission to spend some money with him ...So that's all come out of this. Not all of it, but a hell of a lot of it because I've given myself permission to just go with the flow.

4.3.4.4 Mindful Decision Making

Approximately 40% of principals at time 2 felt that not only had they gained more clarity in decision making but they were also approaching decision making differently. Simone shared how she was now trying to engage her administration staff in finding solutions:

I've had some discussions with the admin team about how we question and how we go about things, but I've also shared with some of my colleagues in the group and, basically, have come to the same conclusion that you just have to take step back sometime and say to someone, "What do you think? How could we solve this problem? What do you think might be the response that we need to give in this instance?" And that doesn't mean to say I shy away from how I can support you to do that, but it gives me a sense of empowering them to be part of the solution to something rather than just the problem nagger or someone who doesn't hold the knowledge.

Likewise, Alan felt that he had more confidence in his decision making because he had clarity as to his intent:

At the end of the day, I'm doing things, decisions I make, or the way I behave is because of the person that I am. And if I'm making those decisions, I'm doing it for the reasons I think are the right reasons. Whether it be for the kids, or whether it be for someone else's wellbeing, or whatever it is.

Or for Louise who felt that because she was more mindful, she was not letting things get to crisis point, by feeling more able to make decisions earlier:

I come in, I know there's a problem, we fix it. I will get into that gear of let's deal with it. Whereas I think I've not had to get into that because I've been better at getting the job done before it becomes a crisis. You know, I've had crises. Like this one boy we were going to take to exclusion and the staff went to the ceiling about this and I've got three staff off on workers comp. It was awful. But instead of it being a big dragged out process, which I've had here before, I've been much more able to be strategic about it, more patient and I've got it all done within the time framework. So that boy's being redirected. He's being looked after.

4.3.4.5 Changing Approach to Work

An awareness for 40% of the participants was that they felt that mindfulness had helped them change how they approached their work, and that at time 2 they were doing things quite differently. For example, Karen who needed to complete a review document decided that she was going to be more creative and authentic in her response, and she felt that the program had empowered her to do this:

There is something else I've done a bit differently. The Principal's Professional Review, I don't know if you've heard of that. It's this thing that they've brought in that you have to do your own professional review, and if she's not happy about something, she will come out to see the professional

review and it better be there. So, I've done a mind map, that's my professional review. A mind map because that's how important I think it is. And everyone's stressed, "Can we have a template for what the professional review would look like? Because we don't quite know, can you give us a bit of an idea?" And I'm thinking "You poor people, this is what corporates have done to you." You're not thinking about who you are and what you want to do to grow. You're going "Can I have a template?!" So, I thought, this enabled me to say I'm having a mind map. There's nothing wrong with a mind map. It's a very powerful tool to express your leadership growth plans and reflections.

Harry described changing his approach to engaging with his team and the awareness that he wanted his team to be more involved. He recognised he didn't need to be the domineering leader he had been in the past:

I want them to be able to express themselves without me dominating everything, which is what it's been in the past. They just seem to think in terms of the leadership the principal is the be all and end all. And that's not how I want ... I want them to be involved in it as well. It's the ownership of things.

Likewise, Andrea now wanted to change her to approach receiving feedback from her team. She discussed that she now hoped to be more authentic and not be afraid to seek clarification so she genuinely could hear and learn how her leadership impacted others:

When I started here, I did a 360 feedback. It was a little bit too early because I hadn't allowed myself to settle in. But it was the mindset with which I did it. I had said, "Oh, I got to do this. I've got to get this 360 feedback out, and then I have to then take that, absorb what it says, and then feedback to the staff how I'm going to deal with all the things that you've fed back to me." And that's how I am. And they all sat there, and they'd never seen that before, but it was the way it happened ... I wasn't authentic. I wasn't real about it. So now I'll be very interested to do another 360 this year. So, I'll be asking the questions again. But when I get the feedback, it will be dealt with differently. And if I want clarification, I said, "I'm going to not be afraid to ask the question," because I'd rather know.

Mandy on the other hand felt that changing her approach had a positive impact on her and her staff efficiency:

I've felt one second ahead, and I've actually started to use that little phrase with staff. In terms of responding to an issue, if we can plan that we're ahead then we're not on the back foot and we're doing things efficiently and that's how people perceive us. I've started to really think about that. So, I do think it's increased my efficiencies, it will have an impact on staff efficiency. It's

impacted on the way I think about things and the classic example is email, not worrying about the email. A shift is at the moment, is not responding to emails that come in after 5.00pm and before 5.30am. I've told staff, sorry, that they shouldn't be responding to parent emails after that time also, and we've communicated to parents that communication might take 24 to 48 hours and please be patient. It's those things that I think make a difference in how you work.

4.3.5 Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) Results

Another aspect of participants' wellbeing, their ability to self-care and put struggles in context, was measured by the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) (Neff, 2003).

As presented in Table 4.6 and illustrated in Figure 4.4 principals' self-compassion (total score) increased over time ($F(2,42) = 9.01, p < 0.01$), with no gender differences (main effect for gender, $F(1,21) = 2.12, p > 0.05$; time x gender interaction, $F(2,42) = 0.757, p > 0.05$). Self-compassion increased from time 1 to time 2 ($F(1,21) = 10.311, p < 0.01$) and the effect was sustained 6 months later.

Table 4.6

Time 1, 2 & 3 Means, Standard Deviation and F Scores for Principals' Self Compassion Scores (SCS)

SCS	Time 1		Time 2		Time 3		F Scores
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Total SCS	3.32	0.67	3.74	0.60	3.77	0.55	9.015**
Self-Kindness	3.09	0.81	3.64	0.76	3.67	0.66	9.299***
Self-Judgement	2.98	0.83	3.42	0.85	3.56	0.96	5.389**
Common Humanity	3.54	0.65	3.92	0.64	3.74	.69	1.474
Isolation	3.44	.91	3.85	0.81	3.98	.79	7.343**
Mindfulness	3.56	0.67	3.76	0.58	3.92	0.68	3.399*
Over Identify	3.28	0.97	3.81	0.68	3.75	0.78	7.878**

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 4.4
Time 1, 2 & 3 Mean Scores for Principals' SCS



4.3.5.1 Subscales of the SCS

Increases over time were found in five of the six self-compassion subscales as shown in Table 4.6. The increases occurred from time 1 to time 2 and were maintained in time 3. A different trajectory was evident for the subscale of *mindfulness* which showed an increase overall but not between time 1 and time 2 or time 2 and time 3. There was no change in *common humanity*.

Self-Kindness: Participants reported higher levels of *self-kindness*, meaning they are more tolerant of themselves ($F(2,42) = 9.299, p < 0.001$). For example, Ruth explained at time 2 how she used to “beat herself up” with guilt and since learning about mindfulness had been better at being kinder to herself:

I used to go through this cycle for years where I would beat myself up in the holidays for not doing enough work, while also beating myself up for not relaxing. I would talk to myself, and I would never get rid of that. Now I do nothing on holidays, I don't feel guilty, and I don't even have to rationalise it. I think that's being kinder to myself.

Self-Judgement: Principals reported lower levels self-judgement, meaning they were less likely to be tough or critical of self ($F(2,42) = 5.389, p < 0.01$). For example, as Alan noted at time 2 he would be more likely to be kinder to himself by being less self-critical: *That's what I want to be able to do is to be able to recognise that and say, “Good choice,” or, “Well done.” To celebrate myself when I have managed a situation.*

Isolation: Principals reported lower levels isolation, meaning they were less likely to feel isolated by their own imperfections ($F(2,42) = 7.343, p < 0.01$). For example, Simone at time 2 captured how she experienced the isolation of feeling that she wasn't making a difference and how mindfulness helped her shift that: *I felt like a mouse on a treadmill. I felt isolated and concerned about whether I was making a difference. I felt my confidence was being eroded... This has given me the confidence back. Not only in my professional life, but in my personal life.*

Over Identified: Principals reported lower levels of over identifying, meaning they were less likely to obsess about negative thoughts ($F(2,42) = 7.878, p < 0.01$). For example, Kate recognised this and understood the connection between lack of self-care and her negative thoughts: *I've got to step back and say, "You can do it easily if you look after yourself and if you don't take yourself so seriously."*

Mindfulness: Principals reported higher levels of mindfulness, in this context meaning they felt more emotionally balanced ($F(2,42) = 3.399, p < .05$). For example, Wendy awareness to her reactions to people and how that had a run-on effect to her emotions:

It probably highlighted for me how much I do react to people; and some of that is a good thing, but some of it can be detrimental. I've probably seen it with fresh eyes - just how much that can impact.

Common Humanity: There was no change over time for this subscale, however in the qualitative data an awareness of how others might be feeling was noted. For example, Louise in her time 2 interview recognised how the suffering of the other principals resonated with her experiences of stress: *Listening to other principals who I've known very well, and they said they were ready to give up. So, my story is their story. I've been part of those conversations with them for years.*

Jenny also shared that she recognised that her suffering was common to the other principals in the group:

I think the levels of stress and the pressure that we put ourselves under is enormous in the role that we have. We're a vulnerable lot. I couldn't help thinking that there's so many people sitting here that are really struggling internally. That's what we do. We have to present this calm, knowledgeable, capacity to solve situations, and manage things for such extended periods of time, and deal with really complex issues. It just eats away at you internally, and makes you a very vulnerable person, because you just get to saturation point. For a lot of us, we just lose sight of what's really important, which is ourselves. That's pretty sad.

4.3.6 The Major Self-Compassion Themes in the Qualitative Data

In reviewing the time 1 interviews only one participant at that time recognised that she needed to take care of herself. However, Maggie did see this as slightly “selfish” even though she recognised the importance of it:

I thought if we both went under, I wouldn't have been any help to anybody. I do have that inside me when it comes to the crunch. I know if I can't help people unless I'm okay myself. That's the other thing that I'm hoping this (program) will make me better at.

In the analysis of the time 2 interview data, the themes most discussed by participants that emerged were:

- Increased levels of acceptance (15 participants, 20 references)
- A sense of permission to take care of self (12 participants, 16 references)
- A sense of self kindness (9 participants, 24 references)
- An awareness and reduction of their negative self-talk (9 participants, 24 references).

4.3.6.1 Acceptance

This theme of being more accepting was reflected by 50% of participants as being important in how they embedded mindfulness into their lives. Acceptance is the ability to refrain from making an already difficult situation more difficult, such that an individual can stop worrying about the things they cannot change, and instead concentrate on the things that are in their influence. Being more accepting means, letting go of the tendency to hold on to things and moving on without the often-associated inner battle or turmoil. For Paul this realisation that he could let go of the worry attached to things out of his control was a turning point:

It's going to happen, so why worry about something that you can't worry about because you know it's going to happen? All right, how do we deal with it? That's our response. Again, there are positives in the way that I'm dealing with this. Whereas all principals are solutions focused. The reality is that sometimes there's no solution or the solution is out of my control. It's in someone else's hands. I just have to wait for that solution to be found or enacted by the other person. In the meantime, deal with the situation. Little bit of a light bulb moment.

Likewise, for Tanya the mental strategy of acceptance was very impactful for her:

One of the biggest strategies that's successful for me is the acceptance strategy. I first read it and I kept reading the one sentence first. And I thought, "Why are they repeating this same sentence?" And then I read it, and read it and I thought, "Oh, heaven's sake." "If you can fix it, don't worry. If you can't fix it, don't worry." Shared it with my husband. He uses it now. Throws back at me if I'm starting to get silly. It's a real beauty. I've just loved that one.

Jean shared how she used acceptance in an exceedingly difficult personal physical pain incident and how it helped her manage the pain better, by being less resistant to the experience:

At one point after a good eight hours of severe pain and light sensitivity, I remember thinking, "It's going to be there, no matter what I do, so it may as well just be there." And it didn't make it go away, but it didn't make it worse!

Robert also shared how he was able to help his wife deal with a tough time she was going through and how his mindfulness practice of labelling thoughts so that they could be observed more neutrally, had helped him to be less likely to worry, and more likely to let go:

Acceptance of the situation, and I think that's helping. ... I think I spoke to you last that my wife was going through a fairly tough time with her leg, and we spoke about how you can't do anything about that, so just what can you do? So, it's been something that's impacted on her ... the why worry bit, that was the bit I couldn't let go of, because I did worry. But now I can, and the labelling of the thoughts has actually been really useful.

The acceptance technique of identifying where an issue was in the "circle of influence" was helpful for Karen. The technique suggests that if the issue is in the outer circle, meaning out of one's influence she could employ acceptance, and if it's in the inner circle of influence, or within one's influence she could act. Karen shared that she had heard similar lessons of acceptance techniques before, however the impact of mindfulness and the mental strategy of acceptance had made it more tangible for her:

Where you say, "What can I influence, what can't I?" My father used to say to me, at the end of each day ask "Have I done a reasonable thing? Have I done what should be expected of me, and I can do no more?" Now I actually believe that, and a bit more. That's why I've got it (book) open here, so I can see the circle of influence - act, and the circle of concern - acceptance. I'm much more accepting than I was. But please don't have me give you the impression I've gone from zero to hero on that, I haven't.

4.3.6.2 Permission to Take Care of Self

Allowing oneself permission to take care of their own needs or be self-compassionate was a common point of discussion for approximately 40% (12 participants, 16 references) of the group at time 2. Sonya for example felt that mindfulness had allowed her to give herself permission to self-reflect on who she was and what she needed:

Isn't it interesting that you just need to do something like this ... actually just being given these tools to have a good think about who you are, where you want to go and that's all it was, ... everyone doing this has been the same I think, I think it's given me permission, because I don't think we gave ourselves permission.

Similarly, Wendy felt mindfulness had also heightened her awareness to be more herself and purposefully bring the parts she liked about herself to her relationships:

I am giving myself permission to do things. I think the part of me that I want to bring more of is the part that I like, obviously. So, that's the part that I'm trying to be more of myself with. That builds those relationships if you're comfortable with who you are.

Permission to look after self was a turning point for Alan, as he felt this and had also ignited a curiosity to learn more about himself:

I just want to know more. To become a better person, not for any other reason but for me. It's the first time in my life I've ever thought like that. In life we're not taught to be "self", we're taught to think about everyone else all the time.

4.3.6.3 Self-Kindness

While only one principal discussed kindness to self in the time 1 interviews, nearly a third in the time 2 interviews discussed the mental strategy of kindness and in particular self-kindness (9 participants, 24 references). Self-kindness is about recognising that to be truly kind to others, one needs to be kind and caring to oneself first. Jenny in her time 1 interview, recognised that she was *kind and gentle with her staff but not to herself*. In her time 2 interview that for her, was the biggest change:

Probably most significantly what the course has provided me with is a level of looking after me, like being kind to myself. I've tried that several times. I've been to psychologists at different times for my children, and they've always talked about, "what about you?" This course has been just demonstrably effective in me really looking after myself, my mental wellbeing ... in that the level of negative self-talk – "I haven't done this, and I'm not good enough at that, and I need to get better at this", has really rapidly declined. So, I'm really

much better at saying, well, that's not done yet, thought out of my head, leave it, park it, don't hold it so tightly. So those things have made a big impact on me. So that's very significant.

However, for others like Karen in her time 2 interview she recognised that getting to the place of self-compassion or kindness to self, was still a challenge:

I'm being kinder to myself but I'm not there yet, I'm still on the journey. The self-criticism, I have been suffering a little bit from that imposter syndrome that female leaders suffer from. I've always been kind and I've always been accepting to others, but not in here (pointing to her heart) because I'm such a high functioning perfectionist and very hard on myself. However, this has given me language, it's given me tools, but most importantly it's given me permission to follow personal learning. To not feel like some sort of alternative thing that doesn't fit in the corporate world, so that for me is huge.

4.3.6.4 Kinder Self-Talk – Taming the Inner Critic

Approximately 30% of the participants felt that mindfulness had changed their negative inner dialogue. For some it was a heightened awareness or noticing that they were getting caught up in their inner chatter, and for others it was about the ability to challenge their negative inner critic. Jenny's experience was that she was able to recognise that her inner critic still had a hold of her, however at time 2 she felt she was able to manage her inner dialogue differently:

I still have that demon in there. You are not doing enough, you need to work harder, you haven't finished this. I am very able to remove those thoughts now.

Likewise, Kate, felt that by managing or taming her inner critic she was able to be more effective and more herself:

This course has given me permission to look after me. It has given me the opportunity to recognise that for me to be effective, I need "me time", and not feel that inner critic constantly nagging at me. The inner critic is losing her voice, she has almost got laryngitis, because I have a greater sense of peace about who I am, what I can and what I can't control.

4.3.7 Reflections on Wellbeing at Time 3

As part of the final questionnaire that participants completed at time 3, they also responded to the open-ended question "what have you noticed about your wellbeing?" The 23 responses noted a range of positive wellbeing outcomes, such as calmness, happiness,

more focused, reflective and aware, medical improvements, ability to manage thoughts, capacity to stand back and be less reactive, less stressed and more real. As Sonya shared:

I am far more aware of my action and interactions with not only staff but family which has led to me stressing less about things - I'm far more "comfortable" with me. I am less likely to stress over things I know I have no control over.

Or as Tanya described the positive impact, she felt mindfulness had on her health, quality of sleep and energy levels:

Significant improvement. My blood pressure has dropped, and my medication cut to half - a huge gain for me. I am no longer so emotionally drained. My sleep has improved greatly; I feel in control of my life and do not constantly think of work. I am happier and able to let go of things which I cannot change. I generally have more energy.

4.4 Leadership

4.4.1 Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) Results

Principals' leadership style was examined using the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) (Walumbwa et al., 2007). Results were generated using the instruction as specified in the methodology section for both males and females at time 1, 2 and 3. The MANOVA for ALQ showed that principals reported changes in how they perceived their leadership over time ($F(8,14) = 3.352, p < 0.05$). The overall mean scores for time 1 (49.6, $SD = 5.27$); time 2 (50.8, $SD = 4.98$), and time 3 (54, $SD = 4.12$) were all in the range of what is benchmarked as "high" authentic leadership (48-64).

The MANOVA also showed that males and females differed in how their leadership perceptions changed overtime (time x gender interaction, $F(8,14) = 3.837, p < 0.05$; no main effect for gender, $F(4,18) = 0.678, p > 0.05$). Further analysis showed that perceptions of *balanced processing* changed (time x gender interaction, $F(2,42) = 3.815, p < 0.05$) with male principals showing a significant change from time 2 to time 3 as shown in Table 4.7. This was the only gender interaction showing a different trajectory for males and females for the ALQ subscales. Worth noting here is that for the eight male principals who responded to the time 3 questionnaire the common theme in what had shifted in their responses was more awareness, ability to remain calm and less reactive as James shared:

I have developed greater control of ability to appropriately detach myself either physically or mentally from difficult situations that would previously have resulted a potentially impulsive or reactive response.

Table 4.7
Gender Interaction for Balanced Processing for Time 1, 2 & 3 Means, Standard Deviation and F Scores for Total Score

ALQ	Time 1		Time 2		Time 3		F Scores
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Balanced Processing	3.06	0.33	3.17	0.47	3.49**	0.48	8.803**
Males	3.08		2.83		3.42		
Females	3.04		3.36		3.51		

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

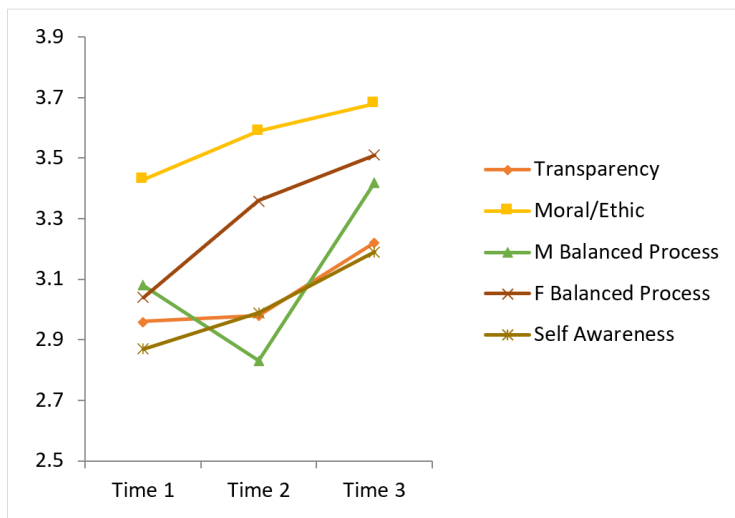
Table 4.8 and Figure 4.5 illustrate the findings of the ALQ subscales.

Table 4.8
Time 1, 2 & 3 Means, Standard Deviation and F scores for Principals' Leadership Scores for the 3 Remaining Subscales (ALQ)

ALQ	Time 1		Time 2		Time 3		F Scores (2,42)
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Transparency	2.96	0.34	2.98	0.37	3.22*	0.34	6.149**
Moral/Ethical	3.43	0.52	3.59	0.37	3.68	0.35	5.250**
Self-Awareness	2.87	0.57	2.99	0.60	3.19*	0.48	5.319**

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 4.5
Time 1, 2 & 3 Mean Scores for Principals' Authentic Leadership Including Balanced Processing Gender Interaction



4.4.1.1 Subscales of the ALQ

The ALQ does not generate a total score so each subscale is examined in more detail. Analysis revealed increases over time for each subscale:

Transparency: Transparency increased over time ($F(2,42) = 6.15, p < 0.01$). An example of one of the subscales items is: As a leader I display emotions exactly in line with feelings. Interestingly, as shown in Table 4.8, the change in perceptions of leadership were between time 2 and time 3; ($F(1,21) = 6.40, p < 0.05$). For example, at time 3 Louise felt that her leadership was more aligned and consistent: *My leadership is more balanced calmer and consistent from my perspective.*

Ethical/Moral: The ethical/moral subscale increased over time ($F(2,42) = 5.25, p < 0.01$). An example of one the subscale items is: As a leader I make difficult decisions based on high standards of ethical conduct. For example, Beth at time 3 felt her approach to leadership was kinder and that this might be having an effect on her school: *My leadership is more measured, more kind, more holistic, more targeted more supportive and more effective. My school is doing extraordinarily well.*

Balanced Processing: Overall the balanced processing subscale increased over time, but with males showing a different trajectory from females. An example of one the subscale items is: As a leader I listen carefully to different points of view before coming to conclusions. Interestingly, as shown in Table 4.7 and Figure 4.5, change in perceptions of leadership occurred between time 2 and time 3. As an example, Kate at time 3 she felt that because her approach was more authentic, she was open to more information that allowed her to make better decisions: *I think I am more open, kind and compassionate. I feel more insightful and more decisive.* For Harry it was more about being open and aware, and recognising the differences that people bring: *I am more aware of individuals traits and how to utilise these for mutual benefit.*

Self-Awareness: Self-awareness increased over time ($F(2,42) = 5.32, p < 0.01$) An example of one the subscales items is: As a leader I seek feedback to improve interactions with others. Interestingly, as shown in Table 4.8, the change in perceptions of leadership were between time 2 and time 3; ($F(1,21) = 5.93, p < 0.05$). For example, Robert at time 3 reported that increase in self-awareness meant he was better able to manage relationships, by listening more and managing his stress when engaging with staff: *Less stressed, I am able to separate personal and professional better. I am less upset with staff, I am a better listener. Decision making is easier. Public speaking is less stressful.*

4.4.2 Major Leadership Themes in the Qualitative Data

This section will present the major qualitative leadership themes that emerged in the qualitative data. At time 1 participants were asked to describe their leadership style and to choose three words that represented their style. At time 2 participants we asked open questions about their leadership in their interviews. At time 3 as part of the questionnaire participants were asked an open question ‘what had they noticed about their leadership?’

This section will focus on participants self-reported leadership styles and the changes in approach over time. The two main themes that emerged were of moving from a more *doing* way of describing their leadership to more of how they were *being* as a leader. The second important theme was participants felt they could be more authentic in their leadership style, that they had the confidence to be more themselves, and act more consistently with their own inner thoughts and feelings (Weiss et al., 2018). To showcase this process in more detail, I have selected Andrea’s particularly well-articulated responses as the narrative to represent the changes over time.

4.4.3 Time 1

4.4.3.1 Leadership Styles

At time 1 participants were asked to describe their leadership style with three words that described their approach. See Figure 4.6, a word cloud, that visually summarises and illustrate their choices, commonalities and frequency of styles chosen (larger words means more frequently used). Figure 4.7 represents the differences responses from females and males.

Figure 4.7

The Difference Between Self-Reported Style of Female and Male Participants



Examining the results from all the participants at time 1 it could be concluded that the majority of the principals observed their leadership style as something external from themselves – or in other words, something they were *doing* rather than something they were *being*, however a closer look at the gender difference word clouds (Figure 4.7) suggests that this was the case more so for male participants. It was however interesting, regardless of gender to discover at time 2 and time 3 that they had started to talk more about how they were being (internally) as a leader. William, for example, saw himself as

an experienced leader and had signed up for the program because he thought he would learn something that he could share with his school. He did not anticipate that he was going to experience internal changes in himself that would impact his leadership.

I started this project as an interest in what my school would get out of it. And now what they will get is a more effective leader. I probably underestimated what I would personally get out of it. If you had of asked me I think in February, "Do you reckon it will change what I'm doing," I would have most probably said, "I don't think it will." I don't know whether I said that or not, but I think it has, I know something's changed ever so lightly inside (me).

4.4.4 Time 2

The major themes at the time 2 interviews centred on how mindfulness had changed their approach to leadership (11 participants, 24 references) and improved their capacity to let go (12 participants, 16 references). Minor themes that supported this included: Improved self-confidence (5 participants, 12 references) and that they felt their role was bringing them more joy (6 participants, 8 references).

On deeper analysis a strong theme of authenticity seemed to flow though the data. It was recorded that 23 participants felt they could be more authentic in the leadership role. This strong theme and the noticeable shift in this group of school principals becoming more authentic in their leadership is explored further and in more nuanced detail.

4.4.4.1 Change in Leadership Approach

At time 2, 30% of the participants discussed examples of how they had changed some of the ways they were approaching their role as leaders. For example, Simone felt that the mindfulness program had armed her with the ability to be able to be more reflective, inclusive of other opinions and to bring attention to assumptions and bias:

For me it's an opportunity to empower people to develop professionally and to contribute and to be valued for that contribution. I think we're in the early stages of that because, effectively, this program has been me focusing on me, and I have taken at times deliberate steps to stand back and say, "Well, what do you think?" Or if I'm responding in a particular way, I'll say, "This is my thinking, but I'm not sure. Have you got any suggestions? Where can we look at your perspective on things." Maybe someone else has got a different kind of perspective and maybe we need to look at the assumptions that we're making are erroneous, and maybe their assumptions are coming from a

different platform. The intent being to create a culture where everyone's opinion is valued and that we don't have all the answers.

Likewise, Sonya felt that her approach had changed quite dramatically and through being able to step back and by using the mental strategy of “letting go” she felt she could create different relationships:

I came in as a leader saying sorry this is non-negotiable, this is been directed from above this is what you will do, so that can create a lot of tension, so I've found through this I've been able to take a step back and go, “You know I can let go of that now. That's okay, I can build different relationships.”

4.4.4.2 The Mental Strategy of Letting Go

The mental strategy of “letting go” seemed to resonate with how participants were managing their leadership. The mental strategy of “letting go” is about developing the capacity to let go of thoughts before they lead to more related thoughts that usually cause the suffering or worry. This group of principals also shared that there were some roles and tasks they were doing that they were holding on to too tightly, and that they too caused them undue stress (high level of attachment). They seemed to have a sense that with mindfulness they were more able to hold things more lightly (less attachment) and have more flexibility and less stress. Laura, for example, recognised that it was an attitude and attention to her tasks that she had control over and that with mindfulness she was more able to stay focused:

Before I started the training, I'm thinking, “How could I let go of that? That report still needs to be done. I still need to do staffing. I still need to write that newsletter”. But I learned early on that it's not about letting them go and not worrying about them. It's about just focusing on this one and ignoring those for the time being, and then when you finish that one, then you can focus on that one if it's still the priority. So, they don't go away. The “hold it lightly” had a big impact on me ...

Similarly, Tanya reflected, that as a leader she felt she needed to mentally store everything, which caused her stress. Being able to let go of that meant she felt she had more mental space:

Obviously the ‘Letting Go’. I used to have a little filing cabinet in my head. I didn't need to think about this, “That's okay. I can file that.” Of course, I might as well have been carrying a bag with me full of bricks.

Letting go for Jack meant he felt that his leadership had improved as he was able to delegate more effectively and with greater confidence in others' abilities:

I think part of doing that is using that letting go strategy. I am letting go of some of the tasks that I feel I have to get done. I've got a lot better at being able to delegate and have confidence in what other people do.

4.4.4.3 Leading Authentically

The importance of leading authentically was highlighted in the time 2 responses and analyses showed nine key ideas related to this theme. These nine ideas were represented in simple statements capturing the essence of the participants' comments. Table 4.9 displays these nine statements, namely 'I can be more myself', 'I am not my thoughts', 'I know me better', 'I am more confident', 'I am enough', 'I see differently', 'I am changed', 'I am potential', and 'this is now me'. The table also shows how many of the participants and how many references there were to each of these ideas. As a way of illustrating the statements, quotes from participants are also included.

Table 4.9
Elements of Authentic Leadership as Experienced by Principals

Key Ideas	Participants/ references	Illustrative quotes
I can be more myself	(8/8)	<i>The picture for myself of myself is more authentic (Tanya)</i> or for Karina and Wendy it was simple: <i>I can be more myself.</i>
I am not my thoughts	(7/9)	<i>It has transformed how I think (Sue)</i> or quite simply: <i>I am not my thoughts (Maggie)</i>
I know me better	(9/9)	<i>I know myself better and have a language to communicate it (Kate)</i>
I am more confident	(6/6)	<i>I wish I had not of been so hard on myself in the past – I now have more confidence in myself (Karina)</i>
I am enough	(7/9)	<i>No longer feel not good enough (Louise)</i> and: <i>I am trusting self, more and less self-doubt – I am OK (Ben)</i>
I see differently	(7/9)	<i>I feel empowered. I am seeing with a beginner's mind (Beth)</i> and: <i>I am seeing the world with a different lens (Simone)</i>
I am changed	(9/10)	<i>Something has changed in me (Paul)</i> and: <i>It is starting to change who I am (Alan)</i>

Key Ideas	Participants/ references	Illustrative quotes
I am potential	(6/8)	<i>Re imaging who you are, the possibilities to grow to be more human (Andrea)</i> and: <i>I can change, I have more capacity and expansiveness (Maggie)</i>
This is now me	(8/9)	<i>This is now integrated into my life (Tanya)</i> and: <i>I am consciously being the person I am when I am mindful (Trish)</i>

Alan, in his time 1 interview, spoke about how his hope the program would help him understand himself better and improve his self-confidence:

An understanding of myself so I know what's happening, so I do something about it. Rather than just going into the decline when I'm anxious or depressed. Being able to recognise it and do something about it. (People) would give you the strategies, some, I found them very difficult to follow. Or it's sort of I know that I have to do that. But how do I make myself do it? Or how do I go about recognising that it's getting to that stage? And If I'm happy with myself, with how I am, I'm hoping that will flow into work. In life in general.

Alan had made some positive changes at time 2 and was feeling more confident, and happy:

I'm just accepting of what's happening and moving on. Because that's the area that I think has always been the issue, is that letting go for me. And I think I'm learning, even in my practice this morning, I tried to focus on letting go. Not to be hanging onto things when people say things to me, or with what's going on. I feel more content. I feel more confident.... I feel happy with what is going on, and the impact it's having on me. It's a positive impact. Now I'm very content and happy with my job. I'm happy with what's happening in my life.

He had also become more aware of other reactions and more confident is his communication and less critical of self:

I'm conscious of not letting things drag me down and make me feel as though there's no way out, or where I'm going to go, how I'm going to deal with this. So, when people are coming in, talking to me, I'm not being weighed down by their concerns or their worries. There is a lightness. It's almost like you feel lighter because you're not weighed down. Therefore, I'm quite confident that what I'm doing is good. I think I'm leading people well. I think I'm providing

for people opportunities to lead and take the school forward and work with what we've got in a more constructive way... I certainly spend a lot more time out and about than behind the desk like I was before. There're certainly still things that I'm conscious that I need to do and improve on. But as a leader, I feel a stronger leader. I think that's the thing. It's about me and how I'm doing it, rather than thinking that's how I should be doing it, or this is how I should be doing it. I'm certainly not putting myself down as much or criticising myself for doing things like I was before.

Likewise, for Karina, who reported at time 3 (six months post program) a shift to a more authentic approach by understanding and believing in herself more:

I feel as though my journey to understanding myself and how to work with myself is just beginning and yet it has already made such a difference.... I know I have changed but that it is all still evolving for me. I felt that I have slowed down without losing any speed and pace, I am more aware of my own thought processes and the impact I have or CAN have on others. I am OK and WHO I am is enough for me now and that is very significant for me!

4.4.5 Reflections on Leadership at Time 3

In the time 3 open ended responses the principals generally reported perceiving that their leadership styles had improved. They felt that they were better role models, more patient, present and accepting, more consultative, focused and strategic, better and more balanced decision makers, calmer and less reactive, more aware of others, and more confident. Tanya's response captures several the common themes:

My ability to think with more focus and clarity and manage distractions better has meant that my leadership role is not as onerous. I feel that I am on top of the many demanding tasks and do not get so frustrated with the increasing workload. I have been able to let go of my perfectionist trait and focus on what is good enough. I am able to think more clearly and make decisions with less energy in the analysis phase.

4.4.5.1 Andrea's Leadership Journey

In an attempt to capture the progress of an individual moving from *doing* leadership to *being* an authentic leader across the three data points (time 1, 2 and 3) this next section will follow Andrea's well-articulated responses as a representation of how this process was experienced through Andrea's eyes as her story beautifully illustrates this journey.

When Andrea was first asked at time 1 about her leadership style, her three words were “consultative”, “adaptable” and “democratic”. She described herself as “quite forceful” and focused on getting the job done. She thought 70% of her staff thought she had a good sense of humour, however others had commented about her lack of interpersonal skills, although she felt that she was “*more approachable now than I was before*”. By Andrea’s time 2 interview her reflections on her leadership had become more in-depth and had shifted from what she did to how she was *being*. Andrea felt that she had a better awareness and acceptance of people’s differences that meant she was able to be more inclusive and consultative in her leadership, as she shared:

The way that we lead needs to be more human You’re modelling a way of being, and acceptance of difference, that has probably been something that has been on my mind for a little while. And I think the acceptance of difference is not just of other people. I think it’s of yourself, and recognising that the way that you think ... People don’t necessarily have to align with your thinking, but your job is really about leading people to the right thing in their own way. So, getting buy-in is now I guess part of that acceptance of difference. I’m probably more confident to say to people, “Look, this is where we need to end up. How do you see yourself on that journey?” Whereas I never asked that question before.

She went on to explain that her approach now was about operating from a place of wellness and that by putting herself in the centre of this wellness and people first approach she was bringing the best out of her staff, engaging them more and bringing a sense of humanity back to how she leads:

Every time you have an interaction will in fact impact on how that person feels about themselves, because you’re in a position of leadership, and they want you to lead. But you’re not just leading an organisation and stuff, you’re actually leading people to be their best selves. Now, I say things now like; the people are the precious participants, not the material things. And so the department put out this high-performance and culture thing for well-being. Well, I called for a committee to put together a well-being strategy. Everybody jumped in. I haven’t seen that for years. It’s incredible. The value of putting yourself in the centre of being well, and being open about it, and allowing that freedom to, I guess talk about things that you don’t normally talk about. ...people come and stand in the doorway and have a chat. They didn’t do that before. So, it’s allowing the humanity to come out into the space, whereas it didn’t before. So that’s magnificent. And for me, I’ve started to lose weight because I’m more active. I do not email people anymore, I go and see them. It’s absolutely fantastic. So, it’s pretty amazing.

Andrea also felt that her new focus on genuinely caring for people was also being perceived as a leadership strength and that mindfulness had provided her with an opportunity to rethink how she leads and that it gave her the possibility of rescripting her leadership style:

So, it's about that ... It's getting back to the humanity. It's not just about being a b#^h. You can edit that out. But it's about all of that, the moral underpinnings of everything that we're doing. The emotional underpinning. Everything is put together for a reason. And one of my new recruits said to me ... And it's the nicest thing anyone's ever said to me. She said, "You're really strategic, and you do things now. But you are in charge like a boss." I said, "What does that mean?" And she's a younger teacher, so it's kind of ... She said, "Change can be just dictated or it can be drip fed. You do that. You really care about the people." Now, that's a new person coming in with fresh eyes who said that. And I thought, "That's nice. That's a nice thing to say to me," because for years, I've been known as the fix it principal. You go in, you chop a few toes off, you do this, this, this and this, and I saw myself as that, as the fixer. And now I don't. So it's actually re-imagining who you are.*

It's very exciting. It's like when you see yourself as a different kind of leader, and I say to myself every day, "Today's just going to be another day." Well, the first day of that week, today was a really fabulous day. Everything was just amazing. Everyone was happy. I was at a really good state. I got my steps in and I talked to some kids, all that. And then the next day, I think we came to Murdoch and it's a nice start to the day. And that was after consistent meditation. And so after a week, I thought, "That's the best week I've had in years." So, thank you. Amazing. It's good, isn't it?

By time 3 Andrea noted in her open-ended questions that not only was she feeling “*much happier*” in herself, she was also being more open with her staff and engaging them in a “*more consultative*” manner as a leader.

The quantitative results and the qualitative findings showed improvements across school principals’ mindfulness, wellbeing, and leadership. The qualitative data supported and illustrated the participants’ felt experiences and personal insights.

The next section in this chapter explores other themes that emerged.

SECTION 2 – EVIDENCE OF ANOTHER LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE

4.5 The Emerging Theme of the Learning Experience

This section explores the theme of transformation. It provides evidence of another level of experience that does not fall under the previously discussed main themes of mindfulness, wellbeing and leadership, but rather seems to present as an overarching theme. It emerged in the time 2 interviews where participants were trying to understand for themselves why they felt the mindfulness training program had impacted them so profoundly. This was an important discussion point for the principals with most of the principals (23 participants, 55 references) discussing about how they felt the process of learning about mindfulness had been impactful and, in some cases, transformational. Focusing on understanding the impact of mindfulness, this next section begins with Alan's explanations at time 2 and time 3 where he shares why it had such an impact and why he was committed to the learning process. Then the strong theme of transformation is explored in more detail and utilising Shapiro et al.'s framework (Shapiro et al., 2006) of the mechanisms of mindfulness to try and gain a better understanding as to the antecedents.

4.5.1 Alan's Experience of the Program

The mindfulness training program seemed to have been timely for Alan and how it was structured, supported his commitment to practice and engage. As mentioned in the previous chapter, at time 2 Alan felt that he had become a better leader. He attributed that to his improved levels of mindfulness, and he felt that the format of the program, with its level of accountability to a routine of daily practice and weekly group sessions, over a period of time had helped create new habits and ways of being:

The training, the practice and the strategies having that accountability side of it meant you got into a routine. And since now there is no accountability, I'll still do it. I'm still doing the practice. I can see a difference in myself, and I can feel a difference in myself. And I don't want that to change. I want to stay in that frame of mind.

I'm getting better at being able to manage and deal with things and have a better understanding. I think it's becoming more embedded. It's becoming a part of my life.

I think I'm hooked, in terms of wanting to know more. To become a better person. To be honest, not for any other reason but for me. It's probably the first time in my life I've ever thought like that. Just because in life we're not taught to be self, we're taught to think about everyone else all the time. It's that balance. It's probably the first time for a long time I think I'm starting to do that. It's really good.

At time 3 Alan was still engaging in his 10 minutes of mindfulness training every weekday and commented that he was still using the mindful techniques in his work and his personal life:

I tend not to hang onto issues or concerns or get as frustrated with situations that I have in the past, both personal or work. I am more confident in confronting issues front on. I am able to prioritise more effectively. I am continually trying to become more aware of my feelings and will keep doing so.

4.5.2 Transforming Through the Learning Process

As Alan's story illustrates, the process of learning mindfulness seemed to have had far reaching and transformational impact. To gain a deeper understanding as to why this was the case, participants were asked why they thought mindfulness training had impacted them. This question provoked a wealth of insight and reflection. The benefit of working with a group of experienced educators meant that they were finely tuned to the different learning techniques and processes. This theme of transformation through learning mindfulness is captured by Simone, who by developing and practicing mindfulness has enabled her to transform how she was working and living:

I felt like a mouse on a treadmill. I felt isolated and was quite concerned about whether I was really making a difference. I felt my confidence was being eroded by that. This program has given me the confidence back. Not only in my professional life, but in my personal life. Big time. Just being grateful. I'm really, really happy. I just feel as if I've gotten off a treadmill and I'm seeing the world with a different lens. Both my professional life and that of my personal life. It's enabled me to be more present with my family and to really realise how precious they are. And, at the same time, given me a fresh vision for why I became an educator in the first place. I just love my job. Stresses and all. I feel like I've got a breath of fresh air as a consequence of this program.

The key themes that emerged in the learning process, were the importance for all thirty of the participants of setting intentions and expectations of the program and then the principals perceived outcomes, the program design including the session format (content,

materials and cadence) (25 participants, 57 references), the power of the group dynamic (19 participants, 33 references), facilitation (14 participants, 15 references), and the development of a “new language” (10 participants, 14 references).

4.5.3 Program Intentions and Gauges of Success

One theory addressing the mechanisms of mindfulness, proposed by Shapiro and colleagues (Shapiro et al., 2006) suggests that an individual’s *intention* to learn mindfulness is an important factor. They noted that as meditators continue to practice their intentions shift along a continuum from self-regulation, to self-exploration to self-liberation. To understand the impact of this for this group of mindfulness practitioners, the time 1 interviews were examined to understand what principals were hoping to achieve, their motivation and then compared that to what they felt was an outcome at time 2, using the three categories (Self-regulation, self-exploration and self-liberation).

Shapiro’s continuum was used as framework to code participants intentions and motivations for participating in the program. For her own study on long term mediators Shapiro defined self-regulation (SR) goals that include similar statements to “learn to control my stress better”, “become more relaxed”, “learn to stop my negative thoughts”, “be able to deal with situations more calmly”. Self-exploration (SE) goals included statements such as “I want to learn more about myself”, “want to see how my mind works”, “what to understand if relationship/ job is right for me”. Self-liberation (SL) or compassionate service goals are “want to go beyond my narrow ego”, “want to deepen my compassion for all living things” and “want to feel the sacred unity of the universe”. To code they also suggest that if a person had a few expectations or goals of the training that a hierarchy was assumed with the highest response coded.

In this study 17 principals mentioned being motivated by self-regulation (SR) which included references like “*manage my time better*”, “*be more focused*”, “*manage all demands and my own expectations of self*”. The remaining 13 principals described being motivated more by self-exploration (SE), for example: “*Deeper learning*”, “*more mindful of what I bring to a situation*”, “*personal development and growth*” and “*learning more about myself as I want to be strong in knowing who I am and what I will or won’t put up with*”.

In line with the Shapiro study, this group of principals achieved their intended goals and the majority experienced additional positive outcomes. Tom’s motivation initially was

self-regulatory: *To improve me and my mindset, the way I think and operate.* At time 2 he reflected he had achieved that and integrated this learning into how he was being:

I've found that I actually have used the word harmony. I really harmonised all those different aspects of my personal and professional life. And it enabled me to focus using all the different areas that we covered. And each one of them, every time we looked at a new focus area, kindness, joy, acceptance, patience, letting go, the beginner's mind, I've applied that directly to myself rather than seeing it as this is a topic for a lecture.

Likewise, Louise's motivation was also self-regulatory, and she just wanted to be *more focused*. At time 2 she had moved along the continuum to wanting to a self-exploratory response as she had learnt more about herself:

I can go tick tick tick straight away. I think in my pre interview my story to you was pretty much a case study of a pretty big challenge for my school ... there was a lot of fear factor sitting in that and a lot of unknowns for myself and staff. So, what this mindfulness approach has done for me is brought back the things that are innate in my character but I had lost control of using regularly. That's really good. So where am I at? I'm more confident than I've ever been. I guess where I was three months ago was I didn't think I was good enough for the job. That was just where I was. ... Yeah so that's a big thing. I have lost some weight and I haven't done anything. My blood pressure is fine. My Rheumatism is under control. I think I was holding so tightly to what I thought I wanted this all to look like and forgetting that I'm just a cog in the wheel. And while I'm a really important cog, I can get where I wanted to go by just stressing less.

4.5.4 The Structure of the Program

The interviews at time 2 also included substantial discussion on the structure of the program. Tanya's response provides a good example of the themes discussed. She described how she appreciated the scaffolded learning, the environment, how they were treated, and that the content was targeted to a school principal's context and captured how to be a "good" school principal:

From an educator's point of view, it ticks all the boxes that we say is good professional learning and adult learning, ... It allowed you to really have big reflection time. And you always said things like, "And the task if you choose to take it." So, you were the model, we know as teachers that modelling and practicing authentically what you speak is very powerful.

Tanya continued to explain how the support that surrounded the program was helpful in keeping her engaged and valued:

The way the program was scaffolded, so you'd come home from the program totally like, "Wow, this is fantastic. I so love it." And an email would come with, "Here's some extra things if you'd like to do this, or read this, or ..." No pressure. You knew you had a backup there. It was motivating. The day before, an email would come, "Oh just a reminder." Now this is going to sound a bit wussy. But it was as though somebody cared. Somebody cared enough to do all the bits of nice stuff that we don't do anymore. Does that make sense? Because particularly as leaders, there's no one who really cares. There isn't anymore. We don't have a district director who can ring up and say hello. So, we're very, very isolated. That little scaffolding all along the way, and then when we started, you'd clue in, "How did you go last week?"

Tanya pointed out how the little things like a lovely breakfast also made her feel special:

Even the food. I know this sound silly, but ... I'm going to have breakfast today. I'm being treated to something very special. This is important for me. And you come in and here's this beautiful food laid out that you only eat that much and it doesn't matter because then you take some for morning tea. I mean all of that just, being treated as though this is a really important part of what you're doing. And I was just gobsmacked when the department invested in something quite so significant.

Tanya also reported that she like the content especially the references to neuroscience:

The whole science base to it. I looked forward to every bit where you started talking to us about, "And here's this brain, and bit of your brain. And here's what's happening. And here's the serotonin, and there's the melatonin wave."

In conclusion Tanya really felt that the program had managed to encapsulate what it means to be a good leader, by providing tools to focus on her inner world and developing the mental strategies of kindness, patience and acceptance to be more resilient:

A principal's role is, as you can appreciate, is extremely complex. And principals are never given the right tools to go and do the job. And the biggest part of being a good principal is how you feel inside and how well organised you are inside. How well you cope. How well you bounce back. How well you can reflect. I think the different aspects that we covered all fit in beautifully as to what makes a good principal. You have got to have the kindness, patience and acceptance. Even though these are commonly used terms, but there's more to it than just that common understanding of what acceptance is. Putting it into context is so important.

The program also had a profound effect for James. He felt the way it was structured and delivered matched the essence of the content:

The beauty of this program is that I love the knowledge, I love the research, It's been the practical strategies that I have actively applied because they've been relevant, If you'd asked me to hop on a webinar every Tuesday morning at 9:30 and participate, you may have seen me log in, but you were getting me to engage at Murdoch. So I hopped in the car ... I was late a few times, but I was never going to miss it. And you know what? I was happily late. And what I mean by that is you allowed me to actually excuse myself. Don't get stressed. She's not expecting anything other than you to be there, so you get there when you get there. Freedom. Just the freedom to be. That is the model. It's got to be unconditional.

Likewise, Jenny felt the combination of the mindfulness practice, the mental strategies and work techniques made it accessible and easy to implement said:

Because of the practice, I think the mindfulness training and the breathing and the key strategies that we've talked about, have been really pivotal to my success as well, because I'm using them. There have been key messages that you have delivered that have really impacted on my conversations with others, and my conversations with myself. It's just the natural process of the program, you can't help but it come out and spill out into what you're doing, whether it be in your workplace or in your personal life.

As mentioned previously the program had a 92% attendance rate and a couple of the principals like Maggie talked about the positive impact of the actual experience of coming to the sessions:

I always felt like when I turned up, it was like going to a sanctuary of peace and learning.

4.5.5 Group Dynamic

The importance of the group coming together regularly was a strong theme and important for participants. They developed a trusting bond and safe space. This safety was explained by Anne as an opportunity to be vulnerable:

I can't think of another forum where people would've been vulnerable.

Likewise, James said the sense of being in the group meant he felt protected and solid:

Those sessions on the Tuesdays, honestly, I've felt as though we had created a bubble. there was a whole bubble of serenity that had fallen on those Tuesday sessions and we were impervious.

Andrea shared how she was hopeful that the bond established with the other principals might continue after:

Wonderful. It's almost like an alumni feeling. Like here's a group of people now who have shown their underbelly in a group. You've shared things you wouldn't normally talk about. Oh, we can go to the Principals' Conference, and we can talk about what goes on in our schools, but that group of people that got together, that 30 principals, will now always have something that they can share at a different level.

4.5.6 Facilitator

A number of the participants talked about the importance of the facilitator during the time 2 interviews. Laura felt that the facilitation style had drawn the group together in a way that allowed for learning to happen:

Sometimes the person who's running it can make a lot of difference, you pulled us all together really gently without even trying, you know, you just kind of wrapped us up and went, "It's okay. We'll all learn together."

Similarly, Jenny felt that it was important that the facilitator embodied what they were teaching and was committed to mindfulness:

You are the right person for this course because there is such a calmness about you, there's such a level of respect and belief in what you're doing. That is just so important, because if we sit in front of someone that's not credible, we see it really quickly, or someone that's not fair or critical, or doesn't really truly believe in what they're doing, it all goes too fast. It just loses everything.

Likewise, Sonya felt the energy of the facilitation style had a positive impact on the group:

I think your presence just has a huge impact too because ... you ooze this great enthusiasm for life and I think that's been really great too, I've really enjoyed going on the Tuesdays, because you've really actively engaged, and you make us feel really great.

It is important to note here that participants were talking directly to me (as I was also the facilitator), and even though this was kind feedback, it also highlighted the complexity and challenges of wearing two hats. It needs to be acknowledged that participants might have felt they needed to be nice. Or as Karen shared that they also knew this was a research project and she was invested in fully participating:

The other thing is my loyalty to you. I think you're an important part of it. If I have a sense of loyalty, and I imagine the group does too, that this is a research project for you, you've brought a great deal of heart to it, and a great deal of your knowledge and wisdom to it, and there's a strong sense for me that it's important that I am a sincere part of that, and I use the word "sincere" and "genuine". But in this, it's been a stronger connection, a stronger sense of loyalty to the facilitator because I think it's the nature of the program. It's not about facts and going away and taking it, it's more organic. Much more organic for me.

4.5.7 Language

The new language and vocabulary of mindfulness and the science was a strong theme for the group with half them discussing this in their time 2 interviews. Participants had incorporated words for example like "cognitive rigidity and flexibility", "beginners mind", and "holding things lightly". For example, Trish, who felt that the focus on science and research resonated with her and also gave her an extended vocabulary to understand herself differently:

I love the brain research and the science behind things. I'm a science teacher so I really enjoy that aspect of it. But, it's funny, it's almost like being mindful, and ... Well, it's not that funny really, it's really one second ahead isn't it? That you're looking at your life almost, it's like you've taken a step back. So, I'm able to coach myself more effectively, It gives you language and science to what's happening to you and your body, and why.

Or Karen who felt that the "new" language meant that she could talk at a deeper level with her colleagues:

Having a common language to speak to my colleagues, we've been able to have some really deep, meaningful conversations and not being afraid to say it. So it's been really powerful, even when we went to another external learning we found that we used that common language to share our understanding of the next level learning with other colleagues. All of us who'd done your course were on a different level. It was very, very obvious.

4.5.8 Sustainability

The final theme that emerged was the sense that what they had learned had potential to be sustainable. Jenny at time 2 felt that the 10 weeks of the program had allowed her to develop a good level of mindfulness that she now wanted to maintain:

In the back of my mind, thought, "oh, it'll be another injection of enthusiasm for the time, and it won't really make any difference". But it has made a big

difference, a real difference. I would like to think that that would continue. I'm pretty focused on wanting to maintain my level of practice. I think even just over the 10 weeks, because it's been an extended period of time that we, not just myself, but all of us have been practicing the key skills and strategies.

Similarly, Trish at time 2 also who felt that she had wanted to keep being mindful because she wanted to be her best version of herself:

Probably one of the biggest motivators to maintain it is to be the person who I want to be. So, I want to be calm. I want to be fun because I am, and I want to be effective and I want to be sharp cognitively.

4.6 Summary

Transformation and the impact of the process of learning emerged as important themes in the qualitative data. The detailed narrative of principals' experiences illustrated how these changes were experienced over time.

The next chapter discusses these findings and follows the same format as the results have been presented, mindfulness, wellbeing, leadership, and emergent findings.

Chapter Five

5

Discussion and Conclusions

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5.1 Introduction

The overarching aim of this longitudinal mixed methods study was to investigate how mindfulness training as professional learning might support school principals' approach to their wellbeing and their leadership such that they may effectively and sustainably navigate their critical and complex role. To address this aim, the study investigated the research question: *How does mindfulness training as professional learning support school principals' wellbeing and leadership?*

The study involved 30 participants who were school principals. They attended a mindful leadership training program (10 x 2-hour weekly sessions over a four-month period) that provided three core elements: secular mind training (mindfulness practice), mental strategy or habits of mind training and mindful work applications. To examine changes over the school year, questionnaire data were collected pre- (time 1) and post-program (time 2) and then six months later (time 3), and face to face interviews were also conducted at time 1 and time 2. For analysis purposes the qualitative data included all participants and the quantitative was sourced from 23 participants who completed all three questionnaires. The study employed a longitudinal mixed method design to data collection to deal with the complexity and scope of the project and to accommodate different world views and assumptions (Creswell, 2009). The mixed methods approach included quantitative measures from five validated questionnaires (presented together as a single online questionnaire), and qualitative data from face-to-face interviews and open-ended questions (included as a final section of the time 3 online questionnaire). Using multiple data sources provided a rich palette from which to make meaningful and purposeful propositions (Mathison, 1988) to corroborate and confirm (using quantitative measures and surveys) and explore and conceptualise (using qualitative data).

5.2 Summary of Findings

The principals who participated in the mindfulness program experienced significant improvement in mindfulness, wellbeing, and leadership. The results across these three areas were sustained six months post program (time 3) and, in some instances, further improved as demonstrated by the increase of leadership authenticity levels (as measured by the ALQ) from time 2 to time 3. Given that school principals are not well represented in the mindfulness training literature, this research provides evidence that mindfulness training as professional learning has positive implications for principals' wellbeing and leadership.

In this case, a structured mindfulness training program that encouraged use of meditative mind training, mental strategies and mindful work applications assisted participants to be more mindful, less stressed, better focused on taking care of themselves, and lead more authentically. This highlights the potential “double dividend” (Ericson et al., 2014, p. 73) of mindfulness training to contribute to sustainable strategies for wellbeing and leadership, by enhancing the ability to deal with work stress, *and* lead from a place of calmness, clarity, and focus. The positive findings from this study support the recent work on factors that are required for principals to flourish, that include a more holistic wellbeing approach to engaging principals with their hearts, minds and bodies in leadership development (Cherkowski & Walker, 2016). Given the extent to which principal ill-being has been emphasised in the literature (Beausaert et al., 2016; Riley et al., 2020), the results from this study point to an encouraging solution focused option.

The more detailed findings of each of the three themes will now be discussed.

5.2.1 Mindfulness

Prior to the program this group of principals had limited or no exposure to mindfulness training. Post program they had significant increases over all five facets of mindfulness (as measured by FFMQ) and these were sustained at time 3. In addition, in their interviews, a third or more of the participants believed that the mindfulness training and practice had supported them to improve their mindful capacity to pause and take a conscious breath, be more present in the moment, bring a heightened level of awareness to experiences, including observing and noticing their own thoughts and emotions. They also felt a new sense of calm which allowed for the principals to approach incidents and other people with a level of patience and acceptance, and the personal control to manage their reactions. Two positive indicators of the impact of their mindfulness training were the improved and sustained FFMQ scores over the research period, and that at time 3 most of the group were continuing their regular 10-minute mindfulness practice.

5.2.1.1 Mindfulness and Gender Differences

This research also contributes to the limited research on gender differences in mindfulness with a pattern of the females scoring themselves higher on all five facets of mindfulness (FFMQ). Female principals also reported higher levels of *observing* and *describing* than male principals over time and were less likely to be *non-judging*. There were gender differences in changes for *non-judging* with male principals reporting no

change. Rojiani et al. (2017) also noted significantly higher scores for females in their research and they suggested it may be due to gender based mechanistic differences in emotional coping techniques. They proposed that females are more likely to internalise psychological distress (they ruminate more about their thoughts), and males are more likely to externalise distress by directing actions outward (Rojiani et al., 2017). Katz and Toner (2013) noted that this might explain why females tend to be more attracted to and benefit more from mindfulness training.

5.2.2 Wellbeing

This research showed that mindfulness training helped this group of principals to prioritise their own wellbeing. Based on the MBI results participants' feelings of being stressed, emotionally over extended and exhausted by their work, reduced significantly from time 1 to time 2 and scores were sustained at time 3.

Prior to the program, and in line with other research, participants reported being stressed, some were close to burnout, and they felt overloaded with too much work (Beusaert et al., 2016; Pollock et al., 2017). For 30% or more of the participants, in the time 1 qualitative analysis, the stressors and pressures ranged from challenges with staff and parents, the amount of administration and emails, always feeling 'on', having no time to think or prioritise, and dealing with constant interruptions and distractions. Compounding this, some principals mentioned not feeling good enough, and for a couple, the depleting challenges of perfectionism. Stress appeared to be having a negative flow on effect on how they engaged at work and their professional efficacy.

After the program, participants' improved wellbeing was evidenced through the significant reduction in mental exhaustion (as shown through MBI results), indicating participants had more energy to deal with work demands. This reflects the positive findings regarding the impact of mindfulness training on stress and exhaustion in the educational literature for teachers (Lomas, Medina, Ivtzan, Rupprecht, & Eiroa-Orosa, 2017) and other professionals (Lomas, Medina, Ivtzan, Rupprecht, Hart, et al., 2017).

Interestingly, there was no change over time for the MBI subscale of cynicism however gender differences were identified, with males reporting higher scores. The MBI subscribes to the view that burnout is largely a social/organisational phenomenon, so in the subscale of cynicism, an individual who scores high on the scale may believe that their organisation lacks integrity, and this can be "accompanied by a feeling of smugness because organisational cynics may believe that they are more knowledgeable or have superior

insight about the way things truly are” (Brandes & Das, 2006, p. 237). However, Brandes and Das (2006) also argue that cynicism may be acting as a coping mechanism for moderating the stress– performance relationship and that the more cynical individual may:

Have an experienced, critical eye that could be a force for change if used properly... and who may be “closet idealists” who yearn for improvement but become disillusioned with the who, how, and what associated with organisational strategies and directions. (p. 253)

This may well be the case for this group of school principals who may be motivated by their idealism to positively effect change. This is supported by some research that used school principals’ self-reflections on their careers to gain an insight into school principals’ ‘inner lives’ and noted that if principals took too long to move from idealism to realism it could manifest as “frustration and ill functioning” (Kremer-Hayon & Fessler, 1992, p. 45).

Mindfulness training also had a positive impact on principals’ perceptions of work, as illustrated by higher levels of workload match at time 2 and time 3 in the AWS. The time 1 questionnaire was completed at the beginning of the school year after recent annual leave, whereas the time 2 questionnaire, was conducted at a time notorious for school reporting and annual reviews. The time 3 questionnaire was administered in the last week of the school year where typically there are additional demands, yet the training effect was sustained. These findings are promising as they suggest that despite increased workload, principals may have been more able to mindfully manage their time by being more focused on priorities and thereby less stressed (Grissom et al., 2015). For many participants they had literally given themselves permission to work differently. This was actioned as being better able to prioritise work, attend more mindfully in meetings and in communications (especially emails), being less likely to multitask, reporting improved decision making and work life balance. In the time 2 interview data participants also shared how their new ways of working more mindfully had been extended to how some of their schools now operated. Some principals shared that staff meetings now included mindful minutes at the start to ensure attendees were present and focused, others discussed how their school now included a mindful minute for students to calm and focus after the recess break. Some principals, with the support of their staff, also employed and endorsed a type of email charter about whole school email conduct and etiquette, in an attempt to manage the overload of work generated by email.

Mindfulness training equipped these principals with space to better deal with the engulfing nature of their role and is a “useful addition to leaders psychological defence mechanisms” making “a positive, proactive contribution to their mental well-being” (Roche et al., 2014, p. 487). In addition, the continuous improvements to their sense of professional efficacy and control (as seen by MBI and AWS results) may also have further benefits for leadership, as other studies have shown positive links to improved job satisfaction, work performance and increased self-efficacy to deal with challenges (Laschinger & Grau, 2012; Roche et al., 2014).

Interestingly, principals’ values scores were high according to the AWS (top 75th percentile) at all time points. One possible interpretation is that increased levels of efficacy became more closely aligned with existing work values, contributing to renewed sense of work life balance and job satisfaction.

5.2.2.1 Better Self-Compassion

There was also a sustainable improvement to principals’ levels of self-compassion as measured by the SCS and supported by the qualitative data, suggesting that participants may be practicing more self-kindness and were more likely to put their struggles or challenges into context. The qualitative data showed that mindfulness training (with a focus on self-kindness) had enabled permission for self-care, self-acceptance, and meant that participants were less likely to be influenced by negative self-talk (or inner criticism).

One of the mental strategies principals reported as having a personal impact was nurturing the habit of kindness (particularly kindness to self). This was facilitated by increased capacity to bring awareness to and manage their inner dialogue, especially their inner critic (or negative self-talk). They had learnt instead to send themselves soothing, caring and helpful messages when things were challenging, and thereby felt better able to cope with stress. Inner dialogue stimulates the same neurophysiological systems as if the dialogue had been generated externally (Longe et al., 2010), and so this kinder self-talk stimulates part of the brain that responds to kindness, and the more destructive inner dialogue or inner critic activates an individual’s stress responses (Gilbert, 2009). Therefore, when principals are kinder to themselves (self-compassionate), less self-critical and more purposefully look after themselves, this positively impacts their personal wellbeing and their performance. Self-compassion has also been found in other studies to promote recovery and replenishment of mental and emotional energy (Abenavoli et al., 2013) and has positive impacts on fatigue and stress levels (Heffernan et al., 2010). Further

self-compassion also has a positive impact on psychological and physical wellbeing, happiness and contributes to the ability to be more compassionate to others (Campos et al., 2016). Being kind to self can also negate burnout (Barnard & Curry, 2012). Research with teachers suggests that practicing mindfulness and self-compassion may also have positive implications for performance (Jennings, 2015). With recent research highlighting the lack of self-care practices of school principals and the adoption of a disposition of self-sacrifice to achieve results (Ray et al., 2020) it would seem that mindfulness and self-compassion is well placed to provide balanced and stable footing for principals to sustainably traverse their challenging leadership work landscapes. Promoting self-care practices in leadership development can no longer be “an ‘extra’ or ‘nice to do’,” it has to be “worthy of our attention” (Lemon & McDonough, 2018, p. 2)

5.2.2.2 A Mindful Way of Coping

A key finding in this study was that participants reported that they no longer needed to suppress emotions and appear a certain way. They could in a sense be more themselves, or their authentic self. The analysis of time 1 interviews suggested that principals felt that to do the job successfully, they needed to appear a certain way, regardless of how they were really feeling. The qualitative analysis revealed a common coping mechanism the participants were using in an attempt to manage their emotions and present an in control face.

The tendency of principals to hide emotions, artificially suppress or amplify emotions depending on the context was also noted by Maxwell and Riley (2017) and framed as a ‘display rule’ of presenting their most rational response, and that this constant modelling leads to physical and emotional fatigue (Roffey, 2007). At one level this can be called maintaining a professional front but at a deeper level it is a type of emotional labour, causing stress to build up, as more personal energy is directed at appearing a certain way, and keeping real feelings suppressed (Sachs & Blackmore, 1998).

As noted in Chapter 2 in the review of leadership literature, ‘surface acting’ and ‘impression management’ are noted as the most “important and most frequently studied depleting self-regulatory behaviours” resulting in a less authentic leadership style, as mental resources are absorbed with the energy required to portray a self that maybe inconsistent with the inner self, contributing to less engagement and higher stress (Weiss et al., 2018, p. 311). In this study the positive outcome of not having to ‘surface act’ could be that principals felt that mindfulness provided a new sense of calm and personal control. Mindfulness plays an important role in developing and maintaining self-regulatory

behaviours (Ryan & Deci, 2008), in that it decreases automatic mental responses that can be shadowed by the past or habitual thinking and it creates a space that decreases negative rumination and increases positive self-regulation or control (Glomb et al., 2011). The reduction in mental exhaustion also has positive flow on effects for leadership, as individuals may be less impulsive and more able to self-regulate behaviours and emotions (Fetterman et al., 2010).

5.2.3 Leadership

The notable impact of mindfulness training on principal leadership can be illustrated by the development of authentic leadership attributes as seen in the ALQ scores. The changes in results provide an insight into a possible conditional and positive relationship mindfulness may have in nurturing and sustaining these attributes by: promoting deeper self-awareness and genuine interest in others' perspectives; heightening ethical and moral discernment; and developing more confidence to bring ones true and best self to work. At the time 1 interviews the majority of the principals observed their leadership style as something external to themselves or in other words, something they were *doing* rather than something they were *being*. It was interesting to discover at time 2 and time 3 that they had started to talk more about the impact of 'self' as leader or how they were *being*. They believed that they had positively changed their approach to leadership, by improvements to their capacity to let go and their enhanced self-confidence. They also reported that their leadership role was bringing them more joy. Most importantly, what underscored these changes was a strong theme that participants felt they could be more authentic in the leadership role. This was captured in the qualitative themes of *I can be more myself, I am not my thoughts, I know me better, I am more confident, I am enough, I see differently, I am changed, I am potential, and this is now me.*

These themes show the process of internalising new attitudes and behaviours as individuals moved towards a more authentic way of being and leadership style (Baron, 2016). The very nature of authenticity means it cannot be simply trained (Gardner et al., 2005), as it requires space for deeper reflection, contemplation, and mindful self-awareness. These findings add support to how authentic leadership can be developed through mindfulness and have implications for leadership development and in particular principal preparation (Roche et al., 2014).

Principals are the keystone to effective schools and paying attention to developing sustainable leadership practices seems critical. Mindfulness has been identified as a

“particular important part of being an effective teacher” (Roeser et al., 2012, p. 172), and has been highlighted in this research, as a necessary element of effective school leadership.

5.2.3.1 Authentic Leadership and Gender Differences

Gender differences were also found in ALQ results with female and male principals reporting different changes over time, with males taking a little longer to develop perceptions like that of the females. “Awareness of authenticity requires time and space to reflect on individual and collective goals, meaning and ethics” (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012, p. 128) and possibly the males required more time to integrate mindfulness into their work. Alternatively, females may be quick adaptors of this style as it may resonate with the woman archetype of leadership, which lends itself to more relational transparency (Caza et al., 2010). Brandt and Laiho (2013) also explored gender and personality difference in transformational leadership of 459 leaders (283 men and 176 women), and their results found that that women exhibited more enabling behaviour, and men displayed more challenging type behaviour.

Interestingly in a deeper analysis of the words that this group of school principals used to describe their leadership, female school principals’ strongest theme was *visionary* closely followed by *inclusive*, *empathetic*, *collaborative*, and *empowering* and for the males it was mainly *collaborative*. Rosener (2011) found that women described their own leadership style as more transformational, which is strongly and positively correlated with authentic leadership (Banks et al., 2016), and males tended to describe themselves as more transactional leaders.

5.2.4 A Transformative Effect

The participants also discussed how what they learnt on the program had a “transformative” effect for them. The emerging theme captured how what they had learned had in some way transformed their thinking and being. By experiencing a mindfulness program that encouraged an introspection of self and facilitated a deeper examination of mind and behaviours (that challenged habitual perceptions and cognitive rigidity), may well have paved the way for a new type of awareness or perception (Ettling, 2012). The combined factors of being less stressed, more mindful, self-caring, self-accepting, and more authentically oneself may make personal transformation possible (Brach, 2019). This type of deeper learning or transformational learning (TL) is based on the notion that people interpret their experiences in their own way, and how they perceive the world is a result of

their perceptions of their experiences (Taylor & Cranton, 2012). These findings reflect what other academics have proposed; that the practice of mindfulness may also be a prerequisite to deeper learning of ‘soft skills’ like communication, ethics and leadership (Barner & Barner, 2013; Kuechler & Stedham, 2018), and the development of authentic leadership (Baron, 2016).

Increase in mindfulness was also identified as a significant driver of transformational learning for these principals. Their increased self-awareness and mental strategies of acceptance and beginner mind appear to have supported this development. Kuechler and Stedham (2018) also noted the addition of mindfulness substantially increased reflection on and workplace experimentation with the theoretical material. They tested the viability of including mindfulness training as part of an MBA course to respond to the challenge that most MBA courses predominantly focus on technical skills (having and doing), and do not include enough of the “human capital competencies” (being), required for the complexity of leadership (p. 20).

Barner and Barner (2011) weave adult development, transformational learning and mindfulness together, suggesting that mindfulness practice leads to four durable adult development changes, “increased dispositional openness to experience, productive coping patterns, improved brain function” and a “broader and more expansive view of self” (p. 355).

We have explained the mechanism through which mindful practice helps individuals overcome constraints to openness to experience, stay engaged with challenging life experience, reduce their defensiveness to new information about the self, maintain greater emotional regulation during stressful events and disidentify with negative thoughts and emotions. (Barner & Barner, 2011, p. 358)

The authors underscore that for some people the learning of mindful meditation has resulted in self-reported transformational change and suggest that mindfulness might well “be an alternative path to transformation learning” (p. 359). For the school principals in this study, it would seem that their experience of developing mindfulness was a path to learning that transformed how they now approached their wellbeing and their leadership. This transformational learning path also seemed to be supported by how the participants experienced the content, format, delivery, and facilitation of the program.

5.3 The Learning Experience

The learning experience was a strong theme that emerged from the qualitative data with some notable findings about the construct and design of the training program which participants attributed to their transformational learning process. A possible reason why this theme emerged for this group could be explained in that this was a group of educators and so the pedagogy of the experience would be more tangible for them. The element that they drew attention to were: the program design including the session format (content, materials and cadence); the power of the group dynamic; facilitation; the development of a ‘new language’; and the opportunity for sustainability.

Participants found the weekly session format that included a mental strategy, a mindful work application and a mindfulness practice beneficial, commenting that the program was targeted to them, and included quality scientific referencing and support materials and resources. The program had an attendance and participation rate of 92% which would add support to purposefully designing professional learning so that it provides a trusting environment, inclusive of active learning, including accountability, experimentation, and opportunities to practice and reflect (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). In addition, the program provided enough time (over 10 weeks) to be effective and sustainable (Wells, 2014).

Participants commented on the initial process of setting an intention and personal gauge of success for the program as an important indicator of their success. Personal goal or intention setting has been noted to contribute to positive program outcomes, especially in developing mindfulness skills (Shapiro et al., 2006). In the theory proposed by Shapiro and colleagues’ an individual’s *intention* to learn mindfulness is dynamic and evolves with deepening practice, awareness and insight (Shapiro et al., 2006). As was the case for some principals who started with intentions of self-regulation, yet at program completion recognised they were now focused on self-exploration. It is important to note here that the principals had all attended an introduction session before committing to the program so they already had a level of motivation, this could have been external (*I want to be part of something different on offer*) or internal (*I need this for me because...*). In line with the Shapiro study, these principals achieved their intended goals and the majority reported additional positive outcomes. This sense of setting intention and recognised goal attainment is a contributing factor to why principals thought the program was impactful.

The power of the group dynamic and the style of facilitation also allowed for a safe space. Environmental factors may have allowed participants to be more vulnerable and open, which would also have contributed to the sense of being more authentic, less likely to surface act and feel comfortable ‘dropping their masks’ (Baron, 2016).

5.4 Conceptual Contributions

This longitudinal, mixed methods study of school principals is conceptually unique in that it links together concepts, previously examined separately, and then layers these concepts with the complexity of the participants’ transformative learning experience and process. The interplay and connectivity of how mindfulness can positively affect principals’ personal wellbeing and authentic leadership provides for the first time a framework of how each of these elements rely on one another and how they can be holistically approached by starting with learning to manage one’s attention.

5.5 Methodological Contributions

This research also makes a methodological contribution to the study of school leaders and the impact of mindfulness training. Specifically unique in the field is the longitudinal mixed methods design with data gathered at three time points over a calendar year, and the dual role of the researcher as also facilitator.

Given school principals have not been substantially represented in the mindfulness literature, self-report standardised surveys were utilised to obtain a snapshot of this population in the first instance and place it in the context of other research in this field. Longitudinal studies are also still relatively rare (Tang et al., 2015) and in Davidson’s commentary of empirical exploration of mindfulness he called for “longitudinal studies in less-experienced individuals where changes over time can be tracked” (Davidson, 2010, p. 10). The findings from this study show the benefits of this approach to make visible the sustainable effects of being mindful.

This study also contributes to the limited research on the dual role of researchers who are also facilitators. I was both researching the process and was also a key actor in the intervention process as the program facilitator. To ensure that I respected the challenges of this, I utilised and expanded Herbert’s work in this area with her guidelines in preparing, anticipating and coping with the process of facilitation and research simultaneously (Herbert, 2010). My own mindfulness practice helped me achieve this awareness during the facilitation of the training program and the research study. As much

as I did not use the Mindful Inquiry process formally, it did help in establishing how I viewed myself as researcher, by bringing awareness of acceptance, and attempting no judgement of self, and the sometimes challenging perspective, of just trusting the process. I, therefore, also included in my descriptions of procedures, my mindful preparation and mindfulness practice (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998). Evidence of this mindful approach as both researcher and facilitator was reflected in the participants' qualitative data on the positive impact of the mindful facilitation and interview style, in a sense the experience of someone walking the talk.

This study addresses Donaldson-Feilder et al.'s (2019) six future research consideration points for the study of mindfulness and its impact on leadership and wellbeing (see Table 5.1). Donaldson-Feilder et al.'s (2019) review was published after this study was designed and conducted.

Table 5.1

This Study's Attendance to Donaldson-Feilder et al.'s (2019) Six Research Considerations

Klap Study Component	Research Considerations Addressed
Detailed description of the training program, including the additional mechanisms of the daily in between session or at home ten-minute mindfulness practice (focus and open awareness training), which was supported by the program's App for guidance and consistency.	1. A full examination of the intervention (training program) and format and delivery is included so as to be able "to tease out the impact of these variations" and allow for more studies of the same intervention (p.26). This needed to include clearer details of participants' mindfulness practice inclusive of frequency, duration, type and whether they did home or in between session practices.
Standardised and appropriate quantitative measures that were well supported in the mindfulness (FFMQ and SCS), wellbeing (MBI and AWS) and leadership (ALQ) academic literature and the use of qualitative data to corroborate and confirm the findings.	2. Given the variety of measures studies needed a more consistent and concurrent approach to measuring wellbeing, leadership and mindfulness.
Longitudinal mixed method approach (which included pre, post and 6 months post program data over the course of a school year) with statistical analysis and thematically coded qualitative data.	3. That research included a more rigorous and detailed approach to reporting findings (for example including effect size, significance data) so that more substantive conclusions can be ascertained.
Dedicated mindfulness (FFMQ) measure supported by the Self-compassion Survey (SCS) to examine the process of change in mindfulness, including participants' experience of developing a mindful way of being through the time 1 and 2 interviews.	4. That mindfulness be measured as a mediator or mechanism of change.

Klap Study Component	Research Considerations Addressed
Longitudinal mixed method approach (which included pre, post and 6 months post program data over the course of a school year) with statistical analysis and thematically coded qualitative data.	5. That studies adopted a longitudinal design to confirm long term effects.
Captured the detailed experience and context of participants' learning experience and the process of becoming more mindful from the in-depth interviews and analyses of the qualitative data. Participants needs were at the forefront of the training and research.	6. Research includes process evaluation and not just outcomes evaluation as the context in which the research takes place and the participants involved need to be considered.

5.6 Professional Contributions

This study makes a significant contribution to the profession by illustrating the power of mindfulness training to positively influence principals' wellbeing and leadership. This contribution is also unique, with principals and school leaders professional learning most often focused on ways of 'doing' rather than ways of 'being'. This research has shown new and effective ways of enhancing principals' capacity to deal with work stress and lead more authentically from a place of calmness, clarity and focus. The key professional contribution lies in the findings that mindfulness training is an effective avenue for professional learning school principals and other educational leaders. It has also contributed empirically and theoretically to the research regarding mindfulness and principal leadership, and mindfulness in workplaces.

In this study it was evident that school leaders' mindfulness positively impacted their personal wellbeing and leadership. In the organisational literature, favourable leader behaviours have been correlated with followers' positive emotions; and adverse leader behaviours correlated with followers' negative emotions (Berkovich and Eyal 2015). Compounding this, research suggests that burned out leaders can be in effect contagious, making their followers feel more burned out too (Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2014). The educational literature also supports the view that school leaders can have an impact on teachers' resilience and in "sustaining a sense of resilience, commitment, and effectiveness" amongst their staff (Gu & Day, 2013, p. 39). For example, Gu and Day (2007) found that school leaders' capacity to respond sympathetically to pressures in teachers' personal lives had a direct effect of teachers remaining resilient. However, if they displayed unsympathetic responses this resulted in a decrease in the teacher's resilience. Similarly, Peters and Pearce (2012) noted how challenging it is for principals to manage their own and teachers' emotions and called for "increased support for

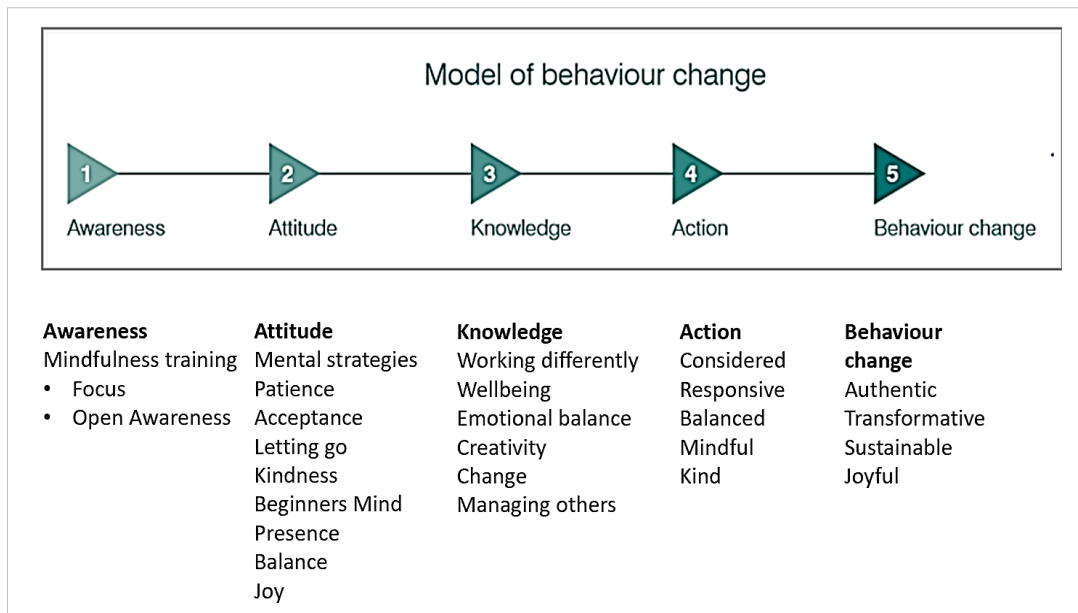
principals in recognition of the important role they can play in enhancing the resilience of early career teachers” (Peters & Pearce, 2012, p. 260). It would seem that not only do mindfulness programs for school leaders offer a resilient buffer against stress they could also be helpful precursor to improving teacher resilience (Klap et al., 2020).

This research has exciting potential applications for the profession, as leadership does matter and ensuring that we address leaders’ resilience will mean school principals will be better placed to cultivate resilience in their staff. If principals are the keystone to effective schools, then there seems to a great opportunity to include mindfulness training as professional learning for leaders both for themselves and how they lead others and for the people they lead.

This study has also shown that mindfulness training can provide the skills to equip school principals to successfully navigate the AITSL model of change for school leaders (see earlier in Chapter 1). The mindfulness training program components and outcomes could map strategically to the AITSL model of behaviour change as a mindful approach to changing leadership behaviours (see Figure 5.1). Mindfulness as professional learning for school principals would provide the explicit skills to develop their *awareness* by practicing focus and open awareness mind training that would then allow them to select an *attitude* based on any one of the eight mental strategies. They could draw on the *knowledge* that they learned as part of the mindful work techniques and their *actions* would then more likely be considered, responsive rather than reactive. The resulting *behaviour change* would then be more authentic, transformative, sustainable and possibly joyful.

An additional benefit of mindfulness training is that it provided this group of school leaders with a *personal* experience and a discerning insight into the potential and value of a mindful approach. This is especially pertinent as more schools are looking towards incorporating mindfulness in their student educational and wellbeing offerings. This research may have wider implications and generate interest in the business leadership sector as principals operate at the equivalent level of CEO and general managers who suffer similar wellbeing issues and challenges.

Figure 5.1
The Mindful Approach to Changing Leadership Behaviours



5.7 Limitations

The intent of this research was to examine if a mindfulness training as professional learning was viable and of value. However, due to the longevity of the program and multiple administration of the survey, other factors may have contributed to the findings. The principals self-selected to participate, and even though they had minimal mindfulness experience they may have been motivated to explore alternative ways to enhance their wellbeing and leadership. Utilising a control group would provide more certainty but was not available on this occasion and difficult to do in leadership research (Teddlie, 2016). Interestingly, the participants could be seen to act as their own control as changes were observed in subscale scores relevant to the mindfulness training but not in those that would be expected to remain constant (for example, their scores from the AWS for ‘reward’, ‘community’, ‘fairness’ and ‘values’, all related to their external environment, remained unchanged).

Another limitation was that I was wearing two hats, even though this was accounted for in the research design and methodology by the roles being kept as separate as possible using Herbert (2010) guidelines. However, when it came to the time 2 interviews it was obvious that a few participants had formed a close bond with me as their mindfulness trainer, and this may have impacted on their desire to provide me with pleasing feedback, and they may have felt more comfortable to share their deeper feelings and insights in the

interviews. However, my mindful preparation prior to interviews may have allowed for a more trusting conversation process (Simpson, 2008). Similarly, Mahfouz (2018) commented that just her presence might have heightened her participants' mindfulness levels. Grepmaier et al. (2007) also found in their randomised double-blind controlled study, that their group of psychotherapists performed better and had more positive outcomes with their patients if they practiced mindfulness prior to their sessions.

5.8 Future Research

Given that this research sets a positive platform for the inclusion of mindfulness training for principals, future research could examine best timing to integrate this. In the teacher literature it has usually been incorporated in preservice training and novice teachers (Jennings, 2015). Exploring the impact of facilitator mindfulness on the program outcomes and the challenges and possible remedies for defining facilitator/research could be another opportunity for future research.

5.9 Conclusion

This study has offered a unique perspective on school principals and provided a wholistic and solution focussed approach to the issues facing them. It brought together the importance of wellness as foundational to leadership and showcased the impact of dedicated and quality professional learning over a period, and the longitudinal effects of taking care and paying attention to this vital group of school leaders. The study makes conceptual, methodological, and professional advancements in this important field of research.

The systemic change required to address the challenges of school leadership and principal wellbeing is intricate and immense, and this mindful personal and professional learning approach to supporting the individual to deal with the challenges of a very demanding role could potentially be a complementary addition to the bigger systemic and policy work of educational systems. The alternative is if school principals remain stressed this not only has implications for their personal wellbeing but also can have a toxic like effect on their staff and schools (Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2014).

An ongoing benefit of mindfulness training is that it provided this group of school leaders with an experiential daily practice, mindful strategies, and practical techniques just for themselves and how they choose to be. This focus on self-first approach may equip principals to then make more informed professional development choices for their

teachers, as more schools look towards incorporating mindfulness in their students' educational and wellbeing offerings.

On a personal note, the process of researching the benefits of mindfulness from a mindful perspective and practice allowed me to learn more about myself and hopefully contribute to making me a better person (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998).

A perfect way to conclude this research is with an email I received at the end of 2019 from one of the 2016 research participants:

I was thinking about how, three years on I am still committed to and practising this every day. What we learnt through the program is now a critical part of my day and an essential strategy in managing my stress. I have learnt now that I cannot remove the external factors to my success, but I can ensure that I build in "recovery" each day. I am not saying that is always smooth sailing or that each day is a perfect moment of mindfulness!! I know that every experience is different, but I now find that I am a much better leader; calmer, more present and able to manage the high stress jobs we have with greater ease and confidence. Some would say it is experience, I think it is more to do with the work we did with Jo in 2016.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Timeline of Events and Hats

Program timeline		TRAINING HAT	RESEARCHER HAT	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Week beginning Nov/Dec 2015					Program Launch Professional Learning Institute, Leederville			
Feb 8	School visit / pre interview / test and Q out	School visit and Q out / pre interview / task and Q out	School visit and Q out / pre interview / task and Q out	School visit and Q out / pre interview / task and Q out	School visit and Q out / pre interview / task and Q out	School visit and Q out / pre interview / task and Q out	School visit and Q out / pre interview / task and Q out	School visit and Q out / pre interview / task and Q out
15	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out
22	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out
29	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out
Mar 7		Session 1 (8 -9.30am)						
14		Session 2						
21		Session 3						EASTER
28		Session 4						
April 4		Session 5						
11	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday
18	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday
25	ANZAC	Session 6						
May 2		Session 7						
9		Session 8						
16	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task
23	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task
30		Session 9 follow up						
June 6	Schools Q out							
13	Schools Q out							
20	DATA in							
27		Session 10 end of training Program						
JULY - NOV	DATA Analysis							
DEC	Schools Q to A & B	Longitudinal data			A tasks			

ESTABLISH PHASE

TRAINING PHASE

SUSTAIN PHASE

Appendix B Research Information Pack for Principals



Research Information Pack

www.murdoch.edu.au

Dear Principal,

Your involvement in this project is a great opportunity to participate in an internationally recognised professional development program and to be a part of an innovative research project using cutting edge technology.

The intent of the of the research component that will complement your *Mindful Principal* training program is to investigate the effects of mindfulness on Principals leadership and wellbeing and the possible flow on effects to their schools.

The training program is voluntary, and by participating in the training program it will also mean that you will be agreeing to participate in the research program. Your consent will be sort via signing the attached consent form.

You will be asked to respond three times over the course of the year. Prior and post training, and then 6 months after the training program has finished. Prior and post to the training you will be requested to complete:

- A survey on your: leadership style, your level of mindfulness and wellbeing.
- a brief online tasks (similar to a the popular brain training apps) that will measure attention and concentration levels
- One on one interview with the researcher at your school.

During the training program you will:

- be required to wear a Readiband which is fatigue management device (similar to fitbit watch, further information attached) until the completion of session 8.
- Respond to a brief reflective journal question set during week 1 to 8 (8 reflections)

Your staff will also be invited to anonymously respond to a questionnaire about your leadership and your schools culture at the same three times (pre, post and 6 months later).

Please take a close look at the time commitments and dates for the training program so that you can check your availability.


www.murdoch.edu.au

Calendar for Principals

Date	Event	Location	Time
12 December 2015	Program Launch	IPL, Leederville	2-4pm
February 2016	One on one Interview Survey completion CBS online task Readiband Distribution	At your school Online Online	1 hour 1 hour 10min
Tuesday 8 March 2016	Session 1	Murdoch University, South St	8-9.30am
Tuesday 15 March 2016	Session 2	Murdoch University, South St	8-9.30am
Tuesday 22 March 2016	Session 3	Murdoch University, South St	8-9.30am
Tuesday 29 March 2016	Session 4	Murdoch University, South St	8-9.30am
Tuesday 5 April 2016	Session 5	Murdoch University, South St	8-9.30am
Tuesday 26 April 2016	Session 6	Murdoch University, South St	8-9.30am
Tuesday 3 May 2016	Session 8	Murdoch University, South St	8-9.30am
May 2016	One on one Interview Survey completion CBS online task Readiband Return	At your school Online Online	1 hour 1 hour 10 min
Tuesday 31 May 2016	Session 9		
Tuesday 28 June 2016	Session 10		
Dec 2016	Survey completion CBS online task	Online Online	1 hour 10min

Please take your time to read through the attached consent form so that you have a clear understanding of what this project requires.

The numbers are limited in this program so participation will depend on your prompt response. If you have any queries or concerns regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would be very happy to discuss these with you.

Alternatively you can contact the University's Human Research Ethics Committee on 9360 6677.

Thank you for considering participation;

Dr Caroline Mansfield

Johanne Klap

This study has been approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval xxxx/xxx). If you have any reservation or complaint about the ethical conduct of this research, and wish to talk with an independent person, you may contact Murdoch University's Research Ethics Office (Tel. 08 9360 6677 (for overseas studies, +61 8 9360 6677) or e-mail ethics@murdoch.edu.au). Any



Consent Form

www.murdoch.edu.au

... Mindful Principal Project ...

1. I agree voluntarily to take part in this study.
2. I have read the Research Information Pack provided and been given a full explanation of the purpose of this study, the procedures involved and of what is expected of me.
3. I understand that I will be asked to respond 3 times over the course of the program to surveys, online tasks, interviews and a weekly journal as detailed in the Information Pack
4. I understand that I will be required to wear a Readiband which is fatigue management device (similar to fitbit watch) two week prior and then during the training program until the completion of session 8.
5. I understand that I will be advised as to how to interpret my Readiband data so that I can monitor my own information.
6. I agree to take appropriate care of the Readiband and notify the researcher of any issues so that they can be rectified as soon as possible.
7. The researcher has answered all my questions and has explained possible problems that may arise as a result of my participation in this study.
8. I understand I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without needing to give any reason.
9. I understand I will not be identified in any publication arising out of this study.
10. I understand that my name and identity will be stored separately from the data, and these are accessible only to the investigators. All data provided by me will be analysed anonymously using code numbers.
11. I understand that all information provided by me is treated as confidential and will not be released by the researcher to a third party unless required to do so by law.

Name of participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date:/...../.....

I confirm that I have provided the Information Letter concerning this study to the above participant; I have explained the study and have answered all questions asked of me.

Signature of researcher: _____ Date:/...../.....

Appendix C Approvals and License

Approval – Murdoch University


Murdoch
UNIVERSITY

Division of Research & Development
Research Ethics and Integrity

Chancellery Building
South Street
MURDOCH WA 6150
Telephone: (08) 9360 6677
Facsimile: (08) 9360 6686
human.ethics@murdoch.edu.au
animal.ethics@murdoch.edu.au

www.murdoch.edu.au

Monday, 07 December 2015

Dr Caroline Mansfield
School of Education
Murdoch University

Dear Caroline,

Project No.	2015/254
Project Title	An investigation into the effects of mindfulness on School Principals' leadership and wellbeing

Thank you for addressing the conditions placed on the above application to the Education Expedited Sub-Committee of the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee. On behalf of the Committee, I am pleased to advise the application now has:

OUTRIGHT APPROVAL

Approval is granted on the understanding that research will be conducted according to the standards of the **National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)**, the **Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007)** and **Murdoch University policies** at all times. You must also abide by the **Human Research Ethics Committee's standard conditions of approval** (see attached). All reporting forms are available on the Research Ethics and Integrity web-site.

I wish you every success for your research.

Please quote your ethics project number in all correspondence.

Kind Regards,



Dr. Erich von Dietze
Manager
Research Ethics and Integrity

cc: Dr Judy MacCallum and Johanne Klap
School of Education – Dr Lindy Norris

CRICOS Provider Code: 00125J
ABN 61 616 369 313

Human Research Ethics Committee: Standard Conditions of Approval

- a) The project must be conducted in accordance with the approved application, including any conditions and amendments that have been approved. You must comply with all of the conditions imposed by the HREC, and any subsequent conditions that the HREC may require.
- b) You must report immediately anything, which might affect ethical acceptance of your project, including:
 - *Adverse effects on participants*
 - *Significant unforeseen events*
 - *Other matters that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.*
- c) Proposed changes or amendments to the research must be applied for, using an Amendment Application form, and approved by the HREC before these may be implemented.
- d) An Annual Report for the project must be provided by the due date specified each year (usually the anniversary of approval).
- e) A Closure Report must be provided at the conclusion of the project (once all contact with participants has been completed).
- f) If, for any reason, the project does not proceed or is discontinued, you must advise the committee in writing, using a Closure Report form.
- g) If an extension is required beyond the end date of the approved project, an Extension Application should be made allowing sufficient time for its consideration by the committee. Extensions of approval cannot be granted retrospectively.
- h) You must advise the HREC immediately, in writing, if any complaint is made about the conduct of the project.
- i) Other Murdoch approvals (e.g. fieldwork approval) or approval from other institutions may also be necessary before the research can commence.
- j) Any equipment used must meet current safety standards. Purpose built or modified equipment must be tested and certified by independent experts for compliance with safety standards.
- k) Graduate research degree candidates must normally have their Program of Study approved prior to commencing the research. Exceptions to this must be approved by the HREC.
- l) You must notify Research Ethics & Integrity of any changes in contact details including address, phone number and email address.
- m) Researchers should be aware that the HREC may conduct random audits and / or require additional reports concerning the research project.

Failure to comply with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* and with the conditions of approval may result in the suspension or withdrawal of approval for the project.

The HREC seeks to support researchers in achieving strong results and positive outcomes.

The HREC promotes a research culture in which ethics is considered and discussed at all stages of the research.

If you have any issues you wish to raise, please contact the Research Ethics Office in the first instance.

Approval – Department of Education



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Education**

Your ref :
Our ref : D15/0574719
Enquiries :

Ms Johanne Klap
Murdoch University
School of Education
90 South Street
MURDOCH WA 6150

Dear Ms Klap

Thank you for your application received 18 November 2015 to conduct research on Department of Education sites.

The focus and outcomes of your research project, *An investigation into the effects of mindfulness on School Principals' leadership and wellbeing*, are of interest to the Department. I give permission for you to approach principals to invite their participation in the project as outlined in your application. Conditions of approval are:

- You submit the finalised online surveys to the Department for approval before they are administered; and
- The results of this study are forwarded to the Department at the email address below.

Consistent with Department policy, participation in your research project will be the decision of the principals invited to participate and individual staff members in those schools. A copy of this letter must be provided to principals when requesting their participation in the research.

Responsibility for quality control of ethics and methodology of the proposed research resides with the institution supervising the research. The Department notes a copy of a letter confirming that you have received ethical approval of your research protocol from the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Any proposed changes to the research project will need to be submitted for Department approval prior to implementation.

Please contact Dr Adriaan Wolvaardt, Coordinator Research Applications, on 08 9264 5512 or researchandpolicy@education.wa.edu.au if you have further enquiries.

Very best wishes for the successful completion of your project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Dodson'.

ALAN DODSON
DIRECTOR
EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY


9 December 2015

151 Royal Street, East Perth Western Australia 6004

License – Mind Garden Questionnaires





Licences for Mind Garden Questionnaires

FW: [Mind Garden] Order #4334 Complete



Johanne Klap <J.Klap@murdoch.edu.au>
To: joe@tripleloop.com.au

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  Reply All
  Forward
 

Mon 25/04/2016 10:14 AM

Hi, Johanne Klap


Thank you for shopping with Mind Garden!

ORDER DETAILS - PAYMENT COMPLETE

Order: YOLCZPKZL
Completed on: 01/23/2016 20:51:27
Payment: PayPal USA, Canada





Product	Unit price	Quantity	Total price
Areas of Worklife Survey - Remote Online Survey License - Translation : English (default)	\$0.60	1001	\$600.60
Maslach Burnout Inventory - Remote Online Survey License - Translation : English (default)	\$1.10	100	\$110.00
Authentic Leadership Questionnaire - Research Permission -	\$0.00	1101	\$0.00
		Shipping	\$0.00
		Total Tax	\$0.00
		Total	\$710.60

[Mind Garden] Order #3140 Complete



Mind Garden <info@mindgarden.com>
To: Johanne Klap

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Wed 28/10/2015 2:58 PM

Hi, Johanne Klap

Thank you for shopping with Mind Garden!

ORDER DETAILS - PAYMENT COMPLETE

Order: GRKDONQTI
Completed on: 10/27/2015 23:58:22
Payment: Credit Card

Product	Unit price	Quantity	Total price
Areas of Worklife Survey - Manual -	\$50.00	1	\$50.00
Maslach Burnout Inventory - Manual -	\$50.00	1	\$50.00
		Shipping	\$0.00
		Total Tax	\$0.00
		Total	\$100.00

Appendix D Principal Codes and Pseudonyms

Code	Pseudonym	Code	Pseudonym
P01	Jenny	P16	Alan
P02	Ben	P17	Tom
P03	Laura	P18	Trish
P04	James	P19	Andrea
P05	Paul	P20	Wendy
P06	Robert	P21	Kate
P07	Jack	P22	Harry
P08	William	P23	Mandy
P09	Isabelle	P24	Tamara
P10	Sonya	P25	Louise
P11	Maggie	P26	Tanya
P12	Ruth	P27	Karina
P13	Karen	P28	Simone
P14	Beth	P29	Bella
P15	Leigh	P30	Sue

Appendix E Timeline of Events

Program timeline

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Week beginning Nov/Dec 2015		Program Launch Professional Learning Institute, Leederville			
Feb 8	School visit / pre interview / test and Q out	School visit and Q out/ pre interview / task and Q out	School visit and Q out/ pre interview / task and Q out	School visit and Q out/ pre interview / task and Q out	School visit and Q out/ pre interview / task and Q out
15	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out
22	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out
29	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out	School visit and Q out
Mar 7		Session 1 (8 -9.30am)			
14		Session 2			
21		Session 3			EASTER
28		Session 4			
April 4		Session 5			
11	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday
18	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday	School holiday
25	ANZAC	Session 6			
May 2		Session 7			
9		Session 8			
16	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task
23	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task	School visit / post interview / task
30		Session 9 follow up			
June 6	Schools Q out				
13	Schools Q out				
20	DATA in				
27		Session 10 end of training Program			
JULY - NOV	DATA Analysis				
DEC	Schools Q to A &B	Longitudinal data	A tasks		


ESTABLISH PHASE

TRAINING PHASE

SUSTAIN PHASE

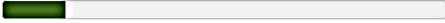
Appendix F Online Questionnaire

Time 1 and 2



Mindful Leadership Research pv3

Principals Survey

1 / 7  14%

Instructions

Thank you for participating in this survey. There are 5 sections to complete.

- The first section is about your mindfulness.
- The second section is about your leadership style.
- The third section is about your wellbeing.
- The fourth section is about how you perceive different areas of work at your school.
- The fifth and final section is about your self care.

Please read each question carefully.

Please note that the survey will need to be completed in one sitting. It will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

Let's get started...

1. Please enter your Code name. (this is the same one you have generated using the first two letters of one of your parents name, your street number (first two digits) and the first two letters of your favourite pet's name eg: HA07FE)

2. Please enter your age range

under 30

30 - 39

40 - 49

50 - 59

60+

3. Please enter your school type

Primary

Secondary

Other (eg: schools that are both Primary and Secondary, Education Support Centres)

4. Please select your number of years experience as a Principal

1 year or less

2 years

3 years

4 years

5 years

6 years or more

5. Please select the number of years you have been a Principal at your current school

1 year or less

2 years

3 years

4 years

5 years

6 years or more



Mindful Leadership Research pv3

Mindfulness Section

2/7  29%

Tick the statement that best describes your own opinion of what is generally true for you.

1. When I'm walking, I deliberately notice the sensations of my body moving.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. I'm good at finding words to describe my feelings.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. I criticise myself for having irrational or inappropriate emotions.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. I perceive my feelings and emotions without having to react to them.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. When I do things, my mind wanders off and I'm easily distracted.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. When I take a shower or bath, I stay alert to the sensations of water on my body.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. I can easily put my beliefs, opinions, and expectations into words.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. I don't pay attention to what I'm doing because I'm daydreaming, worrying, or otherwise distracted.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. I watch my feelings without getting lost in them.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. I tell myself I shouldn't be feeling the way I'm feeling.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. I notice how foods and drinks affect my thoughts, bodily sensations, and emotions.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. It's hard for me to find the words to describe what I'm thinking.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. I am easily distracted.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. I believe some of my thoughts are abnormal or bad and I shouldn't think that way.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind in my hair or sun on my face.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. I have trouble thinking of the right words to express how I feel about things.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. I make judgments about whether my thoughts are good or bad.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I 'step back' and am aware of the thought or image without getting taken over by it.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. I pay attention to sounds, such as clocks ticking, birds chirping, or cars passing.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. In difficult situations, I can pause without immediately reacting.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. When I have a sensation in my body, it's difficult for me to describe it because I can't find the right words.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. It seems I am 'running on automatic' without much awareness of what I'm doing.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I feel calm soon after.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. I tell myself that I shouldn't be thinking the way I'm thinking.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. I notice the smells and aromas of things.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. Even when I'm feeling terribly upset, I can find a way to put it into words.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

29. When I have distressing thoughts or images I am able just to notice them without reacting.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

30. I think some of my emotions are bad or inappropriate and I shouldn't feel them.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

31. I notice visual elements in art or nature, such as colours, shapes, textures, or patterns of light and shadow.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

32. My natural tendency is to put my experiences into words.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

33. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I just notice them and let them go.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34. I do jobs or tasks automatically without being aware of what I'm doing.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

35. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I judge myself as good or bad, depending what the thought/image is about.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

36. I pay attention to how my emotions affect my thoughts and behaviour.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

37. I can usually describe how I feel at the moment in considerable detail.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

38. I find myself doing things without paying attention.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

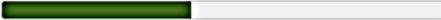
39. I disapprove of myself when I have irrational ideas.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Mindful Leadership Research pv3

Leadership Section

3 / 7  43%

The following section refers to your leadership style, as you perceive it. Please judge how *frequently* each statement fits your leadership style.

As a leader...

1. I say exactly what I mean.

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. I admit mistakes when they are made.

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. I encourage everyone to speak their mind.

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. I tell you the hard truth.

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. I display emotions exactly in line with feelings.

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. I demonstrate beliefs that are consistent with actions.

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. I make decisions based on my core values.

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. I ask you to take positions that support your core values.

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. I make difficult decisions based on high standards of ethical conduct.

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. I solicit views that challenge my deeply held positions.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. I analyse relevant data before coming to a decision.

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. I listen carefully to different points of view before coming to conclusions.

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. I seek feedback to improve interactions with others.

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. I accurately describe how others view my capabilities.

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. I know when it is time to re-evaluate my position on important issues.

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. I show I understand how specific actions impact others.

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Prev	Next
----------------------	----------------------



Mindful Leadership Research pv3

Wellbeing Section

4 / 7  57%

The following section measures your emotional energy at work.
Please tick how *regularly* you feel the following:

1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. I feel used up at the end of the workday.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. I feel tired when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Working all day is really a strain for me.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. I can effectively solve the problems that arise in my work.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. I feel burned out from my work.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. I feel I am making an effective contribution to what this organisation (school) does.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. I've become less interested in my work since I started this job.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. I have become less enthusiastic about my work.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. In my opinion, I am good at my job.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. I feel exhilarated when I accomplish something at work.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. I just want to do my job and not be bothered.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. I have become more cynical about whether my work contributes anything.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. I doubt the significance of my work.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. At my work, I feel confident that I am effective at getting things done.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Work-Life Section

5 / 7  71%

This section is focused on areas and elements of your work-life (workload, control, reward, community, fairness and values).

Please indicate the extent to which you *agree* or *disagree* with the following statements:

Workload

1. I do not have time to do the work that must be done.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. I work intensely for prolonged periods of time.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. I have so much work to do on the job that it takes me away from my personal interests.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. I have enough time to do what's important in my job.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. I leave my work behind when I go home at the end of the workday.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Control

6. I have control over how I do my work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. I can influence management (Education Department) to obtain the equipment and space I need for my work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. I have professional autonomy/independence in my work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. I have influence in the decisions affecting my work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Reward

10. I receive recognition from others for my work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. My work is appreciated.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. My efforts usually go unnoticed.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. I do not get recognised for all the things I contribute.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Community

14. People trust one another to fulfill their roles.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. I am a member of a supportive work group.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. Members of my work group cooperate with one another.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Members of my work group communicate openly.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. I don't feel close to my colleagues.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Fairness

19. Resources are allocated fairly here.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. Opportunities are decided solely on merit.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. There are effective appeal procedures available when I question the fairness of a decision.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. Management (school) treats all employees fairly.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. Favouritism determines how decisions are made at work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. It's not what you know but who you know that determines a career here.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Values

25. My values and the school's values are alike.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. The school's goals influence my day to day work activities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. My personal career goals are consistent with the school's stated goals.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. The school is committed to quality.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Hard to Decide	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Self Care Section

6 / 7  86%

This section is about how you *typically* act towards yourself in difficult times.

1. I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.

Never or very rarely true Rarely true Sometimes true Often true Very often or always true

2. When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong.

Never or very rarely true Rarely true Sometimes true Often true Very often or always true

3. When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through.

Never or very rarely true Rarely true Sometimes true Often true Very often or always true

4. When I think about my inadequacies, it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world.

Never or very rarely true Rarely true Sometimes true Often true Very often or always true

5. I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain.

Never or very rarely true Rarely true Sometimes true Often true Very often or always true

6. When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.

Never or very rarely true Rarely true Sometimes true Often true Very often or always true

7. When I'm down and out, I remind myself that there are lots of other people in the world feeling like I am.

Never or very rarely true Rarely true Sometimes true Often true Very often or always true

8. When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself.

Never or very rarely true Rarely true Sometimes true Often true Very often or always true

9. When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance.

Never or very rarely true Rarely true Sometimes true Often true Very often or always true

10. When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people.

Never or very rarely true Rarely true Sometimes true Often true Very often or always true

Appendix F. Online Questionnaire

11. I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. When I see aspects of myself that I don't like, I get down on myself.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. When I fail at something important to me I try to keep things in perspective.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. When I'm really struggling, I tend to feel like other people must be having an easier time of it.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. I'm kind to myself when I'm experiencing suffering.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. When something upsets me I get carried away with my feelings.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. I can be a bit cold-hearted towards myself when I'm experiencing suffering.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. When I'm feeling down I try to approach my feelings with curiosity and openness.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. I'm tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. When something painful happens I tend to blow the incident out of proportion.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure.


Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.

Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>


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Principals Survey


7/7  100%

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.


Please click the DONE button below to submit.

1. Any comments (optional)


Prev Done

Powered by

See how easy it is to [create a survey](#).

Time 3

Mindful Leadership Research

Principals Survey

1 / 7  14%

Instructions

Thank you for participating in this survey. There are 5 sections to complete.

- The first section is about your mindfulness.
- The second section is about your leadership style.
- The third section is about your wellbeing.
- The fourth section is about how you perceive different areas of work at your school.
- The fifth and final section is about your self care.
- There is an optional comment section at the end of the survey if you would like to share any feedback.

Please read each question carefully.

Please note that the survey will need to be completed in one sitting. It will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

Let's get started...

1. Please enter your Code name. (this is the same one you have generated using the first two letters of one of your parents name, your street number (first two digits) and the first two letters of your favourite pet's name eg: HA07FE)

2. Have you managed to maintain your mindful practices?

Unfortunately not

A few times a month

A few times a week

Most days

Every day

3. If you have managed to keep your practice going, what has helped you?

4. What have you noticed about your wellbeing since completing the program 6 months ago?

5. What have you noticed about your leadership since completing the program 6 months ago?

Appendix G Example from Nvivo Code Book

Post-Interview Themes

Name	Description
A: Mindfulness	the components of Mindfulness, Focus, Calm, Clarity, Awareness, the practice
awareness	the capacity to bring an awareness to an issue, the openness to truly see something
calmness	the capacity to bring calmness to a situation - or remain calm purposefully - with intent
clarity	to be able to see things clearly
focus	the capacity to be focused or to bring attention to one thing
labelling	the ability to label a thought or experience so that one can stand back and view differently or let go
non reactivity	the ability to recognise that one does not need to react or the recognition that one can choose a response
observing thoughts	observing thoughts and dealing them
self talk critic high expectations	the observance of self talk and the recognition of the inner critic - high expectations of self or not good enough speak
pausing	the ability and/or intent to bring pause or space between things - to slow down - to purposefully take a break
personal control	an awareness that one had personal agency or choice - that one can manage rather suppress emotions
practice	the mindfulness practice of breathing - 10 minute daily practice or mini practices - purposefully bringing attention to the breath in the present moment
stillness	noticing the stillness or moments of quiet or calm
B: Mental Strategies	General comments on the mental strategies or mentioning of using a number of them
acceptance	Integrate the mental strategy of Acceptance
beginners mind	Integrate the mental strategy of beginners mind
joy	Integrate the mental strategy of joy
kindness	Integrate the mental strategy of kindness
self care kindness	looking after self- being kind to self - self talk
letting go	Integrate the mental strategy of letting go
non judgment	
patience	Integrate the mental strategy of patience
presence	Integrate the mental strategy of presence
C: Leadership & Work	
change in approach	how mindfulness has changed their approach or style of leading
confidence- efficacy	Improvement or awareness of confidence or efficacy
Isolation	speaking of being isolated or alone
principal's job	the elements of what it means to be a principal - roles, responsibilities, perceptions