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Declaration of authorship

I am the author of this thesis, and the work described therein was carried out by myself personally, with the exception of chapter 3 whereby the research tool used within the methodology design had been developed and used by another researcher.

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Abstract

Through principal and staff eyes, this research explored the depth of perceived effective educational leadership in action in the implementation of change, in one international setting towards understanding fuller, the complexities involved in engaging in effective school leadership. The context was a struggling school in the Middle East with predominantly non-western staff and my role as principal in exercising leadership enabled the removal of the school from being 'unsatisfactory' to 'satisfactory/good'; and make improvements for the benefit of all stakeholders. I critically explored the leader-follower relationship, in terms of trust, loyalty, and evaluation of principal/staff's shared moral commitment in improving the school's effectiveness. The results demonstrated that there was significant but not complete, perception connectedness between principal and staff. Although, there were areas of development for the school leader, the results did align with similar educational research, (Pashiardis, 2001, 2005) set in Western contexts. This empirical research and the new data found contributes to the base of knowledge and understanding surrounding present-day leadership in schools by combining theoretical perspectives stemming from literature (Pan & Chen, 2021) which argue for a newer frame of reference for school leadership which is decentralised and shared. New approaches to school leadership argue the importance of teachers within leadership endeavour, collaboration and capacity for school improvement, and bring to the fore the pivotal importance their perspective may hold of a school's leadership (Kin et al, 2019; Van Wyk, 2020). This research is significant in providing a case study that moves away from the heavy Anglo-American bias existent in the field to a more international perspective. As a study of leadership in action, i.e. a principal's and her staff's lived experiences of leadership in an international school, this research offers insights into practices of leading school improvement and the perceptions of the followers' responses to those improvements, it makes a substantive contribution to the field of school leadership by enhancing understandings of 'effective' leadership. The study therefore has contributed to the development of insights for evaluating 'effective' leadership based on multiple perspectives.

Chapter One-Introduction

Introduction

The National Council for School Leadership (2007) in the United Kingdom argued the position of a school principal had become not only complex but also demanding and as such required ever increasing forms of effective leadership. I have over twenty-five years' experience in international education in the Middle East. In the last fifteen years or so, my engagement with senior leadership positions has challenged me in understanding what was leadership and in what ways the impact of my leadership practice had been effective. I have also considered how leadership practices may differ in different cultures. Much of my international career has been housed in one particular, Middle Eastern state and, immersing myself in that culture, including the study of its religion, has equipped me with deep, tacit understanding of the country I had chosen to live in and call home, whilst at the same time, enabling the international schools I had chosen to lead improve their provision and quality of education. Thus, my unique positioning of having had an international career in educational leadership, aroused a desire in me to undertake research specifically in the form of a case study, focusing on myself as a principal 'doing' leadership. My main research question was to understand better the complexities of engaging in effective school leadership in the implementation of change in international settings, from not only my eyes but equally eyes other than my own.

When I emerged from tertiary education as a trained secondary teacher in the Scottish education system, I like many others upon finishing teacher training, found myself becoming a statistic in the surplus of teaching graduates with no teaching placement to accommodate me. Six months of non-educational related employment, prompted me to pick up an edition of the *Times Educational Supplement* and, reviewing job vacancies, I found myself applying for teaching posts internationally. Subsequently my international career commenced in the Middle East. When I first arrived, there were only a small number of 'international schools' catering to the expatriate workforce prevalent in the country towards the end of the twentieth century. As the country developed, the expatriate workforce exploded as did the number and type of 'international' schools; British, American, Canadian, IB, bilingual, Indian, Iranian, private Arabic, etc. State education itself was not open to expatriate workforces as only nationals were

accepted and subsequently the language of instruction would be Arabic. Thus, this left a gap for independent education and types of international schools to accommodate the children of the expatriate workforces. My tenure remained for the most part, in British all-through international schools, offering secondary qualifications with British examination boards, namely Cambridge International Examinations. My career there had spanned the roles of subject specialist, middle leadership roles such as MFL Coordinator, Head of Faculty for Languages, and then to senior leadership roles such as Deputy Principal, Secondary Principal and over the last fifteen years or so as a whole school Principal or School Group Director.

My prime reason for moving to Principal or Directorship roles came firstly from a moral perspective. The country where I lived had greatly expanded its number of international schools as businesses for profit. However, what unfortunately was not rigorously moderated was their quality of educational provision. Being British, if operating in England, schools would be monitored and inspected by the regulatory government body of Ofsted. Last century, to receive an educational licence to operate in this country, international schools were initially appraised to the same standards as local schools. However, at the onset of this new century, changes were brought in for international schools, whereby I operating as a British international school, had to be accredited by British inspectors from DfE (*Department for Education*) recognised companies such as Penta, who conducted their evaluation not against British standards, but against the 14-point scale applied to the local schools. I, as a graduate from the British educational system felt shame in what was being 'sold' to parents as premium educational provision representative of the UK. Equally, for these same parents, which in my schools represented middle income families, an audit from one of them showed, at that time, they were investing more than 60% of their monthly income in their children's education. These parents believed obtaining a 'British' education would open doors for their children in the future. In Middle Eastern culture, parents invest heavily in their children's education not only for family prestige but equally from the perspective that children are perceived to be the 'retirement pension' for parents in providing for them in their old age.

A second, equally important reason for my move to senior leadership came from tirelessly trying to advise or caution British experienced senior leaders embarking on an international career with whom I had worked formally as part of a senior leadership team or informally as a school

improvement partner within school groups, to refrain from taking their Western, experiential leadership models, which may have worked successfully on home territories, and merely replicating them in an international arena, without giving forethought or due attention to the context in which their models were being applied.

These two challenges, combined with my experiences of the challenges of leadership itself, provided the impetus for my undertaking research in order to better understand some of the complexities involved in leadership and leadership of culturally diverse schools in an international setting. Added to this was my awareness that the Middle East was a region which had been under-researched.

The above has briefly introduced myself and my context. The chapter continues below by introducing the research rationale and how it will address the gap in knowledge. This is then followed by a more extensive exploration of my personal experience which led to an academic interest in leadership and what constitutes effective leadership in school improvement as considered from my perspective and the perspectives of the staff I lead. Finally, I explain the why of my main research focus and my research question on better understanding the complexities of engaging in effective school leadership in the implementation of change in international settings through not only my eyes but equally eyes other than my own.

Rationale

Leading culturally diverse school communities is exponentially becoming more of an everyday occurrence for school leaders globally. One compelling example of this phenomenon comes from world news agencies on the subject of human displacement either through immigration or refugees which currently affects more than 100 million people (UNHCR, 2022). These global flows of adults and children both impact on national and/or international school systems, and obligate us to create more diverse school communities as the children from these groups enter the schooling system (Fisher, 2019). Equally as discussed above, in my particular context, the boom of international schools has increased the demand for the employment of international teachers. In fact, globally by 2026, the world will require nearly 900,000 international teachers (International School Services, 2022). In my context, the demand lies with specifically British teachers, in line with parental expectations and desires for these schools to uphold a sense of

'Britishness'. Accreditation bodies such as previously mentioned Penta, authorised by the UK to conduct inspections overseas would expect this 'Britishness' not only operationally in the hallmarks of a British school located in the UK in design and function e.g. having key stages, through its curriculum but also through demonstration of British values such as democracy as well as application of British etiquette such as manners and politeness, etc. Many students local or expatriate seek either to secure British educational qualifications to enhance their chances of employment and better benefits returning to this part of the world post study; or families seek the opportunity of a better future for their children or they themselves if via immigration or employment from study, they can acquire a British passport which is seen to provide security. The rationale for my study as previously explained came from my own experience of leading international schools in the Middle East and my perceptions and experiences of what constituted effective leadership in school improvement, both from my own perspective and from other stakeholders, specifically my teachers, in my international setting.

Leadership research from different cultures in the business field is readily available but in the international school leadership domain it remains relatively under-researched therefore it is an area for development and where my research can make a contribution. Fisher (2019) states that leadership itself still remains studied and theorised as a practice within one culture, or comparisons in leadership are made to justify the differences between cultures or understanding them, but lacking is the everyday practices of school leaders with their teachers who may be culturally diverse in attaining a holistic perception of effective leadership. This research space is where this current study will make a contribution in the understanding of this important topic.

The aim of this research was to develop a more holistic approach to educational leadership evaluation through analysis of principal and follower perceptions, as a means to unpacking the complexities of leadership in action and contribute to understanding those complexities. Principal effectiveness, understood from the Wallace Foundation (2013) as shaping a vision of academic success for all students, creating a climate hospitable to education, cultivating leadership in others, improving instruction, managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement, is dependent on how the principal perceives his or her own leadership style. Principals in undertaking their role have formed some knowledge and ideas about themselves, and the manner in which they lead schools. Accordingly, in the execution of duties, they act in a

way emanating from these ideas and the perceptions of themselves as leaders. However, if the perceptions of a principal's staff cohort do not fall in line with his/her personal perceptions, then it would be safe to assume that a principal would face difficulties in the execution of effective change management, as staff would be likely to perform or behave in accordance with their personal perceptions of his or her leadership. If both the principal and staff viewpoints match, then the assumption would be there would be no problems. However, if the converse occurred, i.e. there were opposing points of view, then divergent things may not always go to plan and conflict may result. In a school environment, if conflict emerges without planned forethought and balance of all interested parties then divergent views will operate in ways detrimental to school effectiveness and its student body. Thus, my research aim in this evaluative study of school leadership, was to find out if – or the extent to which – teacher perceptions do indeed match – or not – my own views as a principal in relation to effective leadership. Ostensibly what is actually believed to be the educational reality (by leader or staff) is precisely what actions will be based upon. Thus, an argument can be made that this reality will stem from what is perceived (Pashiardis, 2001, 2005).

Historical literature on organisational management has considered how opinion from followers could be used as a developmental resource in appraising leaders and managers. A trend evolved towards qualitative research which Bryman (1996, pp.287-288) stated focused on "the leader as a manager of meaning" leading to an awareness "that the ways in which this process occurs requires in-depth understanding of particular cases and detailed probing among both leaders and subordinates of aims and impacts". Research predominantly from human resources created a plethora of assessment methods for organisations to obtain follower feedback, one of the most used being the 360-degree feedback (see Jafari et al., 2009; Sepehrirad et al., 2012). Throughout Western contexts, notably Europe and the USA, the 360-degree team evaluation has been a well-used resource. It has also been used in education (Wilkerson et al., 2000; Tee & Ahmed, 2014) but rarely in non-Western contexts such as the Middle East. The 360-degree team evaluation is a holistic approach and pertinent to my study in that one of its prime uses is to generate data which enables appraisal of principals' leadership practices from followers' perspectives in relation to change management (Thomas et al., 2000; Kin et al., 2019; Van Wyk, 2020). Hence some important reasons why this piece of research will prove to be worthwhile.

The above arguments identify the 'research space' (Swales, 1990) which this thesis occupies. This research is important in helping develop a framework for schools for leadership in action which is defined below, which I envisage as a type of cultural, contingent leadership of effective mindedness in international waters, which can secure lasting change, even perhaps with or without principal presence. The premise of the research is that if teaching staff and principal perceptions align, and this is subsequently embedded in the fabric of the school, then the sustainability of change has a greater chance of enduring. As the research centres on effective leadership in education, in that the change management undertaken within the school has demonstrated that both principal and staff share a '*perception*' that positive outcomes have resulted and those same positive outcomes have created a newer, more effective reality it would seem pertinent to commence with an understanding of what actually constitutes leadership perceived as being in action.

The Leadership Phenomenon

Howard Gardner in *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership* (2011, pp.297-298) stated "we are more likely to secure responsible leadership in the future if we can demystify its constituent processes. In that sense, enhanced knowledge about leadership may go hand-in-hand with more morally desirable forms of leadership". This current research, in evaluating international, leadership in action from multi-perspectives, will provide some answers to demystifying what leadership is in education and how it can result in better practice (Hayden & Thompson, 2013; Lee & Walker, 2018; Bunnell, 2021).

Educational research projects conducted in various international waters have demonstrated the potential influence of leadership on courses of action linked to school effectiveness and improvement (Harris, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004; Bruggencate & Luyten, 2012; Cravens, 2018). Fundamentally, schools which are perceived as effective have undertaken scrutiny of inspection reports and performance data to guide future actions to ensure evidence of successful leadership and upward school improvement, (see Ofsted 2000; Harris & Chapman, 2004). To better understand the role of school leadership within change, we need closer examination of specific evidence and from specific situations (Lee, Hallinger & Walker, 2012; Cravens, 2018). Such specificity means we can move away from the generalisations of leadership qualities

currently prevalent in much of the literature (Fullan, 2001; Pashiardis & Johansson, 2016, 2020; Ibarrola-Garcia, 2018). My research is a move in this direction.

Leadership theory development addresses the need to understand the impact of leadership and a growing body of empirical data exists which underpins the generation of varying definitions of leadership. Despite this, rather than close the gap in understanding, there is still little general agreement. Two decades ago, researchers such as Fullan, (1998) and Day et al., (2000) rejected the traditional theories of leadership, such as contingency theory which assumes a leader is effective when his or her style of leadership fits the situation, or the leadership traits theory which argues that leaders are born and therefore possess the innate characteristics required to lead, and posited that these theories lacked validity within the complex reality schools face. Argument continues for a new frame of reference for school leadership to become decentralised and shared (Day & Harris, 2003; Greany, 2020). Other studies have argued the importance of, for example, emotional leadership (Humphrey, 2002; Jin, 2010), value-centred leadership (Day et al., 2000; Clair, 2020), distributed leadership (Gronn, 2000; Huber, 2004), and constructivist leadership (Lambert et al., 1995; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2015). In essence, leadership and its impact remain a contested terrain. The research undertaken in my study of school effectiveness sits in relation to this contested field; its specific relation is with leadership theory in action and aims to offer a deeper account of this within a specific international context. It does this by drawing on Day and Harris's (2003) '*development*' of a framework for school leadership in action; a type of cultural, contingent leadership of effective mindedness linked to processes of improvement (Ibarrola-Garcia, 2018), thus moving away from generalisations about leadership.

School leadership literature positions the perspective of headteachers as pivotal (see Penlington et al., 2008). Hallinger and Heck (1999) affirmed principal influence to be extremely effective in defining and voicing school purposes. International research indicates that the quality of leadership provided by a headteacher is an important factor in the analysis of school effectiveness globally, for example, the Pacific Rim, Europe, the Commonwealth countries in Africa (see Dalin, 2004; the Commonwealth Secretariat, 1996; Mortimore et al., 2000; Pashiardis & Johansson, 2016, 2020; Ibarrola-Garcia, 2018). Research on 'instructional leadership' has examined leadership and classroom learning frameworks with respect to the centrality of a headteacher's role (see Elmore 2000; Hill 2002; Kaparou & Bush, 2016).

The above research indicates that effective leadership comes from a headteacher rather than any other stakeholder (Patti et al., 2015; Issah, 2018). Much school leadership research has used surveys to obtain the views of headteachers, qualitative interviews, or case studies, these latter largely being autobiographical in nature as written by a headteacher from their own personal experience. A while ago, Hallinger and Heck's (1996) literature review argued that certain analyses within the leadership field were being ignored because of either theoretical or epistemological biases which they labelled as 'blind spots' which still exist (Bindlish & Nandram, 2018). An important blind spot, according to Harris (2004), arose from extensive focus being given to the formal leadership practice of headteachers within educational literature, which resulted in an over-reliance on headteachers in defining leadership in action (see Pont et al., 2008; Ingersoll et al., 2018). Muijs and Harris (2003) argued that this neglected not only other forms of leadership but also other perspectives of it within an educational context (see Walker & Qian, 2018). The research undertaken for this study aims to counterbalance these 'blind spots', and makes use of headteacher and staff perspectives in an international context. It indicates that the views of both on leadership in action are significant in bringing about school improvement.

The historical perspective of school leadership saw it as a form of formal authority in a particular school setting. Later work (Day et al., 2000) has redirected research towards non-traditional perspectives within school leadership (Jackson & Parry, 2011; Harris, 2003). Newer approaches to school leadership shift away from a focus on the headteacher to argue the importance of teachers within leadership endeavour, collaboration and capacity for school improvement, and bring to the fore the pivotal importance their perspective may hold of a school's leadership (Day & Harris 2003; Harris 2003b; Kin et al, 2019; Van Wyk, 2020).

The above shifts in the research and the field suggest that it is of educational significance to examine leadership via the lens of my own specific situation (Pashiardis & Johansson, 2016, 2020; Gurr & Drysdale, 2020). In combining this with evidence from staff across the school, this research advances a multidimensional, wider and empathetic perspective of leadership and its leaders through pragmatic mixed methods and analysis of one leader and her leadership practice in affecting change in an international, educational context with a multi-cultural cohort of staff who are primarily non-Western.

My research sets out to make a contribution to understanding this important topic, by adding depth to theory of what constitutes effective leadership, and by adding a particular study of a non-western school to the global bank of leadership research it may help shift reliance away from western dominated perspectives, at least a little. Ultimately, where my research may assist is to unpack the complexities of leadership in action and contribute to understanding its complexities.

Context

As most of my working career has been based in this one Middle Eastern country, and almost half of it in one particular school, it seemed appropriate to develop a case study of it on leadership effectiveness. Much of my senior leadership tenure had involvement with schools that in the UK would have been deemed 'challenging', 'unsatisfactory' or likened to 'special measures'.

The English regulatory body, Ofsted, inspects schools and assesses schools on their overall effectiveness linked to four key judgements; quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, leadership and management, which are ranked between 1-4, according to a body of descriptors within each key judgement area which range from; 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate'. A school would be judged inadequate if it failed to provide an acceptable quality of education and care for children and would immediately need to make significant improvements (Third Space Learning, 2022). Along with the ranking of inadequate, if the management team of a school ranked 4 therefore leaders were not taking effective action to stem the decline in the attainment or progress of disadvantaged pupils; and were not doing enough to tackle weaknesses in the school, the school would then be ranked as 'special measures' and face regular inspections in England (Ofsted, 2021). I, as a trained school inspector would have to concur with those judgements for my international school when I first commenced my headship. My school would have received the aforementioned judgement because; the quality of teaching and learning was so poor that it had a significant impact on the progress and attainment of the children under its care. The international examination results were way below UK averages. Only one third of the students achieved A* to C pass rate. There were serious breaches in the safety and security of students. The school had insufficient pastoral

provision for any student. School leadership had failed to address any deficit and therefore leaders were responsible for the decline in standards. I had longevity in employment in this institution, in which I commenced as a secondary subject teacher, then moved into a middle leadership role as Head of Faculty, before taking a sabbatical. I returned a few years later to become a whole school Principal, and then was promoted to Academic Director for the company's schools. I had seen engagement with different leaders who historically had been effective at the school as it had flourished. My longevity of employment demonstrated that I had a personal involvement i.e. emotional attachment and my own postgraduate professional development in leadership study, collectively stimulated my reflective practice to see value in pursuing case study research into leadership which was my own leadership.

Personal Interest

On being approached to take up the position of Principal after my sabbatical, I assumed that I would be returning to the school I once knew or a better version of it. Previously, the school ran as a British International school with British trained staff. It offered Cambridge International Examinations and the international results for the school were equal or better in some subjects to UK averages. The school had international accreditation and had the judgement of 'very good' by an Ofsted international accredited body in many areas. The school roll was healthy, over six hundred and was increasing annually. Sadly, when I returned to the school in a senior leadership role of initially Principal, things were indeed very different. The school had lost its way. The school was now under the control of the owner's son and had moved to become more in keeping with a conservative, Islamic school. For example, music was removed from the curriculum and art was not permitted to display any human form. The staff now consisted of many nationalities, with varying qualifications, and varying experiences of British education primarily to reduce company staffing expenditure as employing British trained teachers would require international contracts that included benefits such as flights, housing, medical, etc. Local hires would receive only a salary.

Almost eight years of my life had had a connection to this British international school, with now more than ever, a culturally diverse staff and student cohort. My longevity in this school itself,

and in this Middle Eastern culture, I felt would 'add value' to the research conducted. As an insider-researcher, I would be able to offer deeper insights.

International Schools

What constitutes an 'international school' in this thesis needs some clarification. Clarification is necessary as there is no, at present, unified definition. Hayden (2006) detailed the evolution of international schools and made an effort to provide definitions or categorisations of them. Hayden (2006) stated that even though there were some features of international schools that could be generally agreed upon, they could not be judged as a prerequisite (p.21). These features could encompass having a multi-cultural student body or teaching body, and even, a curriculum not of the host country which meant a curriculum created for international schools which used English as its main language of instruction. However, not all schools that classified themselves as 'international' would have all or most of these aforementioned features, which Hayden, in conclusion, suggested no simple answer could be given to assist construction of a definition (p.2*).* Later Hayden and Thompson (2013) offered a revision to the understanding of an 'international school' in explaining it as a school whose provision of 'curriculum' is not of the 'host country' that is, the country where it is located, (p.5). Within this broad definition, Hayden and Thompson described three subcategories of schools: 'Type A' defined as catering for globally mobile families; 'Type B' as ideologically based schools which attracted students from different global areas and focused on creating a better world. The final, 'Type C', entailed providing education for host country nationals who wanted a different educational system to their national one. The school in my research fits into Hayden and Thompson's 'Type C' definition of an international school: my school originally was conceptualised to cater for host country females, from elite families, to provide a British designed curriculum. As the country was conservative, the opportunity for female nationals to attend a boarding school or be schooled abroad would be extremely rare. However, attendance at a 'British' style school would increase their chances of marrying into a 'good family' when time came for their arranged marriage. Societal roles of that country dictated it was the mother's role to deal with matters relating to childcare, thus if she spoke English, and had had a 'British' education, her chances of marrying well would vastly improve as she would be able to nurture English speaking children and support them with a type of international schooling.

Interest in Context and Leadership

Obviously the 'hold' this country had had on me to remain so long, and the furthering of my career in leadership, led my reflective practice pondering on context and educational leadership. My educational leadership roles and engagement with them in this Middle Eastern arena permitted an exploration of the complexity of culture, of leadership itself and understanding what is effective leadership. My school culture in terms of staff nationality had now changed from being majority British to being multi-cultural; and my role of turning a challenging school around prompted reflection on how leaders can be most effective in culturally diverse communities. Outside education, from the 1980's, research is found on the impact of culture on leadership (see Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). In the leadership questions which arose from my reflective practice on my particular culture, and sourcing research on effective leadership in other cultures, particularly education, I found it was predominantly comparative, that is individually comparing one culture to another. However, I wanted research on leading different cultures in one team, (Hallinger & Kantamara, 2000). There is growing interest in comparative studies of educational leadership where comparisons are drawn on leadership practices between different cultures (Cheong, 2000; Dimmock & Walker, 2005; Bush & Oduro, 2006; Lumby, Crow & Pashiardis, 2008). However, my exploration found a gap in the literature on the leadership of culturally diverse staff in understanding what constitutes effective practice in school improvement through their and my own eyes and this became the focus of my research.

In line with Preedy et al.,'s (2012) identification of the need for educational leadership to be understood as an international phenomenon, my research contributes to current interest in the international perspective of leadership. My research adds a critical voice against unthinkingly enforcing Western models of thought and action without due diligence to the cultural context. Historically, Dimmock and Walker (1997) emphasised the importance of this, and more recently, Hallinger and Bryant (2013) argued that different cultures approach leadership in a number of ways which have deep cultural foundations. Fitzgerald (2003a, 2003b, 2004) also highlights the fact that educational leadership may be performed differently by females, indigenous leaders or female indigenous leaders. I am cognisant of these perspectives in this research.

Purpose of Research and Research Question/s

Muijs and Harris (2007) argued that although the quality of teaching strongly influenced the motivation and achievement of students, the quality of leadership provided at schools had an indirect but powerful impact on student achievement. They qualified this by arguing the quality of leadership can greatly influence the motivation of teachers and the quality of classroom teaching.

The aim of this research is to develop an understanding of effective leadership through the eyes of principal and teaching staff in school improvement and subsequently deepen theory of what constitutes effective leadership, and to add to a global bank of leadership research which moves reliance away from western dominated perspectives. My research interest and question focuses on better understanding the complexities of engaging in effective school leadership in the implementation of change in international settings through not only my eyes but equally eyes other than my own.

The research aims to:

1. Explore teachers' perspectives of 'effective' leadership in school improvement to provide comprehension and insight into what it means to be an 'effective leader'.
2. Analyse what constitutes 'effective leadership' in a non-western context to draw comparisons and contrasts with findings from studies of western and/or global sourced contexts.
3. Offer newer insights into the contributing role followers play in effective leadership

This research will provide understanding of teachers' perspectives of 'effective' leadership, and this understanding aims then to contribute towards the development of dimensions for evaluating 'effective' leadership to include teachers' multi-perspectives.

The study has employed a reflective narrative approach because I, a school leader with considerable leadership experience, have learnt most about leadership from engagement with the actual act of attempting to lead and then reflecting on the success or otherwise of my leadership practices. I have had to negotiate my own philosophical stance on leadership; my 'implicit leadership theory', (Schyns & Meindl, 2005), in the context of Avolio's (2005, p.11) comment

on 'life stream', of how "the events you accumulate from birth to the present that shape how you choose to influence others and yourself". This leads to the crucial question: How have my personal background and experiences evolved to shape not only my own leadership practices but my engagement with 37 female followers in an EYFS, a primary and a secondary school who are predominantly, non-Western in background and educational training, in the creation of what is leadership?

My study is not just another study of 'doing' leadership. Rather, I focus on its impact and effectiveness through an understanding of leadership in action. I do this as a means of, in Howard Gardner's words, "demystifying its constituent processes", (2011, p.297). If we seek the creation of more forms of leadership which are morally responsible therefore it is of prime importance that we don't consider just the leaders but equally include the followers too as the act of following ultimately guides and influences leaders. This research study, then, in focusing on personal leadership in action, i.e. lived, in an international school in the Middle East, offers insights into a principal's account of leading school improvement as a researcher in conjunction with the perceptions of the principal's followers. In doing so it makes a substantive contribution to the field of school leadership studies.

Dimensions of the Leadership Problem as a Context for the Study

The main reason for doing leadership research is to make a difference in practice. If leadership is better understood, then it should influence better leadership in practice. Although this is the rationale that has been adopted, the practicality denotes another reality as John Storey states, "the accumulation of weighty and extensive reports…….. regurgitate a now familiar thesis", (2004, p.6) which is a blind faith in leadership development competency. Such leadership studies continue to promote the status quo in merely serving to capture a collection of appropriate leadership behaviours. Their lack of practical value obligates us to create new methods to examine other leadership conceptualisations, (Jackson & Parry, 2011). Therefore, this current research, from a pragmatic mixed methods, narrative perspective, makes use of an approach which considers, in Moller and Eggen's words, "practice as narrative form" to analyse the "complexities of leadership practice in schools", (2005, p.335). This encounter consists of two "tales"; firstly, the principal's reflective, narrative account of leading school improvement and

secondly, the surveys and interviews from staff on her engagement with leading school improvement. These tales open the principal up for scrutiny if staff storytelling does not match the principal's perceived effective leadership in school improvement. MacGregor Burns, a pioneer of modern leadership studies. drew attention to two recent developments in this domain. One, the internationalisation of leadership, MacGregor Burns observed its "theoretical work and practical application in non-American contexts [*would*] inevitably move leadership theory away from its overly American emphases and bias towards a more international perspective," (2005, p.11). Other scholarly support believes this will result in more rigorous understanding of how successful leadership is influenced and adapted (Hallinger & Bryant, 2013; Walker et al., 2012) especially in international schools (Hayden & Thompson, 2013; Lee & Walker, 2018; Bunnell, 2021). My research aligns with this imperative.

The research is a study of leadership in action in a context of change management. As Principal, part of my role is to plan, implement and monitor all aspects of change responsibly (Fullan, 2007). Evidently, the type of changes selected to improve the provision of the quality of education at all levels and subsequent success, has close ties with its organisational leadership (Ghitulescu, 2013). Teachers are pivotal to how effective educational institutions are and for the quality of education delivered, as such, they are key to the implementation of change initiatives. One question at the heart of this research is the extent to which a shared reality exists between the principal and her staff and how this informs effective educational leadership and change management. It is surprising how much leadership research has neglected teachers' attitudes towards change (Hauge et al., 2014; Foster, 2005) and how organisational change endeavours have floundered because teachers' attitudes have been forgotten (Clegg & Walsh, 2004). My research seeks to address this neglect.

Piderit's (2000) research proposed the need for a multidimensional view of organisational change, and concluded for it to be successful, employees needed to be motivated and supported by their leaders. Other studies support this view that school leader behaviours, within their organisations, must contribute significantly in influencing their teaching staff's attitudes towards educational change (Kursunoglu & Tanriogen, 2009; Hauge et al., 2014; Romanowski et al., 2020). In both school improvement and effective school literature, there is a recommendation that the demonstration of leadership behaviours by a school principal is, in fact, key to the

implementation of change (Hall & Hord, 2011; City, 2013). When there is a risk element to change in education, both the facilitation and support for that change, by the school leader, is crucial (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). Equally, for any school change to be implemented successfully, we cannot deny teachers are the most individual, crucial factor for that success (Fullan, 2001; Gigliotti et al., 2019). Fullan's (2003) research indicates that not only do school principals' behaviours impact on the attitude of staff to change but also their motivation towards it.

This research speaks into the need for investigation of school study sites in non-Western contexts (see Reagan, 2004; O'Donoghue & Clarke, 2010; Walker & Qian, 2018). Its findings help to broaden thinking about how cultural and religious values might impact on not only effective school leadership practices but also on gender, power and hierarchy within leadership. The research, therefore, represents a useful step in the direction of lessening dependency on the dominance of leadership research from the West. Furthermore, as I am a Western principal serving a Muslim community in an Arab country, this research will enable me to explore how my own identity is entangled with the dynamics and structures of western dominance through its reflective dimension.

Organisation of the Thesis

The next section of the thesis is the literature review which is constructed according to Gardner's (2011, p.297) suggestion that 'responsible leadership' needs to be considered through the 'demystification of its constituent processes'. The thesis commences looking at effective leadership and then specifically at effective leadership in managing change. It then moves to examine the niche of international schooling and leadership roles existent here. A typology of leadership practices related to education is explored, including distributed leadership. The section on leadership concludes with deliberation on how leadership practice in international schools is perceived to be effective before moving on to discussing the limitations of leadership research, where it addresses the need to move the field away from the previous asymmetrical focus on leaders. Thus, I focus on followership, covering concepts of followers as moderating or constructing leadership; or even co-producing or substituting leadership. I include studies which, within Western contexts, see followership as 'second best'. My study builds on these latter studies to offer new insights into the contributing role followers play in successful leadership.

Following the literature review, the methodology chapter explains and justifies the mixed methods approach taken in this study; it also discusses researcher positionality and ethical protocols. The subsequent chapters discuss the findings and emerging themes from the study both quantitatively and qualitatively. In the final chapter, the conclusion elaborates the contribution made by the research and identifies implications for practice and research.

Summary

This first chapter has outlined my personal interest, experiential and academic rationale for this study and has indicated where it may make a contribution to deepening theory in educational leadership. What is evident is there is no solitary way of 'doing' leadership which would constitute a one-size-fits-all approach to be effective in all contexts. Effective leadership practices are enacted within and responsive to specific contexts (Day et al., 2010; Walker & Riordan, 2010) and researcher leaders have to be mindful of this. For me, career longevity in international waters prompted much self-reflection on what constitutes effective leadership and my move to educational leadership was fueled by the concern of the never ending flow of principals, relocating and embarking on international leadership, with a 'copy and paste' mindset of how they had enacted leadership in their home base would merely be replicated without paying due diligence to the contexts they now embraced.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

As previously discussed, professional leaders such as myself who accept tenure in international educational establishments discover quickly that they have to function in a loosely specified but nonetheless exponentially expanding, specialty niche of education. Keller (2015) affirms that the leadership context of such schools is rife with ambivalence and complicated tensions between opposing forces (p.900), thus, "it is the challenge of leaders to make sense of opposing perspectives within their school, and to help their school community do the same" (p.913). Keller also states making sense of these international contexts holds importance "because of the tremendous variation in school ownership, governance and structural arrangement" (p.907). Thus, this making sense provides opportunities to deepen theory concerning educational leadership from outside the global North which this project aimed to achieve. The international school in which this research was based was marked by many of Keller's tensions, and had lost its way. My employment remit as Head of turning the school around to being once again effective brought me, as a leader, significant challenges. Keller (2015) argues that if these challenges are not well met, they can result in a 'dark' or 'destructive' form of leadership which may very well cause the demise of a leader (p.900). I was fortunate not to actually experience this, but in my quest to be the best leader I could be to rise to the challenges of my school, I found little guidance within educational literature on effective leadership practices within the special context of international schools. My study seeks to address this gap, through an examination of leadership practices in change management, through the eyes of principal and staff, and in relation to some of Keller's tensions such as governance.

The literature review commences with general definitions of effective leadership from current research before moving on to effective leadership in managing change in education. It then examines the context of leading in international schooling, before looking at leadership roles within this context. Next reviewed is a typology of educational leadership practices, including; effective international leadership and cultures of school change, then movement beyond solo leadership forms to explore distributed and contingent forms of leadership. The second half of the literature review looks at what constitutes following in the leadership equation. As the *MRQ*

probes where and when a multi-cultural teaching team and their principal perceive effective leadership to be in action, the project aim is to develop an understanding of 'effective' leadership through the eyes of stakeholders; a principal and her staff cohort, to add to a global bank of leadership research to be able to move reliance away from western dominated perspectives. Thus, this section of the literature review turns to research undertaken to address the observed limitations and move the field of leadership research away from the previous asymmetrical focus on leaders to focus on followership; covering concepts of followers as moderating or constructing leadership; or even co-producing or substituting leadership. I include studies which, within Western contexts, see followership as 'second best'. My study builds on these latter studies to offer new insights into the contributing role followers play in successful leadership.

What Constitutes an Effective Leader?

Jackson and Parry (2011) argue that for leaders to be effective we need to distinguish between 'fact' i.e. leadership in action, and theory. Jackson and Parry refer to these as the 'common-sense' way and the 'scientific' way (2011, p.17). The former applied an inductive approach to draw out fundamental truths concerned with leadership from direct involvement with successful leaders. The latter involved scientific application whereby a conclusion is reached by reasoning from evidence i.e. a theory is developed on how the leadership should work then rigorous analytical experiments are conducted to test it (p.17). With regard to the first explanation, quite simply if people support another person then that other person is displaying leadership by exhibiting certain qualities or attributes. Jackson and Parry (2011, p.18) defined these qualities as: "confidence, integrity, connection, resilience and aspiration". They explain the first quality of 'confidence' as developing the perception of having self-worth and efficacy needed to undertake a leadership role and maintain it. The second quality of integrity permits leaders to be clear about their values and beliefs. The third quality, connection, is much more than communication as it requires the skill to convert values and beliefs through an authentic, sincere link with followers. The fourth quality of resilience requires leaders to have the ability to overcome setbacks and conflicts and be able to deal with emotional, physiological and psychological stress. The fifth quality of aspiration is the most important given that to be effective, you need to aspire to a greater good in initiating change.

Yukl (2002) added eight more characteristics. These emerged from Yukl's deductive research which reviewed major research programmes and suggested predictors of leadership effectiveness. These eight characteristics are: high energy level and stress tolerance, internal locus of control orientation, emotional maturity, personal integrity, socialised power motivation, moderately high achievement orientation, moderately high self-confidence, moderately low need for affiliation.

Yukl suggested managers having high energy levels and stress tolerance assisted them to cope with the frantic pace, lengthy working hours and continuous demands of many managerial posts. To be able to problem solve effectively, Yukl stated, required a calmness of managers to stay focused instead of either panicking, ignoring the problem or even shifting its responsibility to another colleague. In addition, high stress tolerance enabled managers to give decisive directives to subordinates when involved in crises.

Self-confidence, Yukl suggests, encapsulated other related concepts, including self-esteem and self-efficacy, which connected to leadership effectiveness through examination of how the trait of self-confidence influenced a leader's behaviour. Yukl believed a lack of strong self-confidence prevented a leader from trying to influence others and subsequently made them less likely to succeed. Even if leaders had experienced teething problems or setbacks, those concerned leaders were more resolute when faced with challenging circumstances. This persistence to achieve, according to Yukl, increases commitment from either superiors, colleagues or followers to support. In times of crisis management, self-confident leaders are considered to be more decisive and more successful because followers believe their leader has sufficient knowledge and courage to effectively deal with the problem in an action-oriented approach. However, Yukl cautions against over self-confidence as it can produce dysfunctional behaviour. In scenarios where leaders do not have superior expertise over subordinates, Yukl suggests demonstration of moderately high degree of self-confidence would be more beneficial.

Another trait Yukl forwarded as pertinent to managerial effectiveness came from the 'locus of control orientation' (see Rotter, 1966). Yukl stated that 'internals' i.e. individuals with a high internal locus of control orientation believe their own actions rather than chance or an uncontrollable power shape the events in their lives (p.140). Yukl cites 'internals' as having faith

in influencing their own destiny: they are more accountable for their own actions and their company's organisational performance. Internals are future-oriented and plan ahead regarding accomplishment of their objectives. They make use of failure or setbacks as learning curves rather than perceiving them as misfortune.

As far back as the 1990s, empirical research demonstrates that key components of emotional maturity are linked to improving managerial effectiveness (see Bass, 1990). Emotionally mature people are more self-aware of their strengths and weaknesses; and are subsequently geared towards self-improvement. According to Yukl (2002), people with high emotional maturity care about other people, are less impulsive, experience less mood swings and are willing to learn from their mistakes, thus are able to maintain collaborative relationships with superiors, colleagues or subordinates. A second consideration lies in what Goleman (1995) labelled as 'emotional intelligence', which concerned "abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathise and to hope" (p.71), enabled effective leaders to control their emotional state and be cognisant of their weaknesses.

Salovey and Mayer's original model (1990) of emotional intelligence defined it as the "ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p. 189). Over the last few decades, several academics have argued that emotional intelligence is connected to leadership effectiveness (Goleman, 1995; Goleman et al., 2002). Yukl (2013), for example, suggests a leader with high emotional intelligence is able to solve complex problems, use time effectively, alter their behaviour to a situation; and even manage a crisis (p.152). However, Joseph and Newman (2010) counter this by stating that research is limited to support the claim that emotional intelligence enhances leadership effectiveness. Locke (2005) agrees and further claims that as theories of emotional intelligence make use of well-known traits and skills, it makes no new contribution to knowledge on what constitutes effective leadership. Yukl (2013) does argue to what extent exactly emotional intelligence can help predict leadership effectiveness beyond evaluation of cognitive intelligence or other traits has yet to be delineated with clarity (p.152).

Managers in large organisations are required to utilise power to influence subordinates, colleagues and superiors. However, Yukl (2013) states that the manager's effectiveness is dependent on how the need for power finds expression (p.142). Empirical research from House et al., (1990, 1991) suggest socialised power orientation is more conducive to leadership effectiveness than a personalised power orientation. Managers with a socialised power orientation are more emotionally mature and use power for the benefit of others, thereby enabling power to be translated into influence to develop an organisation to be successful. Yukl suggests this leader's commitment to developing organisational commitment invokes managerial behaviour which coaches and is participative.

Jackson and Parry (2011) note that integrity is desirable for effective leadership, and Yukl sees integrity as a 'primary determinant of interpersonal trust' (p.143). If a manager is not perceived to be trustworthy, it would be problematic not only to secure support and cooperation from peers or superiors but equally to maintain the loyalty of followers.

Yukl suggests achievement orientation as a factor associated with needs and values for effective leadership, and includes the 'need for achievement', a desire to assume responsibility, performance orientation and regard for task objectives (p.145). Yukl stipulates the relationship between achievement orientation and managerial effectiveness is complex and research findings have been inconsistent which, he argued, possibly arise from the relationship being curvilinear instead of linear. Thus, the most effective managers are those who display a moderately high amount of achievement orientation. Yukl argues how achievement orientation manifests in a manager's behaviour relies on the motive pattern of the manager (p.145). Leadership effectiveness in only enhanced through achievement orientation if it is placed secondary to the need for socialised power as the manager will endeavour to build a successful team. If strong achievement motivation allies with a personalised need for power, then a manager's direction will focus on an advancing career no matter the price. According to Yukl, this type of manager will let task objectives slide as well as the advancement of subordinates in pursuit of establishing his own personal reputation.

The final trait is the need for affiliation which, Yukl suggests, has the capacity to induce a negative relationship with managerial effectiveness. Both an extremely high or low need for

affiliation can produce unwelcome consequences. A high need for affiliation places more importance on interpersonal relationships than accomplishment of tasks (McClelland, 1975). A low need manager does not like socialising, therefore lacks the motivation to engage in developing effective interpersonal relationships with subordinates, peers or superiors in the workplace which would be detrimental to having influence over others. Thus, for management to be effective, Yukl advises the desired affiliation should remain moderately low.

In the leadership literature, Huczynski and Buchanan (2013) define the above as 'trait spotting' in attempting to pinpoint personality traits necessitated by effective leaders. What ultimately can be agreed from much of the literature is that leaders want to lead. In addition to this, commonly related questions in leadership effectiveness centre on the differences between male and female leaders. The trait approach suggests men are better leaders than women while the behavioural approach infers women are generally better than men (Jackson & Parry, 2011). However overall, there appears no general agreement (Alhourani, 2013; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014) and any evidence published remains weak (Jackson & Parry, 2011). Agreed, it is a complex area, but if much related research demonstrates only moderate differences, they have no universal application. However, gender analysis or comparison does not play a part in this research; the leader and teachers involved were female.

The leadership literature reviewed above attempts to source personality traits of effective leaders but all agree leaders wish to lead. As this current research is an evaluation of leadership through the eyes of various stakeholders, evidence demonstrating these traits in operation outside the global north would deepen educational leadership theory within the context of international schools. As this current project explores effective leadership in school improvement, the thesis will now move on to provide insight into what determines effective change management in schools.

Leadership and Effective Change Management in Schools

All leading organisations, to retain or increase efficiency, must be open to change to face the new challenges posed by globalisation (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Kin et al., 2019). Such changes in recent decades, have impacted on rapid technological and socio-economic development to fuel this drive towards a knowledge society and service-based economy (Khair, 2009; Kin et al.,

2019). Consequently, in pursuing change, solutions proposed to organisations can cause organisational conflicts and problems e.g. which change strategies to adopt and the constraints those strategies might bring; the behaviour of the organisational leadership, change management and organisational structure; change execution and its implementation and achievement of particular goals (Burnes, 2004). For successful change management, organisations need effective leadership which encompasses strong, soft skill competencies and schools are no different, they need leaders who have the capacity to motivate teachers who work 'on the front line' in the pursuit of excellence in education (Duyer et al., 2013; Thomas et al., 2020).

In this research, organisational change is characterised as intentionally planned change in an organisation's formal structure, procedures, systems, or its product or service market domain whereby the goal is to enhance one or more of the organisational objectives (Lines, 2005, p.9-10). Employee attitude towards organisational change is characterised by the employee's assessment of the change (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005; Morton et al., 2012), which may be psychologically rooted and manifested in some kind of like or dislike (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005; Ajzen et al., 2005; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). The changes assessed in this research originate in initiatives from the top level of the organisational hierarchy, i.e. the principal. The top-down changes provide data which focus on the reaction of the personnel ranked below the individuals who initiate or oversee the implementation of the change, i.e. the teaching cohort and their principal.

School principals have importance in being able to plan, implement and monitor all aspects of change responsibility (Fullan, 2016). In school management, Romanowski et al., (2020) believe the principal is the most important person to influence the success of a school. The type of changes chosen to improve quality education provision, at all levels and successfully, has close ties with its organisational leadership (Ghitulescu, 2013). As teachers are pivotal to how effective educational institutions are, and for the quality of education delivered, they are the key to the implementation of change initiatives (Harris et al., 2013). As Fullan (2007) affirms, for change to succeed the role of teachers is crucial. As this research centres on educational improvement leadership demonstrating positive outcomes in shared aims and goals of the school vision by principal and staff, consideration must be given to any negative outcomes and their causal connection (Kin & Abdul Kareem, 2018). Factors like attitudes towards change are almost

always disregarded (Day, 2002) and unsuccessful organisational change occurs because attitudes are forgotten (Clegg & Walsh, 2004). However, research exists which demonstrates that teachers' attitudes can influence successful implementation of school change (Thomas, 2003; Sarafidou & Nikolaidis, 2009). As this current study examines the perceptions of staff towards principal effectiveness, staff attitude is a line of research in which the study is situated.

Having outlined what makes leaders effective and what type of leadership is effective in change management in schools, I will now move on to provide a contextualisation of several background considerations of leadership in international education. Given that my research falls into this category, it is pertinent to examine relevant research in leadership and culture in education. Consideration is given to relevant leadership practices found in education, including conceptualisation of 'distributed leadership'. My contribution to the field, in observing and recording, principal and staff perceptions of 'what is going on' in leadership in action, in international school improvement effectiveness moves away from the traditional bias of Western domains and offers a perspective on a non-Western context, which challenges adopted Western frameworks on leadership. We need to unpick previous frames of reference on school leadership in order to construct newer conceptualisations. For this reason, the next section defines and explores culture and leadership, and then examines actual leadership in international schools.

Defining Culture and Leadership

Fisher (2019) emphasises the lack of consensus in academia surrounding conceptualisation of what constitutes 'culture', but argues against avoidance of engagement with it because of its complexity, as it would result in hindering possible research and understanding. For my research, I will adopt Cheong's (2000) conceptualisation of culture as being 'shared assumptions and beliefs, values and behaviours in a given group, community or nation' (p.209) as a hypothesis to work with. Equally, effective leadership practices in this research are those which inspire or influence others to accomplish a specific objective or result desired by a party or organisation and involve leadership practices as well as management activities (Davies, 2005; Gronn, 2000, 2002; Bush, 2008; Fisher, 2019).

As previously addressed in the Introduction, the concept of leadership is a much contested domain and to date no unified definition is accepted. Leadership study as noted has evolved in

practice with examination of leaders while leadership as a discipline or academic field of study has grown in education. Harris (2003a), and James et al., (2020), affirm that, in spite of extensive research, the quest for a robust explanation of leadership is still unsuccessful. James et al., forward an alternative explanation, conceptualised as 'legitimate interaction in an educational institution intended to enhance engagement with the institutional primary task' (2020, p.3), They argue the historical, accepted definition of leadership as influence to achieve organisational goals is open to criticism. Leadership for the purpose of my study, constitutes the actions taken by a leader to effectively engage an individual or group to achieve the agreed desired goals (House et al., 2004).

This research's evaluation of the depth of perception alignment between a female principal and a culturally diverse group of staff in a school's vision and improvement goals resonates well with Cheong's (2000) conceptualisation of culture, just as its analysis of female leadership effectiveness in school improvement between principal and staff, in a context outside the global North, is adequately represented in the conceptualisation of House et al., (2004).

Within the business field, what dictates effective leadership and how culture may affect the type of leadership behaviour/s to model has gathered interest for a considerable time (see Fisher 2019; Meyer 2014; Hofstede, 1980). However, Fisher (2019) argues in education, limited empirical research is available in these areas. What constitutes effective school leadership has been touched upon above; and available are significant publications and research on the topic. There is also growing awareness of the impact of culture on school leadership practices and its importance in the research agenda, historically arising from Hallinger and Leithwood (1996). However, much of the research comes from cross-cultural studies of national schools (Fisher, 2019); and it has served to provide considerable new knowledge to enhance understanding and comparison of leadership in action in other countries and cultures. Studies are available on leadership in international schools, but they are limited; and there seems to be even less empirical research connected to leadership and leadership of culturally diverse staff, even though societal cultures (see Blandford and Shaw, 2001a, 2001b; Keller, 2015; Fisher, 2019) have been cited as a leadership challenge. This therefore leaves leaders to ponder what support is available for leaders with culturally diverse staff teams.

One possible source of support comes from the work of House et al., (2014) whose investigation of societal cultural values, leadership traits and leadership effectiveness clearly demonstrated how they were in fact linked. The work formed part of the GLOBE research (Dorfman et al., 2012) on effective leadership in different cultures. Two particular leadership styles; autonomous and self-protective emerged from the GLOBE findings and formed 'Eastern leadership perspectives' (Dorfman et al., 2012, p.506). These had not previously been listed in Western academic research thus, the GLOBE research enhanced the knowledge field and endeavoured to close some of the gaps in leadership research and publication (House et al., 2014, p.22-23). The GLOBE findings also concurred the most universally considered effective leadership features are: performance-oriented, visionary, integrity and inspirational, therefore successful global leaders need to "develop a vision, inspire others, and create a successful performance-oriented team within their organisations while behaving with honesty and integrity" (House et al., 2014, p.23). Thus international school leaders can find some guidance on what particular leadership behaviours to adopt to succeed in most contexts. These listed behaviours form some of the themes evaluated by staff on principal leadership styles explored in my research. The thesis now examines leadership within the niche of international schools.

'International' Schooling and Leadership

As previously mentioned above, international schools are seen to be a specialty niche which are housed in the larger educational field (Hayden and Thompson, 1995; Keller, 2015). However, how to define the collection of international schools has gathered debate, with referral to them as a sector, network, system, or industry (see Keller, 2015; Hayden and Thompson, 2013; MacDonald, 2006). As already highlighted in the literature review's introduction and in its historical origins of more than a hundred years (Sylvester, 2002), there is still no unified definition to date of what it means to be an 'international' school (Cambridge & Thompson, 2001). It is true that to gain membership, accreditation or authorisation for example to be an International Baccalaureate (IB) school or to be a member of the British Schools of the Middle East (BSME), schools rarely even have to meet any requirements to have the word 'international' in their name (MacDonald, 2006). Indeed, the school in this study was a member of an international school organisation at a regional level (BSME) and did not make use of 'international school' in its title. Educational institutions which consider themselves as

'international', whatever their title, differ in many ways: size, setting, student demographics, curriculum, ownership, admissions criteria, commitment to special educational needs, language of instruction, satisfying a particular body of parents, governmental control and others (Keller, 2015; Hayden and Thompson, 1995; Sylvester, 2003). Even though no consensus has been reached in a unified definition for 'international schools', debate still continues in finding a widely accepted one (Keller, 2015; Dolby, 2012; Cambridge & Thompson, 2001).

It is acknowledged that globalisation has intensified the substantial growth in both the number and diversity of international schools globally (see Spring, 2008, Keller, 2015). However, in light of this, it would be wrong to assume that international schools are primarily made up of expatriate children. Data (including the school in this research) demonstrate that almost 80% of international school students come from wealthy host country families (as in my school's case) who choose international education over state-funded or other tuition-funded alternatives (Brummit, 2011). Other data demonstrate as the annual growth in the number of schools is around 10%, the 'international school industry' is expanding significantly (Bates, 2011). Keller (2015) points to globalisation as fostering a first phase of international schools which were representative of expansion, diversification, decentralisation, independence and exploration. He cites a second phase commencing represented by unparalled restructuring, re-professionalising, re-evaluating, re-focusing, and re-standardising (Bunnell, 2008) which has provoked international schools to critically reflect their relationship to globalisation. Although globalisation has enhanced international trade expansion which in turn has brought economic advantage, its downside has brought disadvantage and concern connected to social justice, cultural imperialism as well as environmental deterioration (Eden and Lenway, 2001). Thus, directing international schools to engage with and confront the aforementioned disadvantages and concerns connected to globalisation requires leaders who are both skilled and ethical.

Leadership Roles Within the Context of International Schools

In the international school arena, the majority of schools tend to employ a single person in an executive leadership position. There is a vast array of titles: Director, Head of School, President, Superintendent, Director of Education, Director General, Principal, Headmaster and many more (Council of International Schools, 2022). While there may have been different titles for the same

job, the position requirements depend on the particular context of a school. In my particular case, I held the title of Principal for my leadership of the single sex school but Director for my leadership of the company schools in the group. Similarly, in the international school context, the formation of school ownership and governance could cover non-profit/cooperatively owned schools with an elected parent board to for-profit/corporate owned school networks with salaried corporate supervisors (Keller, 2015). My particular case was a for-profit owned school within a group of schools which were overseen by a salaried corporate supervisor. In addition to this, Hayden and Thompson (2010) point out other major differences in context which include organisational, local, community and larger cultural-environmental factors which occurred at varying levels. Obviously, this range of variation in context would impact significantly the exact job responsibilities for the individual who held the title of school leader (Keller, 2015). It seems clear from this that international school leaders will face challenging situations as they endeavour to work in this fast-paced but poorly defined place within the education sector (Brummit, 2011).

Leadership in international schools, according to Haywood (2002) may include other aspects which distinguish it from other school leadership roles. Redefining international schools for a globalised world, Haywood looked at the 'pragmatic' and 'idealistic' domains of international school leadership. Lodged within the 'pragmatic' domain of international schooling, Hayward singled out human resource concerns such as retention, motivation, teacher recruitment, effective team creation and community involvement which he identified as being often connected to expatriate concerns which would subsequently be linked to an international context. Leading on from this, he identifies other categories of pragmatic concerns such as materials purchasing, regulatory compliance, student mobility, to name a few, which pertain to international schools. Hayward explains the demands these pragmatic concerns placed on international school leadership mobilised international school leaders to initiate their own regional support organisations. Equally, within the 'idealistic' domain of international school leadership, Hayward highlighted creation of vision and mission documentation, cultural understanding, building consensus, vision continuity to focus on the ideals of internationalism and similar related themes. A wealth of literature exists surrounding distinctive matters relating to the curriculum of international schools and its 'internationalisation' (see Short, 2003; Wylie, 2008). Keller (2015) agrees that international schools have contributed support to this and other matters

in the idealistic domain. Where Hayward's review may be critiqued is in its inability to define the intensity of the internal dynamics or micro-politics existent in international schools. Caffyn (2011), in dealing with these micro-politics, suggests they arise from the fact that international school communities can become detached not only from their immediate locality but also from their homelands. This restriction of social possibilities can lead to psychological and linguistic isolation which can intensify relationships within the school setting. Caffyn warns this can lead to a 'psychic prison' (p.74) which fuels distancing, frustration and build-up of emotional tension. The environment produces varying levels of interaction; diverse, group and subcultures which are either permanent or transient. Caffyn alerts us to the power distance and politics provoked by the emotional exchanges of permanent and transient groups dwelling in a particular expatriate community as 'the boundaries of these groups can isolate then from outside and fragment them from within" (p.74). My research interest was aroused upon arrival in this international school context, discovering I was the ninth principal in eight years and initially, was the only British trained teacher and native English speaker in the whole teaching team. I found myself undertaking the immense challenge of making the school 'better' for all concerned. The school had lost its 'Britishness' in standards: international examinations sat at a 33% pass rate; and constant change in leadership led to nothing having the chance to be embedded, or any real accountability anywhere for the predominantly Arabic speaking staff, whom engagement with, either resulted in rolling of eyes and/or resistance to change. From one side, I felt empathetic towards staff, continuously embarking on a carousel of change with the arrival of each new principal. However, having had prior knowledge and previously being employed in the school, knew how good standards had been. Now evident was division; each school section was working remotely from each other. Many divisive sub-groups existed with personal agendas of keeping the status quo, even though detrimental to students, equally hindered accountability. Ultimately, the school had deteriorated to not only be 'bleeding' students and profit: if situated in the England most certainly would have been closed by Ofsted. All of this, coupled with the great degree of micro-management from the executive 'board' did indeed bring significant challenge to executing leadership. The literature above indicates that international school leaders such as myself face difficulties in confronting these various pressures. Indeed, Benson's (2011) analysis of chief administrative turnovers in international schools reports that that average life span of a school leader is 3.7 years. My administrative tenure in this research study lasted four years and

my reason for departure (which Keller, 2015, cited as a major cause of departure for international school leaders), was difficulty in dealing with the school governance. In my case, I considered there was too much micro-management from the executive management which impinged on how I felt able to undertake change. There does exist a body of literature, specifically from teachers (International Schools' Review, 2013) which intimates that there is a 'dark side' (Burke, 2006) to international schools, and a prevalence of 'destructive' (Einarsen et al., 2007) types of leadership. Caffyn (2010) cites location as a significant factor in international school micro-politics. The leadership challenges unique to international school contexts require more research, especially given its rapid growth as an area of education (MacKenzie et al., 2003). As Hayward (2002) advises, international school leaders need techniques and approaches to tackle the challenges of complexity, ambiguity and change. This research study, in its analysis of effective leadership practices, to secure improvement change in an international context, seen through both the eyes of staff and leader, begins to address this gap. Cambridge and Thompson (2001) explain that, in order to foster the required climate, international schools must find solutions to the innumerable difficulties inherent in their school.

One solution in overcoming these difficulties, according to Keller (2015), is in the application of dualism to help leaders make sense of and lead in their unique context. Keller explored his personal experience of leading a bi-cultural community in Turkey through the use of a research model incorporating Janus, the Roman two-faced god, to help him view two opposing sides of a situation which were both valid. In exploring his experience, Keller made use of frameworks from Simkins (2005) of sense-making in educational leadership and that of Bolman and Deal's (2002) four frames of leadership. Keller concluded that international school leadership required leaders who were adaptable and able to appreciate various perceptions of truth instead of accepting only one as the correct perception. I take this up in my study: incorporating staff perceptions in evaluating change may help to address or assist school leaders' ability to honestly see (different versions of) 'truth' in their own particular contexts.

Having examined the specific niche of international education and how educational leadership may work within it, the thesis now moves on to examine leadership practices.

A Typology of Educational Leadership Practices

Educational leadership has undergone dramatic transformation over the last few decades. Previously, the rhetoric in educational business was controlled by government officials, policymakers and school principals. The impact of technologisation, socio-political structures, arts and sciences, educational globalisation and competitiveness, required school leaders able to envision future education to not only gather public respect but also include national or international perspectives which transcended politics (Mohamed et al., 2017; Kin et al., 2019).

Aligned with this, leadership research also advanced quickly. O'Donoghue & Clarke (2010) discuss the development of leadership traits literature which evolved from research on personality, competencies, intelligences and neuropsychology; the development of a sociological lens of structure and relationship to analyse leadership, in conjunction with the anthropological lens of culture. In addition, belief concerning leadership was often localised, and inspired by ethical, religious and historical agencies, resulting in an array of defined leadership frameworks (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Pashiardis & Johansson, 2020), seven of the broadest themes pertinent to education will be discussed briefly.

Managerial Leadership

Bush and Glover (2003) defined managerial leadership to be the implementation of school policies, as well as the efficient and effective maintenance of the school's current activities (p.10). Cuban (1988) explained it as maintaining efficiently and effectively current organisational arrangements. He argued that managing well often exhibits leadership skills, but the overall function is towards maintenance rather than change. This indicates the narrow perception often adopted towards management. A reviewed explanation by Bush and Glover (2003) explains managerial leadership as focussing "on functions, tasks and behaviours. It also assumes that the behaviour of organisational members is largely rational and that influence is exerted through positional authority within the organisational hierarchy. It is similar to the formal model of management" (p.20).

Leithwood et al., (1999) found similarities between managerial leadership and other leaderships within classical management literature. However, Dressler (2001) rejected this position as

principals' tasks traditionally occupied managerial responsibilities but have now expanded with societal and global impact which, O'Donoghue and Clarke (2010) explained, encompass interpersonal relationships, sensitivity and communication skills, contextuality such as cultural values and political influence. Managerial leadership for teacher retention requires continuous adaptability and flexibility (Semarco & Cho, 2018). Internationally, Goldring's (1992) observation of principals' leadership roles in Israel demonstrated a shift from being routine managers to leader managers which she attributed to systemic changes in requirements imposed on schools and their leaders. Her typology of changes affecting principals could apply to many international school systems whereby, for example, in resource allocation, principals as routine managers would receive resources but as leader managers would be resource mobilisers. Additionally, in the market structure, principals as routine managers would be monopolistic but as a leader manager in international schools, would be competitive as many run for profit (p.53). This conceptualisation although an older claim holds relevance for some of the remit I had to undertake in my international school.

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership was perceived by Bush and Glover (2003) to engage with teaching and learning, and with the behaviour of teachers interacting with students. Rather than the influencing process, importance lay with the direction and effect of the influence. Historically, Hallinger and Murphy, (1985, 1986) suggested that instructional leaders outlined the school's mission, directed the instructional programme and championed the school's climate. Later, Leithwood et al., (1999) and Southworth (2002) recorded instructional leadership as being connected to teaching as well as learning. Present views centre on empowerment, transformation and community building (Pashiardis & Johansson, 2020), In spite of its positivity, Leithwood (1994) advised caution with instructional leadership which over-emphasised classroom activity given it may render itself inadequate to cope with evolving educational threats.

Transactional Leadership

This leadership focuses on exchange relationships between leaders and followers and favours evolutionary change environments (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Foster (1989) argued support for

leaders arose from mediation of several social forces to concede, negotiate and accommodate particular needs.

Transformational Leadership

This focuses on a leader's capability to envision a new future and transmit it to followers. The intention of the leader is to influence followers to understand what is best for the organisation (Yukl, 1994) so they become inspired and transformed from higher levels of morality, thus rewards are unnecessary because the transformational leadership intention is to see values as the glue of the leadership (Pashiardis & Johansson, 2020). Bush and Glover (2003) define transformational leadership through its influence and its inculcation of greater commitment of followers towards organisational goals. Transformational school leaders will offer support to teachers in enacting the school's vision and boost teachers' abilities to achieve goals.

Transformational and transactional leadership types are often compared. Sergiovanni (1991, pp.125-126) described transactional leadership as "leaders and followers exchang[ing] needs and services in order to accomplish independent objectives…. leadership by bartering", whereas transformational leadership he viewed as "pursuit of higher-level goals that are common to both. Both want to become the best; both want to lead the school to a new direction". Sergiovanni believed successful transformational leadership resulted in goal blending rather than individualised goals.

At the end of the 20th century, debate focused on the perceived differences between these two leaderships which controlled both policy and practice world-wide. Generally, transactional leadership functioned better where systems of command and control operated whereas transformational and other democratic forms of leadership suited decentralisation (O'Donoghue & Clarke, 2010).

Moral Leadership

Bush and Glover (2003) stated this leadership existed when leaders focused their values and beliefs to set a clear purpose for schools. It encompassed some transformational leadership but incorporated a stronger value base which, according to Sergiovanni (1991), promoted educational excellence by putting "purposes into structure and embodying those purposes in

everything it does …. transform[ing] school members from neutral participant to committed followers", (pp.322-23). Moral fusion resulted from purpose and follower development. Sergiovanni's educational moral leadership contextualised a principal's challenge as arbitration between two competing demands: the managerial and the moral. Morality in educational change is more than improving student scores for accountability (Fullan, 2002). It engages with a wider perspective of educational purpose to include equity and citizenship (Smyth, 2011; Keddie, 2016).

Invitational Leadership

Bennis and Nanus (1985) conceptualised a more pragmatic, all-inclusive leadership which encouraged followers to emulate leaders and have more fulfilling, professional and personal lives. It was designated as invitational leadership because it tapped into the intrinsic energy within people to enhance their self-belief, resilience and achievement of great things. In education, it recognised the candour, aptitude and interdependence of teachers towards a common good. Egley (2003) believed this turn towards empathy and respect for others would culminate in collaborative, mutually beneficial activities. Burns and Martin's (2010) research has shown statistically significant differences in the use of invitational leadership qualities between effective and non-effective schools. Invitational leadership is movement away from command and control to collaboration and communication, just as manoeuvering is replaced through bidding, discrimination to non-discrimination, and subordinate to associate (O'Donoghue & Clarke, 2010).

Interpersonal Leadership

Historically, Tuohy and Coghlan (1997) declared teachers' professional demands required collaboration and that interpersonal relationships were vital to this. Subsequently, interpersonal school leaders needed to adopt a collaborative approach to leading within a moral framework to then focus on school community relationships. Bush and Glover (2003) affirmed successful leadership would require advanced interpersonal skills, with leaders, adept in connecting with both internal and external stakeholders. Bryk et al., (2010) saw principals as the driving force for educational improvement which operated in an inclusive-facilitative manner to foster individual and collective agency in staff, and develop collective capacity. VanGronigen et al., (2018)

include interpersonal-intrapersonal skills into the inclusive-facilitative umbrella to secure successful organisational performance.

Most of the theories from Bush and Glover's (2003) leadership typologies above were adapted from Leithwood et al.'s (1999) six leadership 'models' which I have used as a starting point for presenting and differentiating models of educational leadership. However, this list is not exhaustive and it needs to be noted that other academics will have chosen to conceptualise leadership in other ways. Even though many more types exist, O'Donoghue and Clarke (2010) suggest further analysis would reiterate the same themes occurring. As new challenges arise in education, then diversification of leadership types will likely continue. Concepts of leadership include those that relate to leadership skills and competencies; and those that emphasise situational factors (Bush & Glover, 2003). My research in an international school setting, evaluates what particular leadership practices were perceived by staff to be effective in school improvement. Thus, the theoretical content here demonstrates how leadership is conceptualised and my empirical study will assess whether and how my research evidence supports these concepts of school leadership to contribute to a global bank of research outside the global North.

The discussion thus far has provided conceptualisations of educational leadership practices. This offers a basis for further exploration of what makes educational leadership effective in international schools, and commences with the impact of culture in school change.

Effective International School Leadership and Cultures of School Change

This section moves on to leadership in culturally diverse schools, and examines relevant research into leadership and culture in education. One large research project to date was undertaken by Day et al., (2010) who augmented Leithwood et al's., (2008) seven strong claims to ten concerning successful school leadership. These claims are:

1. Headteachers are the main source of leadership in their schools

2. There are eight key dimensions of successful leadership

3. Headteachers' values are key components in their success

4. Successful heads use the same basic leadership practices but there is no single model for achieving success

5. Differences in context affect … leadership actions

6. Heads contribute to student learning through …a combination of actions

7. There are three broad phases of leadership success

8. Heads …secure success by layering leadership strategies

9. Successful heads distribute leadership progressively

10. The successful distribution of leadership depends on the establishment of trust

 (Day et al., 2010, p.1)

These 10 claims about school leadership can be compared with perceptions of effective leadership research from the business world, through citations of Hofstede's cultural dimensions or the Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness study (GLOBE) (Dorfman et al., 2012; Fisher, 2019). Unfortunately, one drawback of the majority of such school leadership research is that it is limited to the UK and North America, i.e. the global North which somewhat reduces its relevance to other global contexts (Fisher, 2019).

Heck and Hallinger's (2005) review lamented the degree of confusion between competing conceptual or methodological structures regarding educational leadership which restricted comparisons so much so that practitioners, researchers and policymakers often talked past each other (p.239), and studies lacked empirical rigour. Later, Bush and Crawford's (2012) mapping of educational leadership over a 40-year period from the 1970s to the early 2000s concurred that change had occurred and interest in educational leadership was accruing global interest, evidenced by the growing number of articles published from outside the UK. However, Fisher (2019) argues this research was limited as no analysis was made if a particular article was written locally or from outside researchers. Thus, acknowledged is the importance for more locally-based researchers to undertake examination of school leadership. This current research aims to do that and to add to the growing global bank of leadership knowledge.

Distributed Leadership

One area of interest gaining momentum in leadership studies is the concept of distributed leadership (Bolden, 2011) which Crawford (2012) saw as part of a wider discussion on shared leadership to include democratic leadership, collegiality and participative leadership. The concept originated from activity theory and theories of distributed cognition whereby a system was arguably created to analyse leadership in practice, through the contextualised interaction of school leaders and followers. The academic literature concerned with 'distributive leadership' is flooded with varying interpretations (see Gronn, 2000; Crawford, 2012). Two influential models on the conceptualisation of distributed leadership came firstly from Spillane (2006) who explained it as:

> A distributed practice is first and foremost about leadership practice. This practice is framed in a very particular way, as a product of the joint interactions of school *leaders*, *followers*, and aspects of their *situation* such as tools and routines. (2006, p.3; italics original).

This model of 'leaders', 'followers' and 'situation' being developed as key elements moved leadership practice away from a leader's knowledge and skill to being distributed practice defined as the "collective interactions among leaders, followers and their situation" as now paramount (2006, p.4). This model moved beyond shared leadership as it integrated a leader-plus aspect where multiple individuals function as leaders and a practice aspect where leadership is generated from interactions. Spillane tested the model empirically and categorised four distributive leadership positions of: collaborative, collective, coordinated and parallel. Spillane's conceptualisation from an analytical-descriptive position provides a logical classification of how leadership was distributed in practice (Tian et al., 2016).

The second influential model came from Gronn (2002, 2003) who commenced the new millennium with conceptualisation of distributed leadership in a 'numerical-concertive' model which was similar to Spillane's leader-plus and practice-centred components. Gronn (2000) viewed leadership to be 'more appropriately understood as a fluid and emergent, rather than as a fixed phenomenon' (p.324). He argued that a distributive form of leadership required:

a new conception of the unit of analysis ……. because account has to be taken of various forms of conjoint agency. That is, conjoint agency presages a new division of labour in which the authorship and the scope of the activities to be performed have to be redefined to encompass pluralities of agents whose actions dovetail or mesh to express new patterns of interdependent relations. Second, the abandonment of fixed leader–follower dualisms in favour of the possibility of multiple, emergent, task-focused roles necessitates a reconceptualisation of the nature of influence and its relation to activity (2000, p.325).

Review of other empirical studies, led Gronn (2008b) to suggest a 'hybrid' model as a more meaningful descriptor for distributed leadership as it integrated 'hierarchical and heterarchical elements' (p.155). One important contribution of Gronn's hybrid model was the removal of distributed leadership from the individual-collective and formal-informal leadership continuums (Tian et al., 2016). The hybridity understood individual leaders were proportionately important and co-existed in unison with collective forms of leadership. Distributed leadership had no defined pattern as it evolved over time and was unique to its context.

While Spillane (2006) examined distributed leadership as the conjoint agency of multiple actors, Gronn (2008, 2009b), to some degree, also recognised leadership as individual agency in his hybrid model but noted, Gronn's research focus was to outline how different sources of agency constituted leadership holistically. What both models omitted to consider, is a line of research in this current study, of how individuals would feel, participate or even develop in the leadership process.

My case study as a practitioner is situated in relation to theories of distributed leadership connecting to Spillane as it seeks to frame practice from the outcome of interactions between myself, my followers and aspects of our situation; and contributes to understandings of how and when leadership may be shared, and the hybrid forms to use to make this possible (Crawford, 2012, p.618). Both Spillane and Gronn agree that an organisation's sustainable development requires multiple sources of leadership but observe the role of formal leaders to coordinate the expertise of others rather than being absolute authority (Gronn, 2008, Spillane, 2006). As Tian et al., (2016) conclude distributed leadership's scope has evolved from task sharing to collective

interactions; then to hybridity of individual and collective, hierarchical and heterarchical leadership forms which may be used as frameworks for empirical studies such as mine.

Empirical school leadership investigations involving a distributed perspective conclude that multiple individuals typically perform leadership work, either as a formally designated leader or individuals without formal designations. Camburn et al's., (2003) examination of 120 geographically dispersed US elementary schools found responsibility for school leadership functions were divided between three to seven formally designated leaders. Other empirical study concerning the school principal's working day accentuate the role played by other formally designated leaders or those with no leadership designation in the leading and management of the school (Spillane et al., 2007).

One consistent outcome from these studies has been the pivotal role of the school principal (Spillane and Diamond, 2007). Spillane et al., (2015) argue school principals are regularly focused, however this focus is not uniform which infers between-school variation even within smaller local school systems. The distribution of leadership they also found varies within schools depending on the organisational function and the school subject. Between-school and within-school variation in the distribution of leadership prompts consideration of how the principal's position and work might enable and constrain distributed leadership; and where this current study may shed some light.

Unfortunately, distributed leadership is not always viewed as effective, for example, in the GLOBE project, participative leadership practices ranked fourth in priority in order of preferred leadership practices (House et al., 2014). Earlier, Spillane's (2006) insightful research into how leadership responsibilities are distributed in schools demonstrated much scope existed to develop leadership capacity in teachers, even if they had no official, administrative responsibility in schools. Even if leaders pursued opposing goals, Spillane argued it may not be detrimental for a school. These leaders could still operate collectively while moderating each individual's perspective. Leaders cannot operate in a vacuum; they need followers who impact significantly in defining the leadership practice; a focus of the current research. Leader efficacy is reliant on the volition of followers to concur, comply or disapprove with the leadership in practice. Distributed leadership has been affirmed to have acquired significant importance (see Pashiardis

& Johansson, 2020). However, it is not without its critics. Conceptualisation of distributed leadership has been further developed, refined and empirically investigated, resulting in issues surfacing regarding its utility (Lumby, 2013; Torrance, 2013; Spillane et al., 2015). 'Hybrid leadership' has been forwarded as a better way to explain informal and formal leadership practices (Gronn, 2009c). In spite of these, an expanding empirical knowledge base from distributive leadership research has continued to expand and offer newer perspectives of leadership in action, including reciprocal responsibility and collective sources of leadership (Hulpia et al., 2011).

Contingent Leadership

Relating to leadership typologies, academics such as Fullan (2005) and MacBeath (2005) argue in spite of their connection with some of the earlier discussed leadership frameworks, no solitary leadership style exists to best fit all educational institutions. Even Spillane, as a principal advocate of distributed leadership, did not regard this as a panacea for all that afflicted schools. Rather, it was viewed 'as a conceptual or diagnostic tool for thinking about school leadership' and 'not a blueprint for effective leadership' or 'a prescription for how school leadership should be practised' (2005, p.149). Therefore, what was advocated was the concept of contingent leadership (Bush, 2007). This alternative necessitates leaders capable of adapting their leadership style to a best fit approach which, Bush and Glover (2003) argue, responds to the diversity of school contexts, their exceptional organisational circumstances and the challenges they confronted.

Effective school leadership Bush defined as:

> Conceptual pluralism … similar to the notion of contingent leadership. Both recognise the diverse nature of educational contexts and the advantages of adapting leadership styles to the particular situation rather than adopting a 'one size fits all' stance (2011, p.211).

Acknowledgement of the above, Bush argued would permit 'a conceptual tool-kit' for the manager to deploy as appropriate in addressing problems and developing strategy, (p.211). This above rationale in analysis of educational leadership research is perhaps more useful in offering

support to demystifying what is educational leadership as the field seems to be replete with theories and less universally accepted conclusions (Fisher, 2019, p.23-24). Bush's analysis demonstrates consensus with the GLOBE findings that effective leadership has to be appropriate to its context (Dorfman et al., 2012; House et al., 2014).

Various other examples of multiple styles of leadership exist in research such as Davies' (2005) requirements of educational leadership in which he cited ten different practical styles of leadership. However, again caution must be aired that his list of styles may add to a school leader's confusion if the leader does not possess the skill, time or experience to evaluate his/her personal context as there is limited reference to when or in which context, any of these styles might be of more use.

What can be acknowledged from all of this is growing consensus that context can have an effect but precisely what effect depends on the context which although has an awkwardness in syntax provides some rationality. Various research studies have heralded the importance of understanding context as well as compounding there not being one generic set of appropriate behaviours for effective leadership. One analysis by Saros and Saros (2007) on the first hundred days of a new Principal and CEO concluded that the roles were more concerned with getting to grips with understanding each of their contexts, than about perfection or theoretical understanding of what was leadership.

Hallinger's (2011) examination of educational leadership and management in East Asia, highlighted an extremely important matter concerning educational leadership, which historically had relied solely on Western based research but recently was undergoing a transformation which Hallinger urged should be 'regionally valid' (p.305). Hallinger believed that insufficient research was conducted in the East Asian region which might have arisen, not from disinterest, but contrast in the type of research and the epistemological basis in which Western and Eastern research situated themselves. Earlier, Nisbett's (2004) analysis of Asian and Western thought remarked Eastern research looks for knowledge to increase personal wisdom while Western research wants knowledge that informs and can be acted upon. Eastern epistemologies relate more to the relationship between people and objects whilst allowing for fuzzy black and white scenarios which Liu (2011) within qualitative research, explains truth as a transferable concept

reliant on context. In the Middle East (where this current research is conducted by someone from the West with multi-cultural participants), this concept of knowledge holds importance as Bajunid (1996) asserts that 'received knowledge' from the study of religious texts is considered bona fide knowledge. This understanding is contentious to academic research from the West which believes 'knowledge' to be the product of rigorous scientific testing. Also, in the Middle East, the Arabic understanding of the word leader is associated with powerful military leadership and following on from this, leadership perceived as effective would be tied to this (Fisher, 2019). Effective leadership is also tied to 'faithfulness' linked to religion (Scandura & Dorfman 2004, p.288) which again highlights requirement of a different epistemological base to conceptualising leadership (Fisher, 2019).

From the above, it becomes clear that what particular leadership applications are relevant may be dependent on an individual's epistemological grounding be it from the West, the East or the Middle East. What may also affect leadership applications is access to and availability of research as well as the depth taken by an individual holding a leadership position to reflect (Fisher, 2019). Mittal and Elias' (2016) examination of social power and leadership in a cross-cultural context affirm findings from GLOBE concerning leaders, they should follow the expectations of their followers as avoidance can result in problematic challenges and misunderstanding. What is clear and emphasised throughout this thesis is that production of research into school leadership is over-abundant in Western contexts. However, evident is a surge of leadership literature from other cultures and what is clear is there is no universal consensus of what is effective leadership. Clearly what does impact leadership is its context, the dominant epistemological grounding of a specific community as well as social culture and context (Fisher, 2019). This therefore, points to a need to conduct further research into school leadership and culture to make further assessment of how leadership manifests itself in different cultures and equally to understand what engagement of leadership attributes might be most effective for leaders employed in non-native cultures or even working in communities with diversity of staff such as mine.

Contingent Leadership Efficacy in International Schools

Research into culture and the implications for school leadership has taken time to gather interest in the academic world. Although, to date nothing has been produced to the scale of the GLOBE study on business leadership, but where understanding has evolved is on the differences and similarities between differing leadership styles; and the effect of culture on what is successful, where and why (Fisher, 2019). Emerging is the importance this practice in leading has in education.

Early work on the influence of culture on leadership, specifically educational administration, by Hallinger and Leithwood (1996) argued that little had been done to expand exactly how the 'cultural foundations of leadership' could be conceptualised, (p.106). At the start of this new century Ribbins and Gronn's (2000) examination of principals expanded this concept of culture suggesting that in order to understand leadership practice better, research questions in ethnography should centre on context rather than taking for granted that the researcher would be able to decontextualise the work. Simply put, they believed research should be observed and reported in context. For those of us who practise leadership then, rather than blindly apply a 'copy and paste model' care needs to be taken importing assumptions concerning leadership into other cultures.

Research in the literature is available examining leadership in various cultural contexts but not all have addressed culture affecting leadership practices (see Hallinger & Kantamara, 2000, 2001; Bush & Oduro, 2006; Walker et al., 2008; Wang, 2008). What is evident from the body of research is while both culture and context can affect how leaders lead, the studies are limited in failing to provide an overview or differentiate the how, why and where a culture may in fact impact leadership (Fisher, 2019).

Law's (2012) research on the contrasts between Chinese and Anglo-American educational leadership traditions in China concluded that Chinese leaders did in fact like both but how they were implemented was significantly different (p.277). Participants in the study cautioned against adopting Western ideas too deeply or automatically (p.278) which supports earlier warnings from example, Walker and Dimmock (2002) in not merely replicating Western practices without due consideration to their context of application. It also supports my previously stated experience

and reservations in the Middle East of the frequency of Western trained educational leaders who arrive and simply apply their Western understandings of leadership or training without consideration of context. However, instead of placing too much emphasis on the problems between cultures and styles of leadership, Law suggests adoption of a more multi-levelled approach to culture which takes consideration of local, regional, national and international impact. Thus, according to Fisher (2019) what is demonstrated from the above are the difficulties and adaptability required for undertaking leadership in different cultures which in turn, points to a rethinking of what is needed in global leadership or management in being culturally aware.

Summary

Initially in the literature review, focus was given to the leader's role in creating leadership but the perspective will now be counterbalanced with efforts in literature to understand and explain the role of followers. What is threading through the chapter so far is a notion of leadership being co-produced by leaders and followers but not forgetting that an asymmetrical power relationship exists between them (Jackson & Parry, 2011). Also outlined, leadership is something that is co-produced in a specific context. Leadership does not occur in a vacuum: where and when leadership happens influence how leaders and followers will set about its co-production. Osborn et al. (2002) explain 'leadership and its effectiveness, in large part, are dependent upon the context. Change the context and leadership changes' (p.798). Bringing together the where and when of leadership suggests more focus should be given to these in the study of leadership. Leadership, Jackson and Parry (2011) defined as a cultural activity composed of values, beliefs, language, rituals and artefacts (p.71). However, much leadership research ignores or belittles the significance of culture in preference for psychological or sociological perspectives.

Consideration was also given to the impact of much leadership research emanating from Western contexts and the subsequent problems to validate and apply it to cultural contexts elsewhere in the world. As the bulk of research has also been empirically tested there, then the range of potential leadership contexts have been constrained. Another problem is researchers themselves are the product of a specific cultural context thus what they ask and how they answer those questions are influenced by their immediate cultural milieu (Jackson & Parry, 2011, p.77).

Hence, a contribution of this research is to narrow this geographical limitation and lessen skewing of the West to the understanding of leadership processes.

Joseph Rost (1993, p.102) defined leadership as a relationship between leaders and followers to influence, through mutual purposes, the affecting of authentic change, this first half of the literature review has concentrated on the leader's role in leadership. As this current research topic wishes to address beliefs about school effectiveness; the dependency on the beliefs that followers, namely teachers, hold of their leader, the next section will focus on the role of the follower.

Position of Follower-centred Leadership

In the Romance of Leadership, Meindl et al., (2004, p.1347) stated 'New insights into the processes of leadership can be gained by focusing attention squarely on processes connected to followers and their contexts, independently of what leaders are actually doing'.

According to Jackson and Parry (2011), hesitant followership is representational of Western societies identified as individualistically orientated and/or having low power distance values. They also suggested leadership could be observed as co-produced by leaders and followers but that co-production would entail an asymmetrical power relationship and occur in a specific context. Part of the issue lies with the interpretation of the word 'follower' which demeans following by implying either second best or not fit to lead. This demeaning argument is further enhanced by connecting following to religious or spiritual values with the implication of devotion that is blind, (see Jackson & Parry, 2011; Reave, 2005). Fry and Kriger's (2009) development of 'being-centred' leadership, analysed the ontological (nature of being) paradigms of six world religious traditions and concluded each had essentially somehow the same five levels. The ontological and epistemological attributes for each level connected to a corresponding type of leadership. Level 4, holding most relevance to the aspect of following, related to 'images and imagination' and connected to charismatic leadership. A positive attribute of a charismatic leader is the use of vision to motivate followers but it adversely had the ability to manipulate them. Reave (2005) exemplified how this type of leadership absorbed the minds and emotions of followers; leading followers to focus on the identity and extraordinary qualities of a leader to the detriment of their own individual development to result in passivity and

dependency. In the spiritual domain, Reave (2005) highlighted the association between charismatic leadership and cults while research by Tourish & Pinnington (2002) ushered concern in its association with corporate cultism.

Relating to context, Collard's (2009) analysis of leadership and intercultural education argued historically, Western leadership assumptions and beliefs have failed to offer a normative discourse suitable for other cultures. An impact of the current research is a conceptualisation of Western leadership alignment through the voices of its non-Western followers. Presently, (Walker & Qian, 2018) have argued for awareness of distinctive beliefs regarding authority, collectivism and patriarchy in China. Hallinger (2003, 2005), provided an examination of distributed leadership in Chinese work contexts and noted, the tradition of equality and Western associated relationships were unfamiliar to Hong Kong therefore followers would be reluctant to dissent or criticise. However, criticism of Hallinger's research comes from its attachment to Hofstedian principles and replicates the errors of this 1980 work whereby differences are compared then diagnosed as obstructions to intercultural understanding. Collard (2009) argues if cultural stereotypes are accepted, this creates a division between Western and East Asian societies. As all cultures are continuously in flux and evolving, universalities created disregarding this makes no contribution to the practices of leadership (Collard, 2009).

Hallinger et al's., (2015) review of educational leadership in Hong Kong between 1995 and 2014 concluded the 'density' of leadership beyond principal had expanded, but socio-cultural forces acted upon this in the execution of leadership by principals, middle managers and teachers. Their review also indicated a 'values mismatch' between 'borrowed' Western reforms and local socio-cultural values (Dimmock, 1998; Dimmock & Walker, 1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2000b; Hallinger, 2010). The underpinning values of Western led improvements, emphasising individualism and underrating the role of hierarchical relationships conflicted with the predominant values of the school personnel charged with implementing reforms (Hallinger, 2010). Relationship focus between Hong Kong schools and administrative practice continues to be researched (see Ho, 2010; Ho & Tickly, 2012) which have highlighted the knock-on effects of local socio-cultural influences framed to capture the reform objectives of empowerment, professionalism and instructional leadership through the lens of Chinese Confucian values on principal leadership

practice and followership (see Dimmock & Walker, 1998a, 1998b; Walker and Dimmock 2000a, 2000b; Hallinger, 2010; Hallinger et al., 2014).

Nonetheless, the notion of followership, Michelle Bligh (2011) suggests is in 'the second stage of conceptual development, one of evaluation and conceptual development' (p.431) and continues gaining momentum (Wang & Cameron, 2012; Wolff et al., 2019). Edwin Hollander's work on ethical challenges in the leader-follower relationship indicated followership in spite of its long heritage of usage 'is periodically rediscovered as important to leadership' (1995, p.56). According to Carsten et al., (2010) the followership approach in the leadership equation contradicts the 'follower-centric' approaches to leadership by Meindl (1995) and the additions of Howell and Shamir (2005); and Shamir et al., (2007) in their foci. In followership, interest is not with followers' perspectives of 'leadership', rather followers' perspectives of 'followership'. Followership does not review leaders and their subsequent behaviours, instead followers review their 'own' behaviours and roles when interacting with leaders. A focus on followership, Shamir (2007) believed would redirect leadership research as it attended to the function of followers in developing and sustaining followership with leadership outcomes which were effective Collinson (2006). Lord and Brown (2004) argued it addressed the omission of a more thorough understanding of follower identities and the intricate manner these identities influenced leaders and their subsequent performance. Despite alternatives to the use of 'follower' in leadership discourse, it remains short shrifted (Uhl-bien et al., 2014). Following is pivotal for leadership but similar to leading, there are more or less effective ways of following (Bloome et al., 2015).

Meindl spearheaded 'follower-centric' approaches to leadership. Meindl (1995) and Collinson et al., (2018) agree leadership research should be based on the relationship between leaders and followers; however, in its analysis, the follower plays a part even if minor. Shamir (2007) worked to further develop follower-centric approaches and identified five positions followers formerly undertook in leadership thinking; 'followers being recipients of leader influence', followers being moderators of leader impact', 'followers being substitutes for leadership', 'followers being constructors of leadership' and 'followers being leaders'. A sixth position pro-offered by Shamir and colleagues, whereby, followers were 'co-producers of leadership' was a critical alternative to the five former conceptualisations. These conceptualisations are now examined more thoroughly.

Followers in Action Being Recipients of Leader Influence

The prevalent established view of following in leadership was passive, therefore little was done to counteract follower or followership stereotypes. According to Jackson and Parry (2011) within the leadership equation leader traits and/or behaviour were argued as independent variables and dependent variables were responsible for followers' understanding, point of view and behaviour.

Newer conceptualisations of leadership types like transformational, transactional or charismatic, responsibility remained with leaders to develop the appropriate style or styles of leadership for followers to react to. If a leader pursued the appropriate processes, then transformational, transactional or charismatic leadership would occur regardless who followed. How these theories conceptualised leadership, who was being led had no consequence as followers were inactive in the process: the association between leader and follower was one-sided (Bass, 2008).

Followers in Action Being Moderators of Leader Impact

As previously acknowledged, contingent conceptualisations of leadership agree in what way a leader will influence his followers' disposition and output relies heavily on the individual follower's personal attributes. Followers are perceived to be passively influenced, but the influence of the leader may need mitigation by the characteristics of the follower. Other aspects of followers which contingency theorists believe merit caution, include what Fiedler (1967) termed as the follower's first impression towards a leader and therefore subsequent acceptance. Vroom and Yetton's (1973) work on leadership and decision-making found leaders more participative when followers held more expertise or exhibited similar value systems. These conceptualisations may attempt to highlight aspects of followers a leader needs awareness of in deciding how to lead, however, leaders essentially remain the active participants in the process (Bass, 2008).

Followers in Action Being 'Substitutes' for Leadership

One reason why many people leave employment is having to work with a bad employer (see Ongori, 2007; Jackson & Parry, 2011). Through resignation or avoidance, harm is reduced. Kerr and Jermier (1978) formulated the 'substitutes for leadership' theory, what they meant, and then measured their impact. The theory argued within given contexts, how much influence leaders

had over followers could be neutralised or substituted. If neutralised, the task-oriented or relationship-oriented activities of leaders to change follower's attitudes or behaviour would have no impact. If the leadership was substituted, leaders' activities were not only unattainable, but essentially redundant.

Thus, employees who are independent, experienced, have a strong 'professional' orientation and tend to be self-aware, or self-efficient, do not really need leadership in organisational processes (Jackson & Parry, 2011). This contradicts theories of leadership scholars who argue the central importance of leadership lies in organisational success or failure (see Avolio et al., 1991; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Avolio & Yammarino, 2013). The theory itself has not led or sustained much research interest thus its value lies solely to demonstrate objection.

Shamir (2007) identified how this theory was an extreme model of perceiving followers as moderators of leadership. Again, the precise activities of followers in substituting for leadership are not specifically conceptualised. The development of the theory may have decentralised leaders' importance but it provides little explanation to what part followers play in the creation of leadership.

Followers in Action Being Constructors of Leadership

How followers precisely conceptualise leadership has focused research on their thought processes. Uhl-Bien & Pillai (2007) argue leadership lies in the eyes of followers and if the applied leadership in action is not recognised by them, then it is not leadership. This construction process will be developed further through analysis of three theories; the 'romance of leadership' theory, the psychoanalytic theory of leadership and finally the social identity theory of leadership (see Jackson & Parry, 2011).

As previously discussed, the follower-centric approach arose as another perspective of leadership, as prior research centred mainly on the role of the leader in creating leadership, whilst omitting the importance of the role of following. Meindl and Ehrlich (1988) using a survey instrument, the Romance of Leadership Scale, conducted empirical studies in laboratories with analysis of media reports, and found repetition in follower behaviour. As the research was not based on any concrete organisation, those participating tended to attribute control and

responsibility to leaders with procedures and results they were likely to be associated with, (Meindl, Ehrlich & Dukerich, 1985). Simplistically, leadership served as a single, appealing, one-sided approach to comprehend organisational performance and this romantic notion dominated polar ends of the spectrum whereby success or failure, glory or blame was a leader's responsibility.

Meindl did not forward the follower-centric approach in competition or replacement of the leader-centric approach. He viewed the romance of leadership as a social construction whereby followers formed their perception of a leader from interactions with other followers in which the process of social contagion existed which was defined as 'the spontaneous spread of affective and/or behavioural reactions among the members of a group or social collective' (1993, p.101). Thus, the positive or negative reputation of a leader is passed on from follower to follower impacting the whole community without confirmation of source: its arrival or departure may be just as unexpected. Social contagion centres on the group dynamics and interpersonal processes which support the diffusion of charismatic influences among followers.

RoL theory inflated follower perceptions of the importance and ability of a leader to determine organisational performance. Good or bad, the performance of a company was perceived to be controlled by its leader. Research by Schyns et al., (2007), found a primary concern of the RoL was the depth follower characteristics affected leadership perception. Bligh et al., (2011) moving from leader characteristics or behaviours, suggested one means which might affect leadership evaluations, namely individual differences between followers. Felfe (2005) examined RoL and personality on the basis that leadership may be anchored in constructions of self. Results from the research evidenced occupational self-efficacy, extraversion, self-esteem, conscientiousness and dominance as positively connected to RoL. The need for leadership and structure; and tolerance for uncertainty was not. According to Bligh et al., (2011), this study initiated the first step to gauge particular kinds of followers who would be receptive to RoL.

RoL has received limited attention (Avolio et al., 2009) but what contribution the theory does bring is providing insight into why all this happens via social construction and contagion processes. The theory has limitations in its inability to explain why this happens. The next two

theories; psychoanalytic and social identity provide reasons why followers possibly construct leadership in the way they do.

Leadership Being Psychoanalytic

This stems from Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis and Carl Jung's psychopathology. The psychodynamic approach in either, following or leading, is believed to come from our family of origin (Stech, 2004). The style adopted by a leader is deeply affected by historical individuals, modelling leadership roles like parents or teachers during the developmental stages from childhood to adulthood.

Jackson and Parry (2011) suggest how we are raised may influence leadership as well as followership. In adulthood, if a person has contact with an authoritarian leader or a participative leader, their response to either may depend on how historically, their parents or authority figures reacted to and dealt with their own authoritarian figures. Stech (2004) believes psycho-dynamically our response to a leader can manifest itself in a dependent, counter-dependent or completely independent way. Total dependence can arise from a need to be employed or for emotional support. Demonstration of counter-dependence, is one of rebellion to reject the mandate of a leader. Within independent followership (a behaviour most responsible leaders seek), an assessment objectively is made of a leader's mandate on its ethical or reasonable validity before deciding to act. Although, extreme dependency or counter-dependency followership produce completely different challenges: they are distressful for leaders and followers to resolve.

Shamir's (2007) explanation of why followers construct leaders in a dependent way refers to two psychodynamic processes; projection and transference. Projection is how we credit to another individual our desires, ideals, fantasies, such as someone having a pop idol. Transference is acknowledging another individual as a mother or father figure or significant other from their infanthood. These processes appear during times of crisis or threat. In times of confusion, helplessness or danger, followers may return to childhood behaviours. They formalise an attachment to leaders, idealise them and respond to their bidding not from any leadership quality but simply followers see the leaders symbolic of a parent or some supreme other (Jackson & Parry, 2011).

Leaders have the resourcefulness to diminish followers' anxiety and support some net of psychological safety. In coping with these psychological needs, using transference and projection processes, followers may accept, favour or even create 'toxic leaders' (Jackson & Parry, 2011). The other side of the spectrum, Lynn Offerman (2004) examined followers becoming toxic, warning us of its danger and ability to influence leaders awry.

The psychodynamic approach in leadership study holds the same caution for leadership scholars as psychologists in working with the unconscious mind. Criticism of psychodynamics (see Deal, 2007) find using research from clinical observation and/or treatment of people with mental health issues as a foundation for drawing conclusions contentious, as they are atypical subjects and not from mainstream workplaces. Secondly, the theory did not originate scientifically, only through subjective, singular case studies from clinical psychologists.

In summation, the psychodynamic paradigm originated from Freud (1921) and his psychoanalytic theories of human behaviour, and focused on those dynamics to decipher the motives why people behave as they do. Fundamentally, human behaviour consists of humans who are heterogeneous, unique and contradictory beings with abundant, multitudinous motivational drivers, operating decision-making and interactional systems. Its application judges the inner worlds of individuals; the 'within', and the 'reality' arising from the dynamics of the group (Neumann & Hirschhorn, 1999). Leadership essentially centres on human behaviour and effective leadership stems from underlying motives which control such behaviour; where much management theory contributes leadership effectiveness to environmental constraints, this approach believes the psychodynamic processes of leaders and followers to be influential and therefore need consideration.

Leadership Being Social Identity

Social identity theory does not adopt the premise of a leader being attracted to followers from similar backgrounds and beliefs who are then drawn into the group. The opposite occurs whereby followers select the leader, or choose to support because the leader is representational of the group's; attributes, desires, values and norms (Herman & Chiu, 2014). Thus, it is a leadership construction whereby follower and leader identity are given and taken by both iteratively (Jackson & Parry, 2011).

Other leadership constructs relied upon stereotypical leadership behaviours labelled by Lord et al., (1984) as 'leadership categories' such as; verbally skilled, determined, aggressive, decisive, dedicated, educated, and well-dressed. However, as a group gains importance from its prototypicality, this decreases the importance given to 'leadership categories' whether appropriate or inappropriate behaviours. Membership of the group evolves to be what Jackson and Parry (2011) term psychologically salient. A psychologically salient group is one where membership defines a person's being, their beliefs and how they operate as an individual. A group member may generalise on what comprises good or bad leadership but will tolerate leadership behaviours opposing their ideals to maintain membership of the group.

Within this theory, leadership study commences not with the leader, but with the group. It suggests a group selects or supports a leader through three phases (Hogg, 2005). The first phase secures a member most representational of the group who commences exerting influence over its members. The second phase sees the prototypical member, being socially attractive to others, becoming empowered to influence thus, acquiring status and prestige. The last phase sees group members ascribing the leader's success to their unique characteristics and not their prototypicality. This Shamir (2007) suggests results from the creation of a charismatic personality for that leader. Similarly, when a leader commences not fully representing the group, labelled by Krantz (2006) as 'virtuous betrayal' which the leader's followers may believe due to personality defects, might result in retraction of support.

According to Jackson & Parry (2011) the benefit of social identity theory is its contribution to the sense-making of several contemporary leadership concerns. One example lies in Western societies, where women and ethic minorities' women experience difficulty obtaining top leadership roles due to the 'glass ceiling' (Stafsudd, 2006). If an organisational prototype, for example, dress is designed by a society to mismatch minorities, then the endorsement of such minorities as leaders would be unlikely if organisational prototypicality is most salient i.e. when organisational identification and cohesion are taking the lead.

Pathway to a Universal Prototype

The follower-centric theories of the romance of leadership, psychoanalytic and social identity discussed provide a means to observe how followers construct leadership. Shamir (2007)

proposed the integration of these could be used to create a universal prototype by followers of that construct. Analysis of selected motivational theories, focusing on individual following, recognises any conceivable leader may not be able to address all needs of all followers. Thus, leaders are created in response to fulfilling unmet individual needs through processes of attribution, projection, transference and idealisation; and collectively at a societal level from social information processing and contagion (Jackson & Parry, 2011).

These constructions form foundations for leader election, endorsement, and influence approval. The task of construction is always a work in progress given leaders are continuously evaluated against other leaders: real or otherwise. Similarly, with the RoL and the social construction of followership, Uhl-Bien and Pillai (2007) claim leaders and followers create ideas about followership. From direct or indirect contact with other followers or persuasive others, new evidence is gathered to clarify or strengthen original constructions. If a leader catastrophically fails, followers might be so disillusioned or incensed, they dismantle their constructions and pursue another leader. Many of these theories focus on reasoning why leaders develop and miss opportunities to examine the processes how leaders become 'deconstructed'.

Follower-centric theories have redirected conventional leader-centric research to demonstrate value in studying leadership not through leaders but followers, which to date is under-researched. Hence, justification why this current study will give an analytical balance to the perspectives of followers in gaining a much-needed adjustment but also counterbalance to the previous dominant foci of leadership academics (see Tourish, 2014). In exploration of the 'bigger picture', the next section questions the notion of followers being leaders given the power that theory may possess to influence those leaders.

Followers in Action Being Leaders: The Idea of Shared Leadership

This approach refutes differences in leading or following because it views leadership as an activity shared amongst organisational members. Its core assumes followers have the ability to lead, so morally should be given that opportunity. Within the context of this modern, swift changing world economy (including education) and its competitiveness, these flat, laterally interconnected organisations are preferable to the more traditional, autocratically based organisational structures (see Jackson & Parry, 2011; Diefenbach & Sillince, 2011). Rost's

(2008) work on followership and not being outmoded, remarks individuals leading or following are responsible for flattening an organisation.

Figure 1: Follower-Leadership Continuum

CO-LEADERSHIP	SHARED LEADERSHIP	DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP
• Leadership being shared by a pair of individuals or a top management team.	• Leadership being delegated around a team dependent on situation, skill and resource requirements.	• Leadership being a collective team effort through the development of norms of behaviour, contribution and performance.
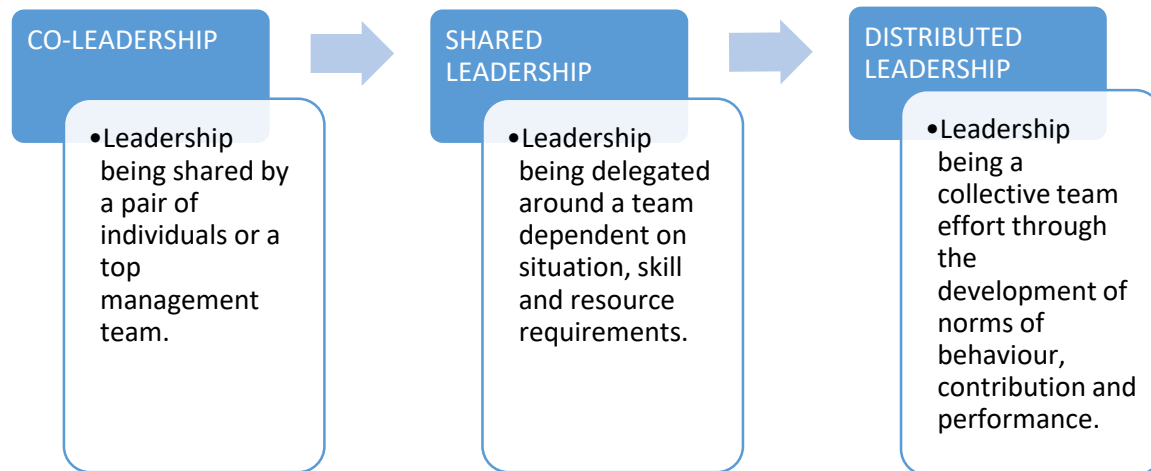
Social theories have espoused their support of followers being leaders along a continuum (see Figure 1). The lower end of the continuum verges on the notion of conservatism by employing the idea of 'co-leadership'. Here, absolute power is not handed to a single leader instead the executive powers are performed by a pair like a CEO and CFO, or a team of top management (Alvarez & Svejenova, 2005).

Next is 'shared leadership' (see Raelin, 2003; Bolden et al., 2015) whereby the concept assumes a group of individuals, interchange responsibility for leadership. The dictates of a particular situation; the required skill set or resources needed are performed by the most appropriate member of the group until completion, then leadership passes to another group member. Within this kind of organisational structure, the principal duty of senior management is to produce a culture and climate which enables followers to undertake leadership roles within and beyond the organisation.

The continuum climaxes at 'distributed leadership' which stems from collaborative teams working in supportive networks which bolster morale, and establish norms of behaviour, contribution and performance (Harris & Spillane, 2008; Day et al., 2004)). However, Jackson and Parry (2011) caution this may contribute, but is no substitute for the importance of

leadership as an input to team processes and performance. This leadership perspective teeters on being peer-based, as viewed by Nielsen's (2004), 'The Myth of Leadership', which argues rank-based management should be replaced by a community of peers. These theories allude to how things should be rather than actual reality. However, case studies of organisational success in executing these theories exist but they are not the norm (see Vine et al., 2008; Printy & Marks, 2006; Harris, 2004).

Distributed leadership at its most extreme prompts removal of the use of 'leadership' in explanation of organisational behaviour. Empirical research work of Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) found managers used the 'leadership' title to explain all kinds of activities occurring within their organisation. However, when the same personnel were asked to detail how the leadership actually functioned, they found it difficult to do. This outcome, their personal concerns with the discrepancies existing between leadership definitions, and society's over-romanticisation of leadership, Alvesson and Sveningsson argued the need to question leadership and by connection, followership as a distinct phenomenon. Instead, Jackson and Parry suggest leadership might be better judged as a "hypothetical construct that has no empirical reality", (2011, p.62).

This next approach cognisant of the contribution made by follower-centric theories, integrates that contribution with the leader's role in constructing leadership.

Followers in Action Being Co-producers of Leadership

The notion of leadership as a mutual exchange relationship between leaders and followers emerged last century from Hollander (1958) who described it as reciprocated influence and social exchange. Messick (2005) examining the psychological exchanges between leaders and followers, found it mutually beneficial as leaders endeavoured to give followers; vision and direction, protection and security, achievement and effectiveness, inclusion and belongingness, pride and self-respect. The notion of 'guardian leader', 'righteous leader' and 'servant leader' as heralded by Islam as a trademark for its leadership, endeavoured to develop followers with; focus and self-direction, gratitude and loyalty, commitment and effort, co-operation and sacrifice, respect and obedience (see Al Sarhi et al., 2014; Kayode & Hashim, 2014). Seldom, would leaders fulfil or followers request all these requirements.

Within organisational norms, leaders and followers would have no explicit contract bonding them, but an implicit contract may exist to balance and maintain the leadership. When this balance is tipped through leaders or followers taking too much or giving too little, the relationship needs to be re-transacted. One theory, gaining momentum in the co-production of leadership is the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) (Erdogan & Bauer, 2014). The theory from repeated empirical observation claimed its relationship-based approach evolved over three stages (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The first stage 'stranger phase' designated interrelationships as formal, regulated, operated by self-interest rather than the greater good. Some relationships did not escalate beyond this point. The next stage 'acquaintanceship', leaders gave followers more responsibility in exchange for inside information, allegiance and assistance. If both leader and follower succeed, the relationship's formality waivered, mutual trust and respect then formulated. In the final stage 'maturity', reciprocation exists between leader and follower who influence and are influenced by one another. Leaders and followers are interconnected productively (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012), more than rank-based relationships and steer towards a transformational leadership relationship.

From the above, it is comprehensible why LMX theory might attract. It has no one size fits all as differences do occur in the standard of relationship leaders have with followers. However, leaders should observe caution with their chosen selectees as they have the capacity to create divisive in-groups and out-groups within the larger organisation. What a leader must endeavour is to create high-quality exchanges with all followers, as everyone needs to work 'from the same page'.

Keith Grint's (2005) analysis of leadership, looking at its limits and possibilities stated leaders can acquire knowledge in leading from followers. His analysis outlines a similarity in the challenge of a first-time leader to a first-time parent as 'counter-intuitively, it is the junior that teach their subordinates how to lead' (2005, p.104). To secure this, an open, honest forum where constant feedforward occurs needs to be cultivated. However, reflecting back to the psychoanalytic theories of leadership this allegory maybe tenuous given it implicitly leans towards to a paternalistic or maternalistic view of leadership which academics now avoid. Nevertheless, one positive perspective is the reciprocal responsibility of leaders and followers to maintain open communication between one another. Noted in the relationship between leaders

and followers, 'constructive dissent', rather than 'destructive dissent' is the basis of success (Bratton et al., 2004; Blair, 2016). If followers are qualified to examine and offer alternative solutions in non-confrontational approaches, leaders should be receptive to these efforts which is a perception as a principal I believed I undertook but in my research wished to explore its depth as evidenced by my staff in evaluating my leadership practices.

From empirical study so far, a strong understanding of leader types has developed but unfortunately, followers still seem cast into the same homogeneous being. Collinson (2006) in his post-structuralist analysis of follower identities remarked leadership studies lacked extensive, deep comprehension of these, and the complexity involved in the interactional identities between leaders and followers. His approach found followers' identities in the workplace may be more challenged and contrasted than previously believed.

For Shamir (2007), follower-centric perspectives of leadership contribute by helping us 'reverse the lens' of leadership and motivate us, as followers, to examine both leaders and whomever is in the role of following.

Conclusion

This research provides some counterbalance to the prevalent one-sided focus on leaders held in and out of the academic world. It offers a more holistic picture into how leadership may succeed or fail with its engagement of both leader and followers' perceptions on what constitutes effective leadership. As follower-centred perspectives are relatively new and moderately formed, research opportunities exist to expand this field as desired by this current research in follower evaluation of leader effectiveness. Most of all, within the role of following, it provokes deep reflection on what change initiation could be implemented to co-develop higher quality leadership.

The next chapter moves on to discuss how pragmatic mixed methods approach was a best fit to conduct the research.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Project Background

Introduction

This research examined the depth of perceived effective educational leadership in action within one international setting. Many theorists within the field of leadership studies have pointed out that leadership is a complicated, multi-faceted and socially constructed process oriented to the act of influencing (Yukl, 2006; Mumford, 2011; Gardner et al., 2010; Setlhodi, 2020). This creates methodological challenges in its examination (Stentz et al., 2012). Many note the prevalence of quantitatively statistical approaches in studies of leadership and current trends in leadership research favour approaches such as confirmatory factor analysis, multi-level analyses and structural equation modelling, with a more recent drive in approaches to determine causal relations between variables within experimental studies (Stentz et al., 2012). Such approaches would not be suitable for my study, given its aim to provide an in-depth exploration of staff and leader perspectives.

Bass (2008) argued for a new conceptualisation of leadership which combined both objective and subjective perspectives to better understand its complexity. Stentz et al., (2012) responded to this and argued that mixed methods approaches are required to best conceptualise leadership priorities and dynamics. Mixed methods include analysis of both quantitative data and qualitative data in ways which permit studies to optimise the strengths of each approach while compensating for their weaknesses. For example, in-depth qualitative insights will improve validity of results by providing contextualised knowledge, multiple frames of reference and cultural influences (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Cresswell et al., 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). My mixed methods approach was conceived to combine the quantitative approach of staff surveys with the qualitative approach of staff interviews in conjunction with my personal narrative reflections to seek new knowledge to add to the existing field of leadership and followership theory. Historically, the benefit of using mixed methods in experimental studies is demonstrated in the work of Cronbach (1975). As the leadership research field developed, it seemed appropriate to transcend the either/or of quantitative numbers or qualitative words. Cresswell and Plano Clark (2011) and Cresswell (2014) affirm a combination of these approaches would result in deeper analyses. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) contend that mixed methods results in the

researcher's ability to answer a broader and fuller range of research problems. This is appropriate to my research.

In the field of educational leadership and improvement effectiveness, which is where my research is situated, Teddlie (2005, p.216) suggests that 'the skillful blending of several methodological approaches' is needed. Crow and Whiteman (2013, 2016) identified several evaluations of educational leadership programmes using mixed methods research. In light of this, application of mixed methods approaches would prove not only beneficial (Hauserman et al., 2013) but equally, justifiable (Whiteman, 2015). Additionally, its global appeal is demonstrated by the growth in mixed methods dissertations (McKim, 2017) and in funded mixed methods research projects (Coyle et al., 2018). My research aligns with the above and offers an exemplar for other academics in its contribution to the field of educational leadership theory and theoretical thinking, particularly in its aim to contribute new knowledge of leadership and followership which will also have practical research outcomes to leadership in action in the real world.

This chapter continues by explaining how mixed methods is defined and from that understanding how it was used in this research. In line with the mixed methods used, the research adopted a pragmatic approach in its analysis which will also be justified. The chapter will then proceed to justify its use of a case study, how it mixed and triangulated its data and its sampling for analysis. The chapter concludes by explaining the research design framework, including my ethical positioning and positionality.

The Research's Mixed Methods Design

Mixed methods research was defined by Johnson et al., (2007, p.129) as:

> The research paradigm that … partners with the philosophy of pragmatism; … relies on qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, and inference techniques combined according to the logic of mixed methods research to address one's research question(s); … [It] offers an important approach for generating important research questions and providing warranted answers to those questions; … used when the

nexus of contingencies in a situation, in relation to one's research question(s), suggests that mixed methods research is likely to provide superior research findings and outcomes.

Historically, several typologies of mixed methods research in definition and design existed (see Morgan, 1998; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2006; Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2007) However, Johnson et al., (2007) argued they were problematic as they offered no single demarcation for 'mixed research'. Johnson et al., believed there were several important criteria to consider in defining mixed methods research in a narrow or pure perspective, as well as, in a broader or highly inclusive perspective (p.112). How mixed method research was defined, according to them, had 'varying levels of specificity' (p.118). Johnson et al., questioned the ability of the field to be able to develop an agreed typology for they suggested in design, qualitative dominant, quantitative dominant and pure mixed method research required independent designs. Positioned along a qualitative-quantitative continuum, qualitative-dominant studies relied on a qualitative, constructivist-poststructuralist-critical view of the research process, quantitative-dominant relied on a quantitative, postpositivist view of the research process; and in the middle, equal status approaches the person who self-identified as a mixed methods researcher adopted the logic and philosophy of mixed methods research. I, for the purposes of my research, took my starting point from the logic and philosophy of mixed methods research whereby, I believed that both my qualitative and quantitative data; and approaches would add insight to my research questions (Johnson et al., 2007, p.123).

As mixed methods research is the approach incorporated into my research, I have taken account of the position of Johnson et al., (2007) in conceptualising 'methods' broadly. Greene's (2006) conceptualisation of broadness is defined well: integrated to include 'methodology' to permit inclusion of issues and strategies concerning methods of data collection (examples used in this research; questionnaire and interviews); methods of research (e.g. experiments); and related philosophical issues (e.g. ontology, epistemology). Johnson et al., believe that qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research consider assumptions, principles and values about these types of methodology and practice-related issues as aspects of the research paradigm (p.118).

Johnson et al.'s, (2007) analysis of 19 definitions of what constituted mixed research identified 5 themes, the first of which ascertained 'what is mixed' in quantitative and qualitative research. The second theme was the 'mixing stage': when and where in the design, mixing is carried out.

The third theme originated from a related issue; 'breadth' of mixed research which situated itself along a continuum between those such as Creswell (2003) who defined mixed method research as the collection of qualitative and quantitative data; those such as Bazeley (2006), who viewed it involving all stages; and those like Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) who saw it including methodological worldviews and language (p.122). The fourth theme dealt with 'why' mixing is carried out in the research i.e. its purpose/s. The final theme pertained to the 'orientation' of mixed method research whereby all mixed research fitted along a 'bottom-up/top-down conceptualisation' continuum (p.123).

Johnson et al., also suggested Greene's (2006) notion of 'Mixed Methods Social Inquiry' to be beneficially useful as a springboard for creating a mixed methods research paradigm, because it conceptualised mixed methods as a 'methodology' composed of four domains;

1. Philosophical assumptions and stances i.e. what are the basic philosophical or epistemological assumptions of the methodology?
2. Inquiry logic i.e. historically known as 'methodology' relating to broad inquiry purposes and questions, logic, quality standards, writing forms which direct the research 'gaze'.
3. Guidelines for practice i.e. the 'how to' of the research methodology, regarding procedures and tools.
4. Sociopolitical commitments i.e. interests, power relations, commitments of the societal locality where the inquiry is based.

As Johnson et al.'s, (2007) definition analysis of mixed methods research identified five themes: *what is mixed*; *when/where, breadth, why* and *orientation,* they suggested these blended to a degree with Greene's methodological development (see Table 1). Thus, Greene's first criterion of philosophical assumptions and nuances blended with Johnson et al.'s '*breadth*' theme. Greene's second, inquiry logic blended with Johnson et al.'s *when/where* and *why* themes. The third criterion of Greene's conceptualisation of guidelines for practice blended with Johnson et al.'s '*what is*' mixed theme and Greene's final, sociopolitical commitments blended with Johnson et al.'s '*orientation*'.

Table 1: Mapping of Johnson et al.'s themes and Greene's criteria for mixed methods

Johnson et al.'s themes	Greene's criteria
What is mixed	Guidelines for practice
When/where in the design mixing is carried out – *mixing stage*	Inquiry logic
Breadth of mixed research	Philosophical assumptions and stances
Why mixing is carried out in research	Inquiry logic
Orientation of the mixed methods research	Sociopolitical commitments

This current research of a principal's reflections with staff surveys and interviews on leadership effectiveness utilises a qualitative and quantitative research paradigm which takes account of Greene's four methodological domains. As no definition analysed in the Johnson et al., review had adopted all of Greene's inclusions, it justified their conceptualisation of the newer one previously cited in this chapter. My research wished to integrate traditional qualitative and quantitative paradigms to be able to 'provide the most informative, complete, balanced, and useful research results' (Johnson et al., 2007, p.129). From my triangulation of perspectives, my mixed research data would provide what Collins et al., (2006) termed 'significance enhancement' i.e. my data would be richer to deepen the interpretation and usefulness of my findings.

As many methods writers (see Johnson et al., 2007) view some application of pragmatism to be the most beneficial philosophy to support mixed methods research, this next section will explore why.

Pragmatism: Addressing the 'Why' of Methodology

From reflection on methodological positions and what best suits mixed methods research, I opted to use pragmatism as an underpinning epistemological or philosophical stance for my research.

As constructivism and post-structuralism are connected to qualitative research, and post-positivism is connected to quantitative research, I as a mixed methods researcher believe some form of pragmatism is the most constructive philosophy to support my research. Johnson et al., (2007) posit pragmatism as an appropriate philosophy for integrating perspectives and approaches: it offers an epistemological justification from pragmatic epistemic values or standards i.e. veering 'towards solving practical problems in the 'real world' (Feilzer, 2010, p.8) instead of providing assumptions concerning the nature of knowledge; as well as a logic for combining methods and ideas to frame, address, and provide tentative answers to a research question/s mixing approaches and methods. Pragmatists denounce incompatibility theses, insisting research paradigms can remain apart or be blended into another research paradigm. Conceptualisation of pragmatic extremes along a continuum incorporates a variety of theorists which mixed methods researchers could consider, like Rescher (2000) and Putnam (2002) who conceptualised pragmatism as veering to 'the right', which signposted a moderately strong form of realism, and a weak form of pluralism. However, Rorty's examination of pragmatism (see Brandom, 2000 and Maxcy, 2003), saw its position oppositional and to 'the left' therefore signposting antirealism and strong pluralism. However, I have adopted what Johnson et al., define as pragmatism of 'the middle' because it suits my conceptualisation of what mixed methods is doing in my research.

Given that my research is personal and contextualised in educational action research (Stenhouse, 1985), it is best framed as an individual case study (Yin, 2011). Amaratunga et al., (2002) highlighted that case studies can be post-positivistic, phenomenological or a mixture of both; likewise, case studies connect paradigm methodology method (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) and take account of beliefs about the social world and the nature of knowledge (philosophical paradigm), the logic of inquiry (methodology) and how data is generated (methods) to address complexities of the social world. Pragmatism and case study align with several academics' rejection of the view that philosophical positions should dictate particular methodological approaches (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Sharp et al., 2012). My longitudinal, explorative case study (Yin, 1993; 2014) used the perceptions of myself as a principal, with the perceptions of my staff, in perceived realities towards a holistic exploration of school effectiveness to provide a deeper foundation for any perceived generalisation (Guetterman & Fetters, 2018). As my research incorporated my own staff, I was challenged by my position, power, bias, beliefs,

etc. as a researcher at each stage of the research process: when gathering data, in my engagement with participants, in the navigation and analysis of our relatively perceived realities, and in reporting. My research design in adopting the epistemological approach of pragmatism was chosen to meet the above challenges (Biesta, 2010; Greene & Hall, 2010) of shaping research questions in response to the needs and contingencies of my particular research, and to include subjective and objective knowledge (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Sharp et al., 2012). Sammons (2010) suggests the robust and interesting findings from pragmatic approaches provide more 'value added' for educational practitioners. However, I do note that pragmatism is not the only possible philosophical stance in mixed methods research, (Biesta, 2010; Greene & Hall, 2010; Sharp et al., 2012).

Conceptualising my research in this way meant adopting the particular assumptions of pragmatism below to capture perceived reality of school effectiveness (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Sharp et al., 2012):

- Preference for action over philosophising
- Espousal of practical theory to inform effective practice
- The position that 'knowledge is viewed as being both constructed and based on the reality of the world we experience and live in' (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.18)
- The influence of eclecticism and pluralism in which 'different, even conflicting theories and perspectives can be useful; observation, experience and experiments are all useful ways to gain an understanding of people and the world' (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.18).

Application of these assumptions impacted upon my methodology in varying degrees. Firstly, in leadership effectiveness, my study wanted 'actionable knowledge of direct practical value in the context being studied' (Greene & Hall, 2010, p.138). The context of my study led me to consider the importance of the perceived reality of leadership effectiveness, not only on a personal level but also the perceptions of reality of the people I led. From a pragmatic stance as Rorty (1999) noted, these differing perceptions allowed movement towards the possibility of viewing leadership more holistically, would provide broader assessment of leadership, and would subsequently improve its usefulness as research. These practical applications supplemented its

accuracy. Consequently, consideration was given to the outcomes of the research, the benefits for informing future leadership of the school group (Feilzer, 2010), and its value to my staff stakeholders (Sammons, 2010).

Similarly, I felt consideration had to be given not only to the broader picture of the research but also the indirect influences that shaped the various perceptions of reality regarding effective leadership I wished to investigate (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003b). This is a second way in which pragmatism affected my research as I needed to account for interactional dynamics and other contextual factors when analysing those differences. Finally, adoption of a pragmatic approach in choosing samples affected how I conceptualised my data and how I applied those findings in the discussion of the results. My research used only one site, therefore, I wanted to learn more, and relate findings to my own specific setting for which purposive sampling strategies were employed (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) suggested mixed methods researchers commonly interchange points of view depending on the audience; academic or another setting. Integrating quantitative or qualitative approaches and principles is common practice in case study research (Sharp et al., 2012). In consideration of the above, my research used purposive sampling which integrated qualitative and quantitative data approaches.

This section has explored the philosophical stance of pragmatism and the three ways in which it shaped my methodology. The next section offers a further justification of the use of case study as part of my research methodology.

Case Study

Case study may exist as one of the most preferred qualitative research methodologies (Yazan, 2015) yet it fails to be legitimately recognised as a social science research strategy for it has no well-defined or well-structured protocols (Yin, 2002). This leaves new researchers, such as I, intending to make use of case study in their research, confused to 'what a case study is and how it can be differentiated from other types of qualitative research' (Merriam, 1998, p.xi). This view of lacking rigour and objectivity means researchers need to take care with their research design and implementation (Rowley, 2002). In spite of this, case study research has been widely used because it can possibly provide different perspectives from other approaches. This research has also been seen as a useful resource for the preliminary, exploratory stage of an empirical study;

as a basis for the creation of the 'more structured' tools required for surveys and experiments (Rowley, 2002). Therefore, an appropriate summary of it is 'a how or why question…… being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control' (Yin, 1994, p.9). For my research, this constituted how my staff perceived my leadership effectiveness in school improvement.

Rowley (2002) suggests case study research is appropriate for contemporary events when the relevant behaviour cannot be manipulated (p.17). Often case study research incorporates evidence from a variety of sources e.g. documents, interviews, observations and artefacts, which exceeds what is normally considered as evidence in historical study. In contrast to surveys, normally the number of unit studies in a case study is significantly lower but Rowley (2002) affirms the extent of detail for each case should be greater. Also, compared with experiments, the case study researcher has far less control over variables than an experiment being utilised in situational investigation. Data collected from surveys can come from a number of organisations to be able to generalise to other organisations of the same type (Rowley, 2002), whereas comparative study from a number of different organisations aims is to compare the studied organisations in a systematic way to investigate different research issues.

My choice of case study is informed by Yin's (1993) justifications that case study is best used in research:

- when the focus of a study is on "how" and "when"
- when researchers cannot manipulate the behaviour of those under study
- when researchers want to learn more about the contextual conditions especially relevant to the phenomenon under study
- when the boundaries between the subject of study and the context are not clear.

These above points highlight a strength of case study research is its ability to conduct an investigation into a phenomenon in its context i.e. as in my case of female leadership effectiveness outside the global North. I have no need to replicate this in a laboratory or experimental setting to better understand it. Thus, my case study research is an important way of viewing the world around me. However, I am cognisant of not confusing my case study research with ethnographic or other purely qualitative research paradigms (Rowley, 2002). My case study

is based on a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches as I considered multiple data sources of surveys, interviews, narrative reflections and field notes in a single study.

Referring back to case studies lacking in rigour resulting from an omission of standard methodological procedures, it might be argued this lack of pre-determined steps makes this research more difficult and demanding (Patton & Appelbaum, 2003). Also, as my research did use a range of data collection methods which, although labour intensive, did yield an abundant amount of data. Thus, what could be viewed as data overload (Miles, 1990), meant I had to remain disciplined and focused to avoid this intensive use of my empirical evidence producing theory that was too complex (Patton & Appelbaum, 2003). It should be noted that formal methodologies for qualitative data collection and analysis do exist (see for example, Miles and Huberman, 1994) in conducting unstructured interviews and coding qualitative data as used in this research. As did, making use of multiple data-collection methods substantiate deeper hypotheses (Eisenhart, 1989; Patton & Appelbaum, 2003).

Perhaps, the greatest perceived fault of case study research which cannot be denied is it is subjective and is heavily researcher influenced. Without doubt, the researcher does play a pivotal role in the outcome of the study. However, all research is dependent on interpretation but in quantitative, the impact of personal interpretation is lessened from the research design by the data collection and analysis (Stake, 1995). Qualitative research makes use of the most responsible person in the field to interpret, make observations, exercise subjective judgement, make analysis or synthesis, whilst being consciously alert (Patton & Appelbaum, 2003). Within general quantitative research, Patton and Appelbaum (2003), also argue these types of interpretations and judgement can affect reliability which they say is evaluated by the ability of an experiment or study to be replicated by other researchers who form the same conclusions. However, a study's validity does not necessarily have to be impacted by a researcher's interpretation or identity.

Two areas where a researcher's identity will have an effect on case study research is in access and preunderstanding. Access denotes being able to get close to the object of study to ascertain exactly what is happening (Gummesson, 1991) while preunderstanding is understood to include people's knowledge, insights and experience prior to embarking on the study (Gummesson, 1991). A lack of preunderstanding can result in a researcher spending a fair amount of time

gathering basic information as well as it posing a considerate threat to the objectivity of the study from researcher bias. However, in my case, I was the researcher as well as the object of study. Equally, my longevity of employment in the school afforded me much 'inside' information. What I had to ensure was at all times I remained mature, open, honest with disciplined focus (Gummesson, 1991; Patton & Applebaum, 2003).

Although my identity in the case study was explicit to all participants, I cannot deny that some form of subjectivity had to impact but the degree to which it became explicitly stated became objectified into an object which is clearly my point of view (Hamel, 1993). As such, I am conscious that I was a variable in my research design. To counteract this to sustain objectivity, I hoped was achieved from critical reflection as well as understanding my findings may well have been contoured by my position in the power structure and the ideological context within which I undertook social activities (Sjoberg et al., 1991). Patton and Appelbaum (2003) affirm if as a researcher I am conscious of my viewpoint and paradigm, then I am open to newer possibilities and explanations.

'Generalisation' within the research

Some critics of case study research believe it is not possible to generalise from a single case and the only value of case study is to create a hypothesis and not test it (Patton & Appelbaum, 2003) However, Yin (1984) affirms that the intention of an investigator should be to expand and generalise theories (i.e. analytic generalisation) rather than embark on statistical generalisation to enumerate frequencies. If good descriptive or analytic language is employed from which a true grasp of the interaction between the numerous sections of a system and the important sections of a system arises, will subsequently yield the ability to generalise from a few or even one case possible (Normann, 1984). In addition, to avoid developing something that is easily replicated over and over, a case study researcher needs to construct a proper case with analytic sophistication. Case studies should seek both generalisability and attention to the individual case (Patton & Appelbaum, 2003). Generally, within the natural science approach, the use of random sampling is viewed as essential to generalise findings, however, for case study research, Eisenhardt (1989) argues this is neither desirable nor preferable. In case study research, generalisability comes from the strength of the description of the context as they permit the reader to 'determine the level of correspondence of this particular case to other similar situations'

(Patton & Applebaum, 2003, p.66). Both the detail and depth of the description entailed in the case study provide comprehension of the empirical foundations of the theory (Hamel, 1993). In addition, Hamel affirms the depth of detail in the case study description will enable the representativeness of the case under investigation to be clearly defined. Stake (1995) also posits that much can be extracted from a single case which is general, given individuals through personal engagement or experience can already have familiarity with other cases therefore, including a newer case creates a newer group to generalise from, as individuals have had the opportunity to strengthen, modify or reject former generalisations (Patton & Appelbaum, 2003).

My quantitative method of a survey/questionnaire, followed up with six school personnel, in qualitative semi-structured interviews obtained through purposive sampling integrated with my personal reflections could not be used to make any generalisations and this was not its intended purpose. It sought instead to provide more depth to theory regarding leadership and followership. The findings extracted from my data illuminate a specific case and would not be representative for all principals, even in a similar context. However, as Burgess (2011) argued, what my research data would do, it would enable in-depth scrutiny of complex phenomenon and gain a more thorough comprehension of lived experiences for myself as a Western principal serving a Muslim community in a non-western context and those of the staff who follow me – in that sense, my particular case study offers 'truths' that have been constructed from personal voices. In line with other individual case studies, much can be learned from the insights from my case, particularly the insights I gained from a culture other than my own. My research was never designed to have universal applications as it sought to capture a unique episode in time and a particular process of leadership in action. The results generated from my case add to a global bank of research on leadership practice, where my, and my staff perspectives from a non-Western base, could over time be compared and contrasted to other research. The data obtained permitted not deep but some 'fuzzy' generalisations (Bassey, 1999, 2007) pertaining to other leaders, and specifically female leaders, in but not confined to the Middle East. The research, therefore, assists the academic world to reach greater understanding on what leadership actually is.

Research Quality: Sampling, Mixing and Triangulation in the Research

Reviewing sampling strategies, Goetz and LeCompte's (1984, p.77) study of qualitative approaches in educational research, favoured criterion-based sampling as it set the 'criteria' required for 'units to be included' in my research. This notion, akin to present purposive sampling, used a sample to obtain representativeness or comparability in a study (Patton, 1980; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). However, my study did not use what Patton (1980) referred to as the most extreme, deviant, typical or critical sampling in its analysis while I acknowledge that, as principal/researcher some of those things may have indirectly influenced my choice, I can say with certainty that they were not the driving force behind my process of selection samples. Within the context of my research, a three-stage mixed methods sampling strategy was created, following the principles of a pragmatic sequential mixed methods approach (see Sharp et al., 2012). In my research, the interviewees covered the spectrum of varying nationalities; western/non-western trained; teacher qualified; leadership responsibility; years of experience at the school from 0 to 20 years as well as varying periods of time staff had worked with me to provide a representational sample of staff.

Using mixed methods as an approach in my educational research, ultimately entailed decisions on the mixing, how and at what stages this would occur (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Relevant literature in this field highlighted selection of qualitative and quantitative data collection strategies to explore the research problem, however other rigorous studies involved mixing methods throughout the research process e.g. during the sample selection stage (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003). Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) provided strategies for mixing, including what I chose to use i.e. merging my data sets.

As mixing in the research process can take place during interpretation, data analysis, data collection, and/or during the research design process, consideration of this led me to implement one of the four major mixed methods designs; exploratory sequential design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This design occurred in two phases, but began with the collection and analysis of qualitative data; the personal narrative reflections of my perceived effectiveness. I then used the quantitative data of staff questionnaires, triangulated thematically by the purposive sampling of staff interviews to build on the initial qualitative results of my perceived effectiveness. This

design was most beneficial for me as my initial qualitative results which were personal needed further testing or quantification.

As a mixed methods approach is a synthesis which incorporates ideas from quantitative and qualitative research, importance needs to be given to its triangulation. Historically, formalisation of triangulation practice is credited to Denzin (1978, 2007) who defined it as 'the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon' (1978, p.291). and described four categories (see Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2007), two of which were used for this research. The first was data triangulation as I used a variety of sources; my personal narrative reflections, staff questionnaires and staff interviews. The second was methodological triangulation via mixed methods and pragmatic philosophy to study my research problem. I opted for what Denzin (1978) coined as between-methods triangulation in mixed methods to mitigate biases, including my own. From triangulation use, Denzin cited three results; either contradiction, convergence or inconsistency and no matter which one emerged, greater explanation of observed social phenomena would result. As this particular research incorporated a case study, Stake (1995) highlighted an array of triangulation methods which could be used to increase validity. Methods such as; analysing data in different spaces, times or contexts; using other researchers from different backgrounds to scrutinise procedures and conclusions; incorporating different data sources to study the same object (interviews, narrative reflections and surveys in my case) can be made use of to attain triangulation and strengthen confidence in drawing conclusions. The next section will explain how quality was determined.

Determining Criteria for Quality

The research undertaken in this project, adopted a positivist and deductive approach to a case study design and subsequently prompted the presentation of questions prior to the data collection in the form of 'how' and 'when' effective leadership was perceived which contrasts with approaches such as grounded theory or inductive approach. My chosen approach, Rowley (2002) argued would yield a solid foundation for understanding and controlling issues such as validity and reliability; as well as structure data collection and analysis into a straightforward process to deal with as a new researcher.

Case study research previously discussed as a unit of analysis was the basis for my study. My case of staff evaluation of myself as a female school leader in the implementation of organisational change made up the boundaries of the unit of analysis. A key concern in case study questions is ensuring they only ask questions about the unit of analysis or any sub-units: my study was contextualised to fit the Middle East and enabled me to contribute to leadership and followership theory outside the global North. Thus the data I collected were used to support or demolish propositions on leadership: how and when staff perceived leadership to occur and from reflection on the criteria I used to interpret my findings.

Three concepts form the basis for others to view a research project as knowledge to be incorporated into a field of study (Rowley, 2002); generalisation, validity and reliability. This project as previously discussed did not seek to make generalisations, for it cannot as it is a captured lived 'moment' in time of one school in the Middle East. It sought to provide more depth to theory.

In gathering evidence, I chose mixed methods within a case study, thus my sources of evidence necessitated different approaches to their examination. Although each source of evidence had both strengths and weaknesses, they would yield a rich database of multi-faceted perspectives and triangulation of them would be able to corroborate my findings.

My case study being explorative did not commence with a proposition, therefore I had to adopt an alternative analytic approach by creating a descriptive framework for organising my case research. From the staff interviews arose a framework of sections reflecting recurring themes of leadership effectiveness and evidence was gathered, analysed and compared within these themes to provide a description of the case study corroborated from other sources of evidence; quantitative data from the questionnaires, my narrative reflections and field notes. The chapter continues with discussion of the research design.

The Research Design

The longitudinal nature of the research is explained in Table 2 (see below in the Access, Timeline, Methods and Procedures section). The two strands, with three, individual but overlapping stages – personal narrative reflections, questionnaires and interviews – were used to

provide a mixed-model approach which is 'fully integrated' (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2006, p.1). The qualitative fieldwork over two years generated data which included principal reflections, 37 staff surveys and 6 one-to-one interviews of around one hour's duration with identified staff. This provided an acceptable amount of data in the range of narrative recollection, digital recordings, completed staff surveys and field notes. As previously discussed, this research used a mixed methods sequential exploratory design (Creswell et al., 2003). It involved '3' sequential strands; qualitative, then quantitative and qualitative which are discussed in the sections which follow.

Strand 1: Qualitative

The first section consisted of my personal reflection as principal against the '360'degree evaluative tool i.e. the staff questionnaire to research my assumptions towards my own leadership practice and subsequent effectiveness within the school. The research contained elements of autobiographical and narrative research to produce knowledge which is organically contextual (Barone, 2007) and practical (Carter, 1993). This knowledge is exemplified in the everyday activities of this principal/researcher endeavouring to improve a localised educational context through growth in her own and her staff's practical knowledge. The 'autobiography' took the form of a written personal account (see abridged version Appendix 6), of my performance in the fifty-seven items in the questionnaire on effective schools and effective principalship to be given to staff. This personal evaluation of where or where not, and how with examples, I perceived my leadership effectiveness, was merged with the statistical data from the staff surveys and the thematic data from the staff interviews to explore consonances and differences between our perceptions.

One example, from the staff surveys in the school leadership and management domain (Point 9), *'Cooperates with the staff in creating a common vision for school improvement'* was perceived to always occur.

My personal reflection stated: *the school vision has collectively come for all staff within the school…….,* thus demonstrating alignment.

This evaluation was completed in written form and then transcribed to Word prior to distribution of the questionnaire to staff.

Strand 2: Quantitative

The purpose of the second strand was to elicit staff perceptions of my leadership practices and ultimate effectiveness within the school. More specifically, the questionnaire used in the study would mirror, more or less, the questionnaire on effective schools and effective principalship, used by Pashiardis (2001) in Cyprus and (2005) in Portugal, both Western contexts, to explore if results would be similarly mirrored in my non-Western context. The questionnaire was altered slightly to take account of the local conditions of the Middle Eastern country: the 5th choice of 'no opinion' in the rankings would have significance in this non-native English environment and a translator was available for the survey completion. From the interview analysis, it became clear that some of the concerned staff had a different understanding of what a question was evaluating and therefore confusion or miscomprehension may have prompted 'no opinion'. Equally, being the Middle East, culturally people feel uneasy giving 'bad news' thus, to select 'no opinion' would enable saving face to some degree. In consideration of my specific circumstances as international principal with responsibility for the three schools, the questionnaire asked for identification of a respondent's school section and an indication of how long they had worked with the principal to deepen the analysis.

The staff questionnaire was completed by those who had formally agreed in writing to participate in the study: thirty-seven in total. The survey responses were completed during a CPD session in the monthly after-school meeting cycle with a member of the senior leadership team and the translator. Staff were informed those who wished to participate in an interview for further clarification or justification of their chosen answers had to simply add their name to their survey response. This part of the study was not conducted by me. I was present at the commencement of the meeting to explain the format of the survey and explain it required staff to evaluate my leadership effectiveness using the items and scale provided. I then left the room and another member of the leadership team took the lead to enable staff to feel as comfortable as possible, and to reiterate staff were under no obligation or if they had changed their minds, they could simply withdraw by returning the survey uncompleted. The senior leader responsible for the

distribution and completion of the survey reminded staff of the initial introduction to the research I had given i.e. that the survey answers solely concerned staff perception on the principal only and was not about perceived effectiveness of any other leader. As soon as the staff member completed their survey, they were free to leave for home and were not required to remain at school until the required time as a thank you. The return of the responses did not yield any blanks but did render a number of 'no opinions', which is unsurprising given the sensitivity of the issue. However, I am aware that, in spite of trying to secure strict anonymity, some staff members may have felt reticent with a particular theme connected to personal beliefs and equally, may have been uncomfortable in being asked to appraise the performance of the highest-ranking personnel member within the school domain, namely myself as the principal.

Pashiardis in 1997 developed and pilot tested a questionnaire examining principal tasks and styles of leadership which formed the basis of his later research (2001, 2005). The themes examined were elicited from a literature review of effective schools and effective principalships current at that time (see Pashiardis, 1998, 2001; Duke, 1982; Duttweiler & Hord, 1987; Hoy & Miskel, 1996). The questionnaire is assumed to have face validity given a panel of experts met to critique it and subsequently passed a judgement of valid (Pashiardis, 2001). This questionnaire (Pashiardis, 2001, 2005) is also deemed to be considerably reliable as its reliability co-efficient is r=0.94 (Cronbach's $\propto$ = 0.94, Cronbach, 1951). A copy of the author's permission to use the questionnaire is included in Appendix No.1. The questionnaire consisted of fifty-seven items which were divided amongst the following nine themes: school leadership and management, curriculum development, personnel management, administration and fiscal management, student management, school climate, professional development and in-service, relations with the parents and community, problem-solving and decision-making. The scale chosen for the questions was an interval, Likert-type scale (1931), ranging from 1-5. In the ranking, 4 constituted that the principal 'always' behaves in the manner depicted by a certain questionnaire item; 3 indicated 'often', 2 indicated 'sometimes' and 1 indicated 'never'. As in the Portuguese case study by Pashiardis (2005), a number 5 was included which signified 'no opinion' for the participants but in this research, as explained, was not excluded from the final calculations. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix No. 2.

As the information being gathered from the research emanates from the field of social sciences; related to the attitudes and opinions of school personnel, the use of a single item question would be unreliable, less valid and accurate to use in measuring a construct as it would be difficult to draw inferences from its analysis. Thus reliability, accuracy and validity would be better secured through the use of summated, multi-item scales, (see Spector, 1992; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Cronbach's alpha is a test reliability technique which involves a solitary test administration to produce an estimate of reliability of a particular test, (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Gliem and Gliem argue the use of Likert-type scales necessitates calculation and reporting of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistency reliability for any set or subset of scales being used.

The questionnaire responses were analysed to examine the perceptions of staff with regard to all fifty-seven survey components for which simple descriptive statistics were calculated. This quantitative data from staff was combined with the thematic data from the interviews to bring to the fore consonances and differences between perceptions. The data ranged from 'always, often, sometimes, and never'.

One example of this in a theme arising from the data; common endeavour through innovation and development of a common vision for improvement, was encapsulated in the staff surveys in the area of school leadership and management where *'Cooperates with the staff in creating a common vision for school improvement'* and was perceived to occur always but *'Encourages a culture of innovation and experimentation'* was perceived to occur only sometimes.

Statistical analysis was conducted making use of primarily descriptive statistics, means and frequencies. This study, it may be argued using Seddon's (1993, 1994) emphasis on the difference of context categorical, interpretative and relational, attempts to make analysis of meanings through an interpretative or constructivist lens of context, i.e. founded in the belief of the importance to ascertain what conceptions of reality do organisational members actually hold because Burgess (2011) concluded the possibility of people in a particular situation, having variations of interpretation and therefore understandings of what is real could differ (Pashiardis, 1995).

Strand 3: Qualitative

The purpose of this third strand was to explore deeper the perceptions and experiences of my leadership effectiveness from staff who had identified themselves as willing to be interviewed on their survey returns. The interviews were subsequently analysed through constant comparison method (Coghlan & Filo, 2013; Memon et al., 2017) to derive themes.

The staff survey analysis produced quantitative data in statistics. The staff interview analyses produced qualitative data in themes. Both quantitative and qualitative data were then merged with the principal's qualitative reflection to explore the range of views, and their connectedness or difference, concerning effective leadership practices through arising themes. Through this triangulation; myself, the staff questionnaires and staff follow-up interviews, more objective accounts on principalship and followership were obtained.

Between the academic years of 2016-2018, the research project used the anonymous questionnaire survey and select semi-structured interviews to collect data. These two methods complemented each other in that the results of the survey helped to identify the perceptions of the whole teaching cohort, while the interviews enabled in-depth probing with a smaller sub-sample of teaching staff from all levels of the school, including other middle and senior leaders, (Cohen et al., 2000, 2007; Jurs & Wiersma, 2004). As previously indicated, the semi-structured interviews were to be used to acquire more in-depth data and to obtain this, a protocol based on the questionnaire within two broad questions were asked of the six self-selectees:

1. Could you take me through your completed survey and explain the reason or reasons why you have selected the rankings you did?
2. Can you provide any examples or evidence to support your choice of response?

I included a qualitative and quantitative research aspect to explore the perceptions of staff members; western and non-western in an international school setting because it has rarely engendered focus. The quantitative method of a survey/questionnaire, followed up with six school personnel in qualitative semi-structured interviews with the principal/researcher provided some equilibrium between a framework that is researcher imposed and freedom for the respondents to navigate a research agenda (Cohen et al., 2000).

According to Wragg (1994) semi-structured interviews permit respondents freedom to talk at length however under some control by the researcher to remain on task (see also Day & Gu, 2007). The adoption of semi-structured interviews came from their flexibility and their ability to suit not only the personality but also the circumstances of the interviewee. Even though each respondent was asked basically the same key questions, the interviewer was given the flexibility to push a respondent to probe deeper and expand answers as and when necessary. Where standardised questions in essence fail, the semi-structured method can facilitate comparison and it can permit the creation of a framework of tailor-made questions to suit the unique circumstances of each respondent.

In my analysis, I initially used the interview responses related to the questionnaire data of each interviewee to define themes. Onto this I merged the quantitative data to provide justification or not to perceptions. This enabled me to make stronger comparisons, draw some stronger conclusions from all the available evidence, and make links with the previous research projects of Pashiardis (2001, 2005) concerning possible discrepancies between western based and non-western based contexts as one premise of the study. This comparison of similar research, and other contexts which were set in the West would produce richer, insightful connections (Zartman, 2005). Obviously, from a single sex school, all of the participants were female but the sample is equally balanced between those with western and non-western educational backgrounds i.e. 3 of each.

As much care as possible was taken in the handling and influence of the power dynamics between myself and staff. One interviewee (Jane) returned to me for another interview as she had reflected upon her original responses and in view of her reflections had re-evaluated some of her gradings. She wished to make changes to her data and justify why. In conversation with her, she did wish to '*give her best*' to the research, which demonstrates that staff felt they had a voice.

As a final step in this stage, the audio recordings were transcribed by myself into Word and analytic memos (Maxwell, 1996) were recorded and kept throughout the research timeline as a means for making sense of the data and verifying trends.

Ethics

Ethical approval at Bath University required submitting a proposal to a formal ethics committee whose approval enabled me to commence the empirical research in line with the University's ethical standards (see Appendix No.5). In addition, in order to protect myself and my staff who were involved and affected by the research, I incorporated guidelines from Bath University and the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) into my ethical protocols and due consideration was given to ethics at all stages of the research. As staff were actively involved in the processes of observation, reflection and survey, informed consent was duly obtained, as was freedom to withdraw consent at any given time in consideration of their rights. Similarly, the outcomes of the study's findings were equally available to them. The results were disseminated back to staff in a CPD session with an opportunity to discuss as a stepping stone towards a holistic perspective of leadership and followership and later used to give further direction for school improvement and feed into the school improvement plan. On a personal level for myself as principal, the results would be used for the enhancement of contextualising my leadership practices to be a best fit to their context.

One important consideration was the extent to which my reflective role and researching my own practice might impinge upon staff involved in the research, for example, the power relationships of being principal and researcher and will be dealt with in depth further on.

Equally, I ensured the data collection processes, the data analysis and interpretation of findings were robust through triangulation of my pragmatic mixed methods approach, and ensured everything met the standards for quality and integrity. Just as confidentiality and anonymity of participant data is considered the norm for research conduct from Bath and BERA, I also needed to ensure my institution remained anonymous and confidential and have taken particular care in my reporting not to identify the school or its national context. All of the participants were given pseudonyms (see Table 3). Similarly, in the confidential and anonymous treatment of participants' data, it remained secured and password protected.

I sought authorisation by email from the academic, Pashiardis whose research tool I aimed to use (see Appendix No.1). Permission was obtained from the representative of the owner of the group of schools to conduct the research, and from all of the participants/staff (see Appendices Nos. 3

& 4). In order that ethical protocols remain uncompromised, during the data gathering stage, I was absent from the meeting room in which staff completed their questionnaires. On completion, their questionnaires were handed over to another member of the management team who, after collection was completed, handed them then over to the me. I had verbally given assurance of strict anonymity to staff to encourage them to feel more at ease to complete all sections of the questionnaire. The open culture, walk-in door policy I had endeavoured to cultivate in my educational organisation, appears to be somewhat effective in that no teacher had changed their mind to not participate. May, who had worked with the school, for twenty years believed I, *'always, had an open-door policy ….'* and Anne commented *'the whole open-door policy with teaching staff is the same for parents and students'.* As previously mentioned, one interviewee (Jane) returned for a second interview to '*give her best'* and wanted to amend some of her evaluations. The approach I adopted to completion of the survey was executed in order to secure a high response rate and create respondent trust. However, I recognise that being permitted to leave school 'early' on completing the survey may be construed as a form of inducement and similarly, my influence in the power relationship of being principal may have left some staff feeling obligated to continue with the research as well as being the reason some staff put 'no opinion' answers. The fact that every staff member present at school that day chose to return their survey – which is high for survey return – may also indicate power relations are at work. For example, newer teachers might have feared being identified given that they did not yet know that I welcomed and promoted a culture of openness in communication.

The completed respondent survey answers were stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home. The recorded transcriptions were stored on the researcher's laptop which is password protected and was used only for the purpose of the research project.

Personal Ethical Perspective

I have reflected upon the 'why' of writing such a thesis as this as I have equally pondered the risks of not writing it. In my assessment of the risks, one potential danger is that it may expose the institution or a particular member to vulnerability; also, my research may indeed expose gendered practices. If the thesis were not to be completed, then my experience remains only at an individual level or at level where it may be dismissed by others. Instead, I wanted to find a way

for my experiences to be academically recognised and to have had the potential to impact on or contribute to knowledge, given the high chance that the prevailing culture will remain as status quo if not examined nor challenged. The work of Marshall (1999) in advocating living life as inquiry promotes research as being both in essence personal and a means of good practice, and it is with this tradition that I situated my inquiry. So much current work within the educational world is geared to measurement of impact. My research voice will, I hope, benefit the learning community through an account of personal experience which supplements impact measurements.

It is also significant in providing a case study that moves away from the heavy Anglo-American bias existent in the field to a more international perspective. As a study of leadership in action, i.e. a principal's and her staff's lived experiences of leadership in an international school in the Middle East, my research offers insights into practices of leading school improvement and the perceptions of the followers' responses to those improvements, it makes a substantive contribution to the field of school leadership by enhancing understandings of 'effective' leadership. The study therefore has contributed to the development of insights for evaluating 'effective' leadership based on multiple perspectives.

Positionality: Reflections and Analysis

Greene (2014) affirms positionality to be determined by where one stands in relation to the other and this can be transient throughout a research process (p.2). Merriam et al., (2001) perceive positions to be relative to the cultural values and norms of the researcher and those being researched. As this current research explores the researcher being researched, then insider positionality examines 'aspects of an insider researcher's self or identity which is aligned or shared with the participants' (Chavez, 2008, p.475). What is clear no agreed explanation of the term does exist due to the problem of determining how much social experience merits this classification (Greene, 2014). Chavez (2008) does recognise that insiders can be thought of as either total or partial insiders. In my research, I am a total insider, as I share several identities and experiences with my school community. I have lived and worked with them for a number of years. I am not partial as I am not detached from my community or share a single identity. However, as a new researcher at this level of study, my positionality was in state of flux: as my research evolved I found so, too, did my personal conceptualisation of positionality. Relevant

here is the fact of my white skin tone, British heritage, perceived affluence, being female, older and very experienced, as well as a practising Christian. These factors shaped the research, in conscious and unconscious ways. As a Western principal serving a Muslim community in an Arab country, this research has enabled an exploration of how my own identity was entangled with the dynamics and structures of western dominance and how this played out in the 'local' context of the school. Preedy et al., (2012) suggested the need for educational leaders to transcend national frontiers in their conceptualisations of leadership but is this actually possible, given our multiple positionalities (head, teacher, researcher, plus all the other personal attributes listed above) bring their histories with them and shape our current positionalities? Hence, while much can be learned from my professional endeavours in light of the insights I gained from a culture other than my own, these endeavors and insights are entangled with my positionality.

An important consideration linked to my researcher positionality, given that I was researching my own practice and eliciting my staff views of my practice, are the power relationships of being principal and researcher. I had hoped that the longevity of my experience with the institution and being seen continuously as 'rolling up my sleeves' as part of the team would mitigate these concerns but I had to remain cognisant of the power differentials that remained between us. I have to acknowledge that, within power dynamics, my possession of the title 'principal' apportions much privilege and shapes my researcher positionality. Before I embarked on the research, I had approached my staff for feedback on their thoughts about participating in a research project which I saw as an opportunity to get them on board before formal permission from them was actually sought. However, it is noted that in the survey, despite my physical efforts to remove myself from staff presence, my influence and power as principal may have had some effects, including staff feeling obligated to continue with the research survey, as discussed previously. As principal the research is conducted as an insider researcher. Insider research simply defined is the study of one's own social group or society (Naples, 2003, p.46). Earlier, Merton (1972) defined insider as an individual who possessed a priori intimate knowledge of a community and its members. Hellawell (2006) argued having knowledge of the community did not mean you had to be a member. Originally, insider research originated from ethnography in the disciplines of anthropology and sociology (Sikes & Potts, 2008) however, Greene (2014) promoted its suitability across many disciplines; and particularly interesting to those concerned with the methodological and ethical consequences of conducting research (p.1). However, issues

do exist concerning its use; e.g. positionality, ethical considerations, sociological understandings of self, amongst others. In spite of these, the number of studies using insider research has increased recently, particularly in the field of education. The growth of professional doctorate programs, such as the Doctorate of Education (Ed.D) has resulted in more educational practitioners such as myself engaging in research in their own educational institutions, known as 'practitioner enquiry' in action research (Hellawell, 2006). My research explored how staff perceived my leadership effectiveness as principal. As such I exemplified insider researcher for as a researcher, I had prior knowledge and understanding already illustrated of the group I wished to study and I also belonged to the group. I played two roles simultaneously: namely that of researcher and researched.

Being an insider researcher often runs the risk of a research study being critiqued for lack of objectivity, however, I contend that conducting this research as an insider researcher had research benefits: first, the circumstances of the school were unique and this enriched the data; second, my longevity in the school in a variety of teacher and leadership roles meant that some staff still working at the school had known me and worked with me for a long time as colleagues, which helped me build trust and reinvigorate the vision of aiming to return the school to the successful school it had once been.

In assessing positionality, Takacs (2002) suggests the need to see beyond our own perspectives and to try to be able 'to identify assumptions that we take as universal truths but that instead have been crafted by our own identity and experiences in the world' (p.169). Takacs argues that we live our lives mainly via confirmatory internal self-dialogues and even when verbally exchanging views with others we often embark on monologues to convince others to comprehend us or adopt our specific views. Takacs's suggestion are useful. They underpin my acknowledgement that my knowledge claims are not universal truths and my positionality is linked to my epistemology. Knowing this as a researcher is important in subsequently opening me up to the existence of more possibilities, views and differences in experiences of the world. Thus, this current research project is more than an investment in a self-case study; additionally, it pays homage to staff voices, views and insights too. Adopting this open research positionality has assisted me to 'foster habits of introspection, analysis, and open, joyous communication' (Takacs, 2002, p.169).

I have aimed to shape this research project to what Takacs refers to as an 'assets model of multiculturalism' (p.170). Most of the participants in this project were non-Western and English was their second language. In some international school contexts, this could possibly be viewed as deficiencies. However, as one aim of the project was a move away from Western dominance in research, this becomes an advantage. Such staff are insiders and could help me, an insider-outsider Westerner and a native English speaker, see things that I might have missed and offer new insights into my position as principal and my leadership practices. Respect for my staff's unique life experiences, given that they were from an array of Middle Eastern cultures, therefore provided a broader range of experiences to understand the effectiveness or not of my leadership.

In addition, in trying to focus on the assets of my staff, I wanted to use the research to develop and empower staff to be knowledge makers and assist them in contributing their individualised knowledge to a collective understanding (Takacs, 2002, p.170). Respecting their differences on my leadership effectiveness would help me understand my personal worldview and ultimately the world itself better. My project allowed staff and I to explore and exchange knowledge perspectives which I believe enabled us to have more deeply rooted, reflective and shared understandings of our school world. This project allowed us to become more connected to that world, and to each other and as a school community, we were able to act upon that world to change it for the better (Takacs, 2002, p.174).

The project's mixed methods with a quantitative and qualitative design lent itself to the assets model. The research sought to include and value everyone's perspective, thus enabling 'bias' to be used as a resource to help both myself and my staff understand our positions in the school, and gain some insights on the assumptions each of us had blindly held about effective leadership. As a new researcher, I was initially oblivious to my own positionality. I had never previously had to examine such things as my white, Western privilege. I have never had to challenge any of these things as they had always worked for me. As a principal. I had to continuously examine my power relations, to be aware that my research positionality, as well as my professional role and title of 'principal' and employee retainer could, albeit inadvertently, lead me to abuse my power in my school, or with the research itself, in that for example I could choose to ignore staff voice either from the quantitative data of the surveys or the qualitative data from staff interviews to suit my own ends. Reflecting on my positionality throughout the research kept me ever vigilant. As

advised by Takacs (2002) I tried to shape my positionality by 'keeping an attitude of mindfulness, a willingness to be vulnerable, a searching ear, and a constantly engaged critical consciousness' (p.178) as a means to use the research to move and change.

Access, Timeline, Methods and Procedures

Table 2 Timeline

Activity	Time
Stage 1: Review of relevant literature Permission from school executives Permission for use of research tool Principal reflection	Academic year 2015-2016
Stage 2: Administration of staff survey Analysis of survey data	Academic year 2016-2017
Stage 3: Conducting staff interviews Transcriptions of interviews into Word Analysis of stages 1, 2 and 3 data	Academic year 2017-2018

Recording and Transcribing

The interviews were conducted in an informal, relaxed environment outside the confines of the school if possible. Each interview was digitally recorded. Every effort was made to accommodate what was most convenient for the participating member of staff. A total of thirty-seven staff had returned their surveys and then six of those respondents who had identified themselves took part in the second phase of staff research which was a recorded interview. the

interviews were recorded with permission from each participant and over the academic year 2017-2018, I transcribed them into Word.

The Participants

Seventeen respondents, about half of the sample, came from western educational systems, i.e. British, American, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand or South African. The other twenty respondents came from non-western educational systems, with predominantly Arab background. Purposive sampling was used to identify the participants to reflect the different national backgrounds and other aspects outlined in Table 3 below. This was equally demonstrative in those who volunteered to be interviewed which constituted out of the six interviewees, 3 being western trained professionals and three non-western. Also, half of the interviewees were mainstream teachers and the other half made up staff with either middle or senior leadership designations. All participants demonstrated a willingness to participate through self-nomination of staff on their 'anonymous' survey returns. The study was conducted on the 'home ground' of the researcher/principal thus the targeted population was readily available for the research (Given, 2008). Participants obtained through purposive sampling were encouraged to express their perceptions of leadership effectiveness. As staff members, they had appropriate experience of teaching, the majority were beyond NQT status in the teaching profession, and many, having been in their current institution of employment for some time, also had adequate experience of different school leadership over an extended period of time. Obviously, from a single sex school, all of the participants were female but the sample is balanced between those with western and non-western educational backgrounds.

Table 3. Basic information of respondents participating in the survey and those who completed the survey and interview

RESPONDENT INFORMATION	SURVEY	INTERVIEW
Total number of respondents	37	6

Educational background		
Western	17	4
Non-western	20	2
Position within the school		
Management (Middle or Senior)	11	5
Non-management	26	1
Years of experience in education		
0-5	0	0
5-10	1	0
10-20	26	3
20+	10	3
Length of work experience with principal		
0-1	5	1
2-4	22	3
5-7	4	0
8-10	4	1
10+	2	1

Data Analysis Process

My information was sorted and classified. The process initially was to separate the statements made by the teachers from their interview transcripts and group them thematically to provide further evidence or not to the ratings and findings from the survey. These were then matched to my personal evaluation of my leadership effectiveness from the 360-survey tool to see if the perception of reality by all concerned parties was one and the same. The semi-structured interview protocol made use of the questionnaire data as its base but also added was the statistical analysis, within a theme, in order to provide evidence of justification for perceptions. This enabled me to make stronger comparisons, draw some stronger conclusions from all the available evidence, and make links with the previous research projects of Pashiardis (2001, 2005) concerning possible discrepancies between western based and non-western based contexts.

The research's methodological approach was conceptualised to generate a data set which would lend itself to statistical and thematic analysis. The statistical analysis as previously indicated used the questionnaire responses to ascertain the perceptions of the staff cohort with regard to all the fifty-seven survey components. Both the questionnaire and thematic analyses produced data relevant to the phenomenon under examination (Boyatzsis, 1998): my perceived leadership effectiveness.

The data analysis process consisted of continuously reading and re-reading my data to identify themes and classify those themes (Rice & Ezzy, 1999) into identifiable patterns. These became my 'categories for analysis', (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006, pp.3-4). Distinct from other methods of thematic analysis like the template approach (Crabtree & Miller, 1999, 1999b), whereby a template is developed from a codebook and subsequently utilised to organise data into a form of text, my analysis made use of all my collected data; personal narrative reflections, thirty-seven staff questionnaires which provided data for the quantitative aspect of the research, and six staff interviews for the qualitative aspect of the research. The primary concern of the analysis was to explore where and when a multi-cultural teaching team perceived leadership to be effective in school improvement to provide comprehension and insight into what it means to be an 'effective leader'. As a case study, it would provide contemporary contextual findings of

'effective leadership' in a non-western context which would draw comparisons and contrasts with findings from studies of western sourced global contexts.

My method was iterative as during the analysis process themes were identified, refined and revised. In my qualitative analysis, a traditional practice was adopted (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Houghton et al., 2015), comprising of a two-stepped process; Identifying categories and applying them to the data and Refining the categories into broader themes, before the data were integrated with wider theory and literature.

Identifying Categories and Applying Them to the Data

The interview transcripts were read and re-read meticulously to classify emerging codes and theoretical categories. This comprised of diminishing the accumulated volume of text down to smaller entities, then sorting, and re-sorting in matching to a preliminary classification thereby generating a large quantity of segmented data and annotations (McLeod, 2001; Ary et al., 2018). The categories identified originated from the data, from my experience and values as a principal/researcher, and from the literature review (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). I applied as much caution as possible to ensure the categories both fitted and reflected the data and gave space for data which did not 'fit' easily to be identified. As the research involved a single case study of relatively small proportions, paper coding was chosen as a plausible means to identify arising categories.

Initially, eighty-four categories were identified as follows:

Effective communication	Trust	Team-building	Professional	Life-long learner	Vision	Listens
Role-Model	Approachable	Moral	Respectful	Consults	Clarity	Supportive
Fair	Problem solving	Develop leaders	Takes time for staff personally	Learning focused	Monitor	Engages

Consistent	Supports change	Evaluates	Mentor	Follow-through	Effective educational leadership	Focus on pupil outcomes
Positive relationship builder	Promotes CPD	Feed forward	Strategies to meet student needs	Targeted CPD	Pedagogical help to make school better	Making differences in teaching
Encourages learning	Everyone on the bus	Guidance	Open to ideas	Understanding	People focused	Impartial
Reliable	Knows strengths and weaknesses of team	Open door	Dependable	Values opinions or ideas	Caring	Transparent
Endeavouring	Knows own leader limitations	Leads by example	United front	Reasonable expectations	Loyalty	No blame culture
Presence	Stakeholder voice	Networks/ connects	Appreciative	Nurturing	Collaborative	Culturally astute
Committed	Accountable	Investing in staff	Helpful	External regulations adherence	Pro-active	Eyes always on the bigger picture
Addresses unique circumstances of school	Collectivity on all levels	Image builder	Negotiator	Calm demeanour	Reflective practice	Cultural, academic, behavioural challenges addressed
Pro-professional developer	Teacher leadership	Skill builder	Leader and manager	Confidence builder	Disseminates best practice	Interconnect

These categories were then synthesised and grouped into sixteen themes.

Refining the Categories into Broader Themes

Methods of contrasting and comparing (Tesch, 1990; Ary et al., 2018) were used to form category boundaries, methodically allocate data segments to categories, summarise category contents and identify any shortcomings. The aim of these systematic procedures was to identify conceptual similarities, to refine any differences between categories, and to locate trends, for example, 'leadership effectiveness connected to endeavour'. This established sixteen broader themes from the data which were not only the most recurrent but equally indicators of perceived leadership effectiveness. This was an extension of an inductive procedure whereby the broader themes fitted the categories resulting in a complex, evaluative account of leadership effectiveness. The sixteen themes were: Leadership effectiveness and mentoring; role modelling/setting a good example to junior staff; developing a collaborative culture/teamwork; promoting change in practical ways; listening skills; approachability; communication; clarifying goals/taking followers with me; endeavour; encouraging a culture of innovation/experimentation; promoting an inclusive culture; promoting student learning; establishing a positive culture/acknowledgement and recognition; developing a school's moral compass/following through; building a school's climate; developing personal qualities and professional competencies of the perceived reality between myself and my staff.

The staff survey analysis produced quantitative data in statistics. The staff interview analysis produced the qualitative data in themes. This quantitative and qualitative data were then merged with the principal's qualitative reflection to provide a fuller understanding of the complexities of engaging in effective school leadership in the implementation of change in international settings through principal and staff perspectives.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the project's research methodology, which was developed in accordance with Bass' (2008) argument that a new conceptualisation of leadership needs to combine both objective and subjective perspectives to better understand its complexity. It has discussed pragmatism as the underlying philosophical approach for the mixed methods design I

adopted. Drawing on arguments for mixed methods (Cresswell, 2014; Whiteman, 2015) the discussion of my methodological approach can, I have suggested, serve as an exemplar on educational leadership theory and practice for other academics. This chapter has also explored how diversifying research approaches to create new knowledge of leadership and followership can have practical research outcomes to inform and influence leadership in action in the real world (Gardner et al., 2010).

The following two chapters of the thesis discusses the main findings of the study and the concluding chapter indicates the value of the research outcomes in making a contribution to knowledge about school leadership.

Chapters 4 and 5-Findings and Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to explore further the findings of the empirical research of leader and follower perceptions of school improvement effectiveness. The findings provide insights into an as-yet, under researched context of a struggling international school. The data that were analysed included the teachers' interviews, my own reflections (as principal) on their comments and the teacher survey results. Sixteen guiding themes were identified during the data analysis these were arranged into seven sub-groups; theme 1, Aspects of Support included mentoring, role modelling and setting a good example to junior staff; theme 2, The Development of Cooperation included construction of a collaborative culture, teamwork and inclusion; theme 3, People-Centred Applications, incorporated listening skills, approachability and communication; theme 4, Fostering an Enterprising Culture consisted of promoting change in practical ways, endeavour and encouragement of innovation; theme 5, Culture Construction included school climate, its moral compass, clarification of goals, taking followers with me and following through; theme 6, was Promotion of Students' Learning; and finally, theme 7, Teacher Capacitation explored positive culture creation, recognition, development of personal qualities and professional competencies. The emerging data from these formed the basis of the two sections of this data chapter, the first exploring the leadership aspects discussed and quantified which were focused on supporting staff; and secondly, the aspects of leadership that were focused on the development of cultural and educational engagement.

Within the project's mixed methods approach, the quantitative survey data initially explored the different dimensions of leadership in terms of the nine domains characterising effective schools. The qualitative data derived from my personal narrative reflection and the interviews were analysed thematically. Together they created a dialogue pertaining to my perceived leadership effectiveness co-generated from a dialogue between staff and principal, and highlighted where connections, paradoxes or any opposition may have occurred.

Quantitative findings

Table 1: Staff questionnaire results

Domain Title	Highest Score	Lowest Score	Domain Mean
1. School Climate	4	3	3.7
2. School Leadership and Management	4	2	3.8
3. Curriculum Development	3	2	3.2
4. Personnel Management	4	3	3.8
5. Administration and Fiscal Management	4	2	3.5
6. Student Management	4	2	3.6
7. Professional Development and In-service	3	3	3.2
8. Relations with Parents and the Community	4	2	3.2
9. Problem Solving and Decision Making	3	2	3.2

In the staff survey, the first domain of 'School Climate', the highest marks gained by the principal was for descriptor 7, "*Promotes open communication and flexibility in relations with the staff as opposed to strict adherence to bureaucratic authority"*. This captured a mean of 4.4 which from the survey outcomes was perceived to occur always therefore suggesting seen is a more collaborative, collegial approach in my management style which staff seem to be receptive to. Two descriptors which gained the joint lowest marks were; descriptor 1, *"Clearly states the school's objectives"* and descriptor 3, *"Provides recognition for excellence and achievement"*. These both captured a mean of 3 which from the survey outcomes were perceived to occur often. In essence, what is demonstrated here from my leadership practice could be categorised as a form of transformational leadership. I was proactive in helping staff reach more than they thought possible (Antonakis et al., 2003) and most of all, moved them away from individual self-interest (Bass, 1999). Being transformational here, entailed me demonstrating integrity and

fairness, I set explicit goals coupled with high expectations but provided staff with support and recognition as part of our improvement journey. I had to ignite staff passions to focus beyond their self-interest to take the school to a better place; better than they initially thought possible (Pierce & Newstorm, 2008). Bass (1985) emphasised transformational leadership concentrated on social values and emerged in times of distress and change such as my school and its challenging circumstances. It laid the foundations to create the collective strength required by myself and my staff to be effective (Bass et al., 2003).

In summary, all eight descriptors in the first domain received an overall mean of 3.7 which means that I could be quantitatively categorised as often though not always exhibiting the behaviours outlined.

The second domain of 'School Leadership and Management', the joint highest marks gained by the principal were for descriptor 9, *"Cooperates with the staff in creating a common vision for school improvement"* which was achieved almost immediately on appointment in a CPD where staff with myself facilitating, collectively decided the vision, mission and learning definition for their school, and descriptor 15, which probed *"Closely cooperates and contributes to the work of the Ministry of Education"*. Both these items captured a mean of 4.4 which from the survey were perceived to occur always. In essence, the staff working collaboratively on what would be the vision and mission for our school and equally how we would as an all-through international school which included a kindergarten, a primary, secondary and sixth form school define learning permitted staff to be the catalysts of change as my role in that professional development was as a facilitator. I supplied the data for why we had to change and the research findings to facilitate our school improvement but the staff discussed, debated, agreed how we would set that 'in stone'. Descriptor 13, *"Encourages a culture of innovation and experimentation"* gained the lowest marks. This ranked a 2.8 on the survey outcomes indicating it was perceived to occur only sometimes. This was in existence but was perceived as sometimes by staff as an autocratic decision was taken to employ a western trained specialist to design and control the primary school curriculum in order to improve its effectiveness, as at that time, the majority of the school roll came from that age bracket and in that school section, had no Western trained members of staff. Some primary staff members were not happy about this as evidenced in the quantitative data and explored further in the thematic analysis later where it also arose from the interviews.

In summary, all eight items in this domain received an overall mean of 3.8 which means that I could be quantitatively categorised as often though not always exhibiting the behaviours outlined in this domain.

The third domain of 'Curriculum Development', the joint highest marks gained by the principal were for descriptor 19, *"Monitors systematically instructional processes to ensure that teaching activities are related to the expected outcomes"* and descriptor 20, *"Effectively administers and integrates all curricula taught in the school with the national curriculum"*. These both captured a mean of 3.6 which from the survey outcomes were perceived to occur often. Descriptor 17, *"Develops actions for the adaptation of the curriculum to the students' needs"* gained the lowest marks in this area. This ranked a mean of 2.6 from the survey outcomes which indicated was perceived to occur only sometimes. This data on my leadership adds some extension to the depth of literature on a principal's role in influencing school performance. Waters et al's., (2003) investigation of leadership impact on student achievement in an analysis of 70 empirical studies, concluded school leadership affected student achievement by 0.25. Here, my leadership practice employed instructional approaches. This was encapsulated in varying ways such as building a sense of community, establishing routines and ensuring teachers had the necessary resources. However, even though my leadership was perceived to perhaps influence school performance and involve instructional approaches, it was not perceived by all staff to happen all of the time.

In summary, all four items in this domain received an overall mean of 3.2 which means that I could be quantitatively categorised as often but not always exhibiting the behaviours outlined in this domain.

The fourth domain of 'Personnel Management', the highest mark gained by the principal was for descriptor 21, *"Used class observation to help the teachers' professional growth"*. This captured a mean of 4.2 which from the survey outcomes was perceived to always occur. Descriptor 22, *"Confers with subordinates regarding their professional growth; works jointly with them to develop and accomplish improvement goals"* gained the lowest marks. This ranked a mean of 3.2 which from the survey outcomes was perceived to occur only often. Nevertheless, the data here is somewhat suggestive again of practice in instructional leadership. However, Hallinger's (2005) review of instructional leadership and the school principal, concluded research evidence rarely demonstrated leaders personally supervising teaching and learning, or even evaluating.

However, the leadership behaviours I practised as illustrated above seem to contrast these findings. Robinson et al's., (2008) analysis of school leadership on school outcomes and of the differential effects of leadership types juxtapose Hallinger in affirming 'the closer educational leaders get to the core business of teaching and learning, the more likely they are to have a positive impact on students' outcomes' (p.664). In our school, the international examination results had almost trebled in the course of my principalship there, therefore the instructional approaches adopted by me although perceived not to happen all of the time were sufficient to improve results in international assessments.

In summary, all four items in this domain received an overall mean of 3.8 which means that I could be quantitatively categorised as often but not always exhibiting the behaviours outlined in this domain.

The fifth domain of 'Administration and Fiscal Management', the highest mark gained by the principal was for descriptor 31, *"Is punctual to meetings and gives attention to the discussions of the various issues raised in the meetings"*. This captured a mean of 4.6 which from the survey outcomes was perceived to always occur. Descriptor 30, *"Manages all school facilities effectively, efficiently supervises their maintenance to ensure clean, orderly and safe buildings and grounds"* gained the lowest marks. This ranked a mean of only 2 which from the survey outcomes was perceived to occur only sometimes. School facilities were in fact not under my control but that of the executive management as such if I or a member of staff reported an issue, its attention or resolution would be under their control and not mine. To some degree therefore this perception could be viewed as correct but something out of my control.

In summary, all seven items in this domain received an overall mean of 3.5 which means that I could be quantitatively categorised as often but not always exhibiting the behaviours outlined in this domain.

Grissom and Loeb (2009) argued effective instructional leadership required not only comprehension of the pedagogical requirements of a school but equally the skill to target resources where required and create opportunities for staff development all the while maintaining a school operationally. In addition, their findings argue that school improvement to be sustainable needs investment in organisational management as well as instructional leadership. Porter et al's., (2006) assessment of learning-centred leadership assessed the effectiveness of

specific educational behaviours via principal self-evaluation and evaluation from other stakeholders. Areas of task effectiveness examined were; Instruction Management, Internal Relations, Organisation Management, Administration, and External Relations and the research outcomes revealed the importance of a school leader's Organisation Management skills in forecasting school performance. Even triangulation of a principal's self-evaluation with other members of his/her leadership team affirmed the importance the Organisation Management efficacy of a principal had on school success. My school's long term and short-term goals had been established early on in my tenure and were visible in our vision, mission and school improvement plans. Similarly, with principal task effectiveness in Administration, Grissom and Loeb (2009) characterised as routine administrative duties and tasks carried out to comply with national regulations, I perceived myself to be effective and staff for the most part perceived these behaviours as visibly often occurring too.

The sixth domain of 'Student Management', the highest mark gained by the principal was for descriptor 32, *"Effectively communicates to students, staff and parents school guidelines for student conduct"*. This captured a mean of 4.4 which from the survey outcomes was perceived to always occur. Descriptor 38, *"Promotes the interconnection of learning experiences in the school with practices which are followed outside the school"* gained the lowest marks. This ranked a mean of 2.8 which from the survey outcomes was perceived to occur only sometimes which I would concur given student access to outside experiences were controlled by both the owners and the local Ministry of Education as they needed to grant permission. Overall, perceived in my leadership behaviour to a degree is further engagement with transformational leadership; I model integrity and fairness with students and staff with regard to discipline matters. In dealing with student misconduct, the punishment needs to befit the 'crime' and staff are supported, even physically, in their dealings with parents over these matters. The context of the school, operating in challenging circumstances evokes a focus on social values which lends itself to transformational leadership (Bass, 1985). As Bass et al., (2003) assert this leadership practice lays the foundations to create the collective strength required by myself and my staff as a team to be effective when confronting demanding challenges.

In summary, all nine items in this domain received an overall mean of 3.6 which means that I could be quantitatively categorised as often though not always exhibiting the behaviours outlined in this domain.

The seventh domain of 'Professional Development and In-service', the highest mark gained by the principal was for descriptor 42, *"Strive to improve leadership skills through self-initiated professional development activities"*. This captured a mean of 3.6 which from the survey outcomes was perceived to occur often. Descriptors 43, *"Utilises information and insights gained in professional development programmes for self-improvement"* and 44, *"Disseminates ideas and information to other professionals; providing leadership in addressing the challenges facing the profession"* gained joined lowest marks. Both items ranked a mean of 3 which from the survey outcomes were perceived to occur often also.

Here, the continuing professional development for staff and for myself seems to have been welcomed. My emphasis on the development of myself, my staff in creating improvement and leadership opportunities both inside the school and my application of personal external training and support of staff to undertake external training seems acknowledged and appreciated. My commitment to my own personal development and staff development is seen as important in effective leadership. I get satisfaction from my own and my staff's professional progress and development. Just as Harris and Day (2003) concluded with the headteachers they examined, I too, believed the development of staff had an important part to play in establishing my desired culture: i.e. what was to be our 'learning culture'. One of my priorities in developing my school came initially from me developing myself and then through development of my staff. This leadership as pedagogy, as heralded by Sergiovanni (1998) expands social capital through fostering collegiality and collaboration with staff members. The data provided by the inspections, my professional self-development leading to staff development, suggested community building was an important aspect of my leadership role as much as a sound, well-defined commitment to academic improvement whereby I had high expectations for my staff. This academic capital was established through the belief that all of our students could achieve. As in Day et al's., (1999) analysis of leadership in schools facing challenging circumstances, I, similar to the heads in those circumstances actively encouraged any means of staff development and growth, including my own to build capacity within the school and as Day et al., I tried to ensure that 'development did not only focus upon needs which were of direct benefit to the school and classroom but also those which were of direct benefit to the individual as a person' (p.8). Just as, Day et al., indicated that this emphasis on improvement of staff revealed how important an asset my staff were in bringing about change in a difficult context, and emphasised is the importance of

maintaining 'their own sense of self-worth by valuing them' (p.8). Kouzes and Posner (2007) examining the challenge of leadership categorised five features of effective leadership practice. One such feature, termed 'Modelling the Way', identified effective leaders to seize opportunities of showing others what they did by setting good examples. My deep involvement with our professional development on improved teaching and learning in the pursuit of excellence evidences this. I needed my staff to follow me therefore I had to develop 'a shared sense of purpose and direction' (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p.2). Equally, Duke (2006) in examining unsatisfactory schools and sustaining improvement, identified its link with principals who both model and mentor good teaching practices. For Kouzes and Posner (2002), 'Modelling the Way' can be perceived as 'earning the right and the respect to lead through direct involvement and action. People first follow the person, then the plan' (2002, p.15).

In summary, all four items in this domain received an overall mean of 3.2 which means that I could be quantitatively categorised as often though not always exhibiting the behaviours outlined in this domain.

The eighth domain of 'Relations with Parents and Community', the highest mark gained by the principal was for descriptor 45, *"Encourages relations between the school on one hand and the community and parents on the other hand"*. This captured a mean of 4 which from the survey outcomes was perceived to always occur. Descriptor 47, *"Creates such relations with the community and parents so that they are encouraged to participate in decision making within the school"* gained the lowest marks. This item ranked a mean of 2.4 which from the survey outcomes was perceived to occur sometimes.

Just as Harris (2002) determined for examined principals, I too, seemed to be good at creating and maintaining relationships. Deep commitment from my staff, I believe, as Harris (2002) indicated arose from inter-personal relationships which were transparent, sincere and of value. Descriptor 45 gaining the highest marks indicates staff perceived the importance I believed in building positive relationships with the parents and in being an inclusive school community included parents as stakeholders as much as it did the students.

Stoll and Fink's (1996) described 'invitational leadership' as an approach to leadership which places emphasis on personal values and equally inter-personal relationships with others. Again, I would show alignment with invitational leadership in my leadership approach here in the

importance I place on people instead of systems. Clearly, I adopted an array of leadership practices to address my particular issues and problems and those strategies were contingent to the culture I had inherited in my school but a distinctive characteristic as an improving school was my belief in building the school community into some kind of professional learning community. Within my tenure, I encouraged a collaborative culture and endeavoured to get a commitment from all stakeholders to work together but it took time and dialogue to achieve this both inside and outside of the school. I believe in organising opportunities to foster social trust in which the teachers and the parents engaged in dialogue was instrumental in achieving this. I like, Harris' (2002) principals believed in this *'interconnectedness of home, school and community' (*p.12*).* In achievement of this, my activities of newsletters, open days, parental days, staff/parent contact, etc. required engagement with dialogue and comprehension of our school community needs, parental engagement, and connection with formal and informal community partners. I used whatever opportunity possible to demonstrate our successes and created trust in demonstration of our care for all of our students. My cultural understanding of where my international school was situated; and my school as I had previously been employed in the school when it was successful; my tacit knowledge of my internal school stakeholders, permitted me to be aware how and where learning might be impeded; where negativity of opposition could occur and the importance of listening to parental perspectives gave me comprehension of that bigger picture. All of this, coupled with the understanding of how community relationships affected academic performance dictated the importance community connection was to the success of our school. The aspect of parental contribution to decision making perceived to be lacking was correct but was an aspect of school life which was out of my control as the executive management declined permission for such an initiative.

In summary, all seven items in this domain received an overall mean of 3.2 which means that I could be quantitatively categorised as definitely often exhibiting the behaviours outlined in this domain.

The ninth domain of 'Problem Solving and Decision Making', the highest mark gained by the principal was for descriptor 56, *"Tries to listen to many views and ideas before solving important problems"*. This captured a mean of 3.6 which from the survey outcomes was perceived to occur often. Descriptor 57, *"Implements decision-making processes which are participative as opposed to autocratic"* gained the lowest marks. This item ranked a mean of 2.4 which from the survey

outcomes was perceived to occur sometimes. I perceived myself to be a good listener and instilled in my staff a deep and strong commitment to academic achievement which was transmitted to our parent stakeholders. Sergiovanni (1998) affirmed that a school's professional capital is crafted within a foundation of shared responsibilities and support which staff seem to also perceive in descriptor 56. I believed it of utmost importance to involve my staff in the school's decision making and trusted them professionally yet the survey results suggest staff perceived this to occur only sometimes.

In summary, all six items in this domain received an overall mean of 3.2 which means that I could be quantitatively categorised as often but not always exhibiting the behaviours outlined in this domain.

Quantitative Summary

The main purpose of this first section of the findings and discussion was to illustrate how the quantitative results of the survey 'perceptions' by staff connected to my narrative reflections as principal on leadership effectiveness. The descriptors, their subsequent evaluations and narrative elements from myself as principal illustrated how these connections when visible were constructed in practice, demonstrative of what Frost (2006) argues as capacity for leadership resulting from powerful learning experiences. My 'hedgehog concept' of leading a learning centred school contextualised itself in leadership for learning and this, I endeavoured to create as the climate in the school. In light of this and from the demonstrated results, trust and openness were prevalent in this school thus paving the way for the school to do things in new approaches. As the school's core function centred on learning, it identified leadership to be shared in the sense that learning in the school was done together, knowledge and its meaning were created collectively and collaboratively (Harris and Lambert, 2003), thereby emphasising the interdependence of the leadership and learning endeavours. It can be argued that in operating a leadership for learning approach aligns itself to a cultural approach in school improvement where I, as principal, wished to 'win hearts and minds' (MacBeath, 2005, p.11); support for which was gathered from staff learning collaboratively, networking internally, conversing informally and promoting new ideas (MacBeath, 2005). The quantitative data demonstrated much alignment but not full alignment between principal and staff. The areas for principal self-improvement were; dissemination of professional ideas and information; addressing challenges facing the profession;

encouragement of innovation and experimentation; participative decision-making processes and curriculum adaptation to student needs demonstrated areas of contention between principal and staff.

The next section of the findings and discussion demonstrate further exploration of perceptions through focus on the qualitative aspect of the mixed methods research, the staff interviews with analysis of recurring themes and their alignment or not, with the principal's personal narrative of effective leadership. It also linked with the quantitative data to produce an overall deeper capture of analysis. This 'qualitative' aspect of the research which follows reveals thematical support in the data of further connections between the staff and principal's perception of effective leadership but it again brought to light other paradoxes, shortcomings and challenges which will also be reviewed.

Leadership in action and aspects of supporting staff

In this international context, the theme of supporting, which included mentoring and role modelling, was found to be an important aspect of leadership in action with staff and principal. Ensher et al., (2002) defined a mentor as "an individual with greater or equal career experience than his or her protégé … who can provide vocational, psychosocial or role-modelling support," (p.1408). They also describe three support strategies which mentors give to mentees. The first strategy is vocational or instrumental support for career advancement achieved through visibility, sponsorship, protection and challenging assignments (Noe, 1988; Gibb & Megginson, 1993; Yukl, 2002; Jackson & Parry, 2011; Notman, 2014). The second is psychosocial which encompasses activities such as counselling, friendship, encouragement and acceptance (Scandura, 1992; Yukl, 2002; Jackson & Parry, 2011; Pashiardis & Johansson, 2020). Thirdly, they often operate as role-models to their proteges (Scandura, 1992; Pashiardis & Johansson, 2020) whereby, "the mentor demonstrates appropriate behaviour for the protégé such as giving critical feedback in a constructive manner", (Ensher et al., p.1408, 2002; see also Wang, 2016). Within mentoring also exists the support of coaching which Hopkins-Thompson (2000) identifies as being more focused and shorter in duration than specific mentoring. Through instruction, demonstration and high-impact feedback (Gray, 1988), job-related skills or activities are accomplished.

The data from staff interviews indicated that mentoring, coaching and role-modelling were considered by participants to be important aspects of supporting the effectiveness of my leadership in action.

Mary, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and three years at the school said:

> *I was here every morning at six o'clock discussing [*with the principal*] what do I do, what's the best way to do this, how can I do this and that really helped me improve my leadership skills, a learning experience even though it might not appear like that but for me, I felt as if I learnt something. (Interview, June 2017).*

I have chosen this quotation because it is typical of what others have said. Mary was a British trained teacher who had had several years' experience of working in different but similar schools in this country, therefore she had some understanding of what it takes to work in challenging circumstances. Equally, back in the UK, she had occupied a middle leadership role as Head of Department in a large, inner city, comprehensive school and had some experience and understanding of leadership. At this school, she had been given the opportunity to move into a senior leadership role. The school was not allocated any budget for professional development or capacity building, therefore, this had to be accessed in-house. My role as Principal included researching, organising and actually conducting the school's CPD or where possible, with permission from the Deputy General Manager, used petty cash to enable staff to access external training. Mary states she turned up at school every morning and spent an hour with me to discuss the demands of her new role such as making staff accountable with regard to, for example, duties or meeting deadlines; and how she could achieve those objectives successfully. She felt that from our sessions she did learn and improve but wonders if it '*might not appear like that'* as other leaders and staff members criticised to me and Mary herself, the amount of time she spent with me did prevent them from having access. Similarly, in our discussions, Mary and I would continually return to the same issues she faced such as resistance. Often at my door would be Mary herself upset because team members were resisting her instructions, or her staff would come directly to me to question her directives. Nonetheless, Yukl (2002) identified seven commonly used activities which facilitate the learning of appropriate leadership skills on the job as Mary emphasises which include mentoring and coaching. Moreover, what is suggested from

Mary's data is evidence of Kempster's (2006) "leadership learning through lived experience draw[ing] on a complex milieu of events and influences that occur through daily engagement with particular contexts, and it is through such engagement that leadership meanings and practices" unfold (p.5, 2006). Kempster's notion of an apprenticeship model illustrates how 'naturalistic influences' (p.7, 2006) such as observational learning through notable people can impact on leadership learning. I, as the notable person in Mary's life; an established, qualified leader, was happy to share my learning experiences (VanGronigen et al., 2018) with this up-and-coming leader which she felt were beneficial to her as she states. "…*that really helped me improve my leadership skills*".

Anne, who had worked me whilst I was principal, and two years at the school said:

> *I get the ability to talk to the person right away to solve …… you can see that your own character, your own style of teaching, will be like kind of…… nurtured to or makes your teaching easier. (Interview, June 2017).*

I quote Anne here because her words capture similar perceptions by the other interviewees and she exemplifies what forms of mentorship or coaching were made available to her. Anne was also British trained with several years' experience of working in the UK, again in a large, inner city, comprehensive school in challenging circumstances similar to Mary. She refers to having the '*ability*' to '*talk to the person right away*' which *'makes your teaching easier'* which is a consistent perception throughout her interview as previous experience, back in the UK, mandated that contact in her school had to go through a hierarchy i.e. she could only communicate with her line manager and then had to wait for the response which not all of the time was immediate; subsequently creating delays which did not suit her personality and she found detrimental to being able to do her job. A skilled practitioner in her subject specialism of art, however she took time to adapt to her new context; to win over the parents and students, and realise that she was not in the UK. Also, as well as culture, as a practising Muslim working in a Muslim country did present challenges to her personal beliefs concerning her faith. I was from the West but I had lived in the culture for over twenty-five years and worked with many Muslim students and teachers from the region which gave me a good understanding of how to navigate the terrain successfully. This teacher spent time with me for advice on matters such as how to approach

issues of malpractice where a student removed her exam coursework from school and secured outside help to complete it. Anne had to navigate the 'grey' area of interpretation of malpractice and subsequent ramifications between the school, the student and her parents who believed it was not morally wrong according to their beliefs, given it was only 'help'.

Anne's reference to her *'style of teaching ... own style'* being *'nurtured to'* aligns with the staff surveys in personnel management evaluation which had high rankings for;

> *Used class observation to help the teachers' professional growth"* and *"Confers with staff regarding their professional growth; works jointly with them to develop and accomplish improvement goals*

thus acknowledging that my leadership behaviours in nurturing were also observed to occur in the school by other members of staff. Teaching and learning needed to improve in all school sections which required me to build every teacher's professional capacity through nurturing via formal but collaborative activities such as appraisal and target setting but equally endeavour to empower them by ensuring their individual creativity was not stifled as Anne explains in being able to maintain her '*own style'* of teaching and the survey data suggest from my interactions with staff '*regarding their professional growth'* and working *'jointly with them to develop and accomplish improvement goals*'.

In leadership mentoring, I endeavoured to adapt the traditional formal, monologic monitoring which was characterised by closed interactions (Nahmad-Williams & Taylor, 2015) and therefore less open to socially constructed meaning, preferring to move it towards more equity in discourse by allowing leaders or teachers to lead that engagement through informal conversations as indicated above which were productive as I understood in leading or teaching, they would be the agents of change. I did not operate an appointment system in the school, staff were free to approach me anywhere, at any time and I would try and accommodate them. My leadership behaviours endeavoured to engage with mentoring which in my context was not built on formality (Bolden et al., 2015), in order for me to develop staff confidence about their professional competence, to be able to translate theory into practice, and develop their communication skills (Daresh & Playko, 1990, 1994).

In my educational context, through mentoring activities I aspired to secure the individual development of each staff member (Brondyk & Searby, 2013; Neumerski, 2013; Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015) as supported in my personal reflection account, as I rationalised my mentoring as part of my leadership approach as follows:

> *I taught throughout my four years, modelled and mentored the teaching and learning as I was one of the few British trained professionals and I, with the management team created an environment of mentoring, peer to peer sharing, passing of academic literature, establishing a professional library for staff, appraisal system that allowed for staff feedforward on their appraisals, targets and outcomes.*

Part of any school's performance management structure would be evaluation of the teaching and learning however, in my context, I innovated this to move to a more holistic approach in its application. From any of the school sections, two leaders, either senior, middle or a combination of both attended lesson observations and from their joint discussion on what they had seen; ascertained from the students with whom they engaged in dialogue about the normal learning practices in the class; and from a scrutiny of the students' books would have to come to a joint agreement regarding the appraisal outcome. Staff would be informed who their appraisers would be and if they were uncomfortable for some reason with the selection could request a change. During the feed forward sessions between the leaders and the staff member after the observation, staff were able to discuss the findings, justify their choices, agree/disagree and collaborate on their evaluation outcomes and next steps.

I wished to remove the formality from lesson observations and develop them to become learning and collaborative improvement enterprises where staff felt they had a voice, and consider it a fairer method of 'evaluation' being evidence based. It was well received from the outset of its application. Creating a mentoring environment with informality, therefore making use of the professional library, requesting academic literature, or subsequent discussion was really only supported and accessed by trained teachers or those who had a responsibility in the school. However, as the academic literature and library were written in English, this may have had an impact as the majority of staff were not native English speakers. Where oral engagement with professional issues was evident, occurred in the staff smoking area which was frequented by

leaders and school staff from all sections, even non-smokers such as myself. I would often go to the smoking area in search of a teacher or leader and listen to staff discuss for example, practices such as students working in groups introduced during professional development, which they had tried to introduce into their teaching but had encountered problems. They asked other staff members for advice, how the initiative had worked in their classrooms or even for another staff member or leader which included me to observe their teaching. Perhaps in a more social, informal setting and with translators at hand, staff felt more confident to approach or be open to professional issues; even their own.

The above signifies visual representations of a 'learning organisation' which Senge termed as one 'where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and people are continually learning how to learn together' (p.3, 1990). Schools should be learning organisations which Kofman and Senge (1993) view as places where individuals advance their own learning and growth. Teachers and their experiences therefore will decide if their organisation operates as a forum for learning (Sunde & Ulvik, 2014). Engaging with mentoring that is informal did not merely focus on making teaching manageable (Fresko & Alhija, 2009), for all concerned, it created an arena to improve our teaching and learning (Donohoo, 2018). Mentoring as I chose to adapt it not only facilitated professional development, it provided opportunities to analyse teaching, understand how adults themselves learn and promote critical reflection, (Ulvik & Sunde, 2013). Timperley (2010) argues teaching and learning improvement will be secured if attention is given to student needs coupled with the emotional and professional needs of teachers.

A further aspect within the umbrella of supporting in this international context, was the theme of modelling/setting a good example to junior staff which was found to be an important aspect of leadership in action with staff and principal. Susanto (2017) using Islamic tradition defined the word 'model' "as a way of educating, guiding by using good examples" and "people whose behaviour can be exemplified" (p.315-316). In education, this exemplification lay in the teaching of all values most convincing to secure educational success. Susanto (2017) suggests modelling is the essence of education, therefore it has a connection to leadership, given interactions between principals and their teachers regarding leadership in action does not reach understanding

solely from the words that are spoken but also, the leader's full personality portrayed in their attitudes and behaviours.

The data from staff interviews indicated that modelling/setting a good example to junior staff were considered by participants to be important aspects of supporting the effectiveness of my leadership in action.

Jane, who was newly appointed whilst I was principal, said:

> *…… the fact that the school exists, efficient things do happen but like any other school, there's always room for improvement. No school is perfect…. comes with its own unique circumstances…… and when I actually thought about these responses that was a very big part of influencing my response here even though I haven't been here very long but I look to the bigger picture and I realise that, there are challenges.*

And;

> *In my own experience having actual appraisals and basing it on that, it was constructive, constructive feedback was given but at the same time it was, it is in need of improvement for my liking but it was done in a very conductive and conducive way. (Interview, June 2017).*

Jane above was one of the six interviewees who gave an example of how my modelling behaviours or setting an example was helpful however, unlike the others she has forwarded feedback above which critiques. Her first response refers to aspects of relations with parents and the community, specifically, the depth of encouragement between the school and its parental community, which although has a degree of efficiency, '*there is always room for improvement*' and even though she is new to the school and this international culture, she does realise that there are '*challenges*'. Her second response refers to the use of lesson observations in the personnel management section which although entailed '*constructive feedback*' and were carried out in a '*conductive and conducive way*', still she felt needed '*improvement*'.

According to Harris and Lambert (2003) in building leadership capacity for school improvement requires collective and collaborative construction of meaning and knowledge to 'involve

opportunities to surface and mediate perceptions, values, beliefs, information and assumptions through continuing conversations' (p.17). Harris and Lambert argue these processes are at the heart of shared leadership as they concern collective learning and identity (Bolden et al., 2015). Stoll and Fink's (1996) invitational leadership centres itself around four key tenets, the second of which, respect, is demonstrated through powerful discussion and reasoned dissent as evidenced by Jane. If leadership is perceived to be invited then it should foster a shared sense of accountability which is the fifth principle of the leadership for learning practice from the Cambridge Network (see MacBeath et al., 2005). Staff being able to render an account (Kahlenberg & Potter, 2014) involves our school in a process of self-evaluation, communication and renewal which in turn fosters an accountability relationship expressed in shared goals, mutual respect and trust which Forster (1999) proposes is an empowering practice to school accountability because of its capacity to maintain partnerships and collective endeavour.

And;

> *... very difficult for me to answer that not having known the leader very long but I would definitely, again my answer perhaps based on assumptions, I said 'no opinion' but I would change that somewhat now again if I think about it; the good research the leader is doing; if I look really at what the leader is involved in researching then I would definitely say the leader is very much involved in professional development activities so I do not know if that answer is sufficient but if I could somehow change that answer from 'no opinion' to 'always', I mean, basing it on my own experiences. (Interview, June 2017).*

This quote is interesting from Jane who had found voice to critique where she perceived my leadership practice to falter above but here in this quote, upon reflection returns to acknowledge an area where she has a change of perception to fall in line to be representational of the perceptions of the other interviewees. Jane is the most recently employed member of staff i.e. her first year in the school who although not Western, is pedagogically trained, experienced and has held middle leadership positions. Her home based teaching experience consisted of employment in large, state schools which in some areas lacked facilities and the class student numbers exceeded what was considered to be educationally detrimental in the UK. It is her first

experience in an international context and is entering the school, three years on from the commencement of its improvement journey. She had entered a school that was now functional and had concrete evidence to demonstrate improvement. This teacher is perhaps out of all the interviewees, the most 'critical' of my leadership in her responses and this may have been culturally related to her home country experience or that she was too 'new' to the school to understand where we have come from or simply as she suggests felt had not had sufficient working time with me to form an evaluation. This response related to professional development and concerned evaluation of me improving my leadership skills through self-initiated professional development activities. The day after her interview, she returned to me for additional time as she had reflected upon her original responses and in view of her reflections had re-evaluated some of her grading. Her evaluation of me improving my leadership skills through self-initiated professional development activities, she originally selected '*no opinion*' but wished to change and she now conceived me to be '*very much involved in professional development activities*'. In conversation with her, she did wish to '*give her best*' to the part she was playing in the research. Interestingly, in the mentoring interventions the only aspect she did make use of was peer sharing of resources and support with teaching and learning with the other member of her department who was young, Western and also in her first year at the school. I am not quite sure why. Perhaps being new, she was still finding her feet. Nevertheless, Jane exemplifies empowerment residing in accountability through her confidence and openness to engage with accountability practices, where she highlights '*room for improvement' and 'need of improvement';* and her own accountability practice, '*if I could somehow change that answer from 'no opinion' to 'always'* which suggest processes in place and support existed, to promote and monitor change in the school.

Daisy, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and seven years at the school said:

> *…. Yes, I've had a couple of like confrontations with parents (laughs) and yes, you've proven to be the link and to have sorted it out …… with both sides. Yeah, mediating both sides. (Interview, June 2017).*

Daisy's quote is chosen because it illustrates her personal perception of support from the handling of disagreement between different stakeholders in the school; teacher and parent where

both Daisy and I share accountability to restore harmony. Daisy had several years' employment in the school and had experience of other schools in the location. She was not Western, nor teacher trained but had worked to improve her skill set in teaching. She was proactive and took advantage of whatever was offered to her to be able to learn and improve. She did have a middle leadership responsibility in the primary school and reference here is made to a couple of confrontations she had encountered with parents in her teaching role which had not gone well because emotions had got the better of her. One particular incident related to an issue regarding discipline whereby one of her students on numerous occasions had refused to carry out instructions given by Daisy and was impacting on the teaching and learning of the class. The teacher had followed the school discipline policy by logging the incidents in the student's diary and calling home to inform the mother who did not believe the teacher as she had already spoken to her daughter and had been given a different version of events. However, a teaching assistant was present in the class and had witnessed the event. Daisy was Arab, therefore an Arab speaker and heated engagement with the child's mother at the end of a school day, in the presence of the teaching assistant, had moved interactions to be conducted not in English but in Arabic where the teacher completely understood the inferences she wished her words to convey. In the heat of the argument, the mother insulted Daisy who in turn, in anger, disrespected the mother, forgetting that she was a paying customer and as customary in the culture would seek 'to take her rights' and lodge her complaint with the highest authority in the school which would be the Deputy General Manager who then had the right to decide the outcome. Had I been able to intervene, being principal, in dealing with wrongs or perceived wrongs of staff, I would have personally accepted responsibility for my school of a 'wrong', apologise and then mediate with all concerned parties to find a middle ground to move forward which most of the time worked. Previously mentioned the Cambridge Network's fifth principle of leadership for learning (see MacBeath et al., 2005) supporting the development of a shared sense of accountability within schools coalesces with Earl's suggestion that authentic accountability is interwoven with a 'moral and professional responsibility to be knowledgeable and fair in teaching and in interactions with students and their parents' (p.7, 2005b) which Daisy sees in my leadership practice being '*the link and to have sorted it out …… with both sides'.*

Daisy's reference of support with parental issues regarding discipline matters connects to the staff surveys in the area of personnel management which had high rankings for *"Effectively*

communicates to students, staff and parents school guidelines for student conduct", and acknowledges that leadership involved in role modelling and setting a good example to junior staff were also observed occurring in the school by other members of staff. Here, noticeable in my leadership behaviours is engagement with transformational leadership; I model integrity and fairness with students and staff with regard to discipline matters. In dealing with student misconduct, the punishment needs to befit the 'crime' and staff are supported, even physically, in their dealings with parents over these matters. The context of the school, operating in challenging circumstances evokes a focus on social values which lends itself to transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Pashiardis & Johansson, 2020). Bass et al., (2003) argue this leadership practice lays the foundations to create the collective strength required by myself and my staff as a team to be effective when confronting demanding challenges. The transformational leadership component of individualised consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006), enables leaders to provide particular attention and support from mentoring and coaching as I did with Daisy or Anne previously which in turn enabled them to contextualise appropriately and successfully their interactions with parents and subsequently encouraged growth and achievement of them as followers.

My personal reflection account highlights the importance of creating an environment which is conducive to learning*; expectations were continuously '*modelled'* from the top to the bottom of the school. School conduct of not being tardy or coming with the correct equipment were continually emphasised and awarded importance and subsequently supported staff in their ability to be able to do their job in this school with difficult circumstances. *Our home/school agreements* were a signed declaration of expectations which had been collectively agreed upon by staff. Student misconduct was classified in levels of one to five, each with a selection of appropriate sanctions which were forwarded to homes and published around the school. The agreements were time-consuming to collect from the parents; also as parents and students realised they were legally signing up to the discipline procedure of the school with little room for debate, they had to be chased up but demonstrated to staff their ability to do their already difficult job would have support from both the principal and parents. Modelling the practice of following through and carrying out discipline procedures was filtered out at varying levels to all staff. '*As often as possible, I was present with staff in dealing with their parents'* and if necessary I would intervene to either role model or set an example discretely to staff in how to navigate

with the parents especially if dealing with after school detentions, suspension or exclusions. '*I am an advocate of restorative justice. I will deal with situations with the involvement of others: counsellor, and other school personnel to reason with students and work through problems'*.

Mentoring in the area of student management in connection to communicating with stakeholders regarding student behavioural issues and subsequent equity in application led me to choose a form of leadership which would help to lead our school forward. Mentoring here, I would with staff, as exampled above, empower them indirectly by modelling appropriate approaches (Gunawan, 2019) which involved me at all times remaining calm; being prepared to hear all sides of a situation; investigating issues fully to acquire evidence before making a judgement call in this cultural context. These approaches staff could then emulate to take on 'leadership' roles without me in dealing not only with students but equally with their parents. Staff would gather evidence to support or justify their actions thus parental encounters were less confrontational. One concern for me due to the school's turbulent past was to maintain staff morale and motivation. Staff development within the school as stated was not allocated funding from the budget, therefore I used any means possible as previously highlighted such as in-service training led by me, or other members of staff who had an opportunity to be sent on a course or to a sister school and those developments were not only directly beneficial to the school but also to them as an individual in building capacity. As my school had faced challenging circumstances, like Harris' (2002) schools, I believed that my staff were my most important resource and in our challenging times they needed to feel valued. Equal to Harris' (2002) principals, I believed in everything that I did, I needed to model behaviours which were necessary to achieve our goals. I needed to demonstrate care, support, and encouragement in the counselling domain to be able to configure and draw ratification to a shared set of values. My vision and practices, aligned themselves like Harris' (2002) principals to personal, moral values such as modelling of respect, being fair and ensuring consistency of equality when dealing with students, and in the collective, transformational development of my staff (Donohoo, 2018; Fairman & MacKenzie, 2015). Thus, as such my role in this school required me to be visible (Walker & Qian, 2018) and portraying people-centred behaviours (Bryk et al., 2010; VanGronigen et al., 2018). Every day, during the school breaks I would be visible in the yard monitoring but also engaging with the students and staff in a professional but also personal manner. These engagements, as students referred to all staff, including me as 'Miss' with our first names, lessened the perception of hierarchy within the

school; I, and the teachers were equally responsible for our students. Therefore, as Harris (2002) asserts, my leadership engagement was 'fluid and emergent' rather than a 'fixed' experience, (p.15). Subsequently to be successful, required me to adopt other power relationships within my school where the differences between leaders and followers were more lateral and fuzzier (Bolden et al., 2015). On improving, our tasks within the school became more widely distributed to become shared and collective endeavours in which all teachers within the school participated (Bolden et al., 2015; Pashiardis & Johansson, 2020). Our school's unique context whereby the staff worked and learned together, enabled us to both create and refine meaning which resulted in our shared goals (Harris et al., 2013).

The summary survey score in student management indicated these behaviours occurred often and suggests staff felt via guidance, words and actions, i.e. leadership in action through mentoring or modelling, I communicated my personal vision and belief system. Both teachers and students certainly in student management from an array of symbolic gestures such as being polite always had the expectation of using the words 'please' and 'thank you' which culturally was not as important to demonstrate; actions such as these by me became effective in realigning us to the school's vision. To succeed in accomplishing my desired goals for the school, I had to demonstrate consistency at all times, complete integrity with my approaches and modelling of appropriate behaviour which lends itself to invitational leadership (Stoll & Fink, 1996; Burns & Martin, 2010; Steyn, 2016). My interactions with my staff being positive, contoured their concept of self in the messages communicated and judged them to be able, responsible and of value. These points were transmitted not only in interpersonal actions but equally through the school policies and practices, physical terrain and in my day-to-day dealings with stakeholders. My leadership practice was founded upon trust, respect and my conviction to develop the potential of not only my staff but equally my students and this interaction probably contributed to being successful as did demonstration of softer qualities which permitted me to be effective in my leadership and develop confidence in my team that our vision was worth following (City, 2013).

In summary, the data above of leadership in action and aspects of supporting have illuminated principal practices I enacted which impacted on and improved school effectiveness in this particular context. Leadership engagement with aspects of supporting such as informal feedback

in mentoring itself, establishing a mentoring environment through identified interventions, and modelling (Gunawan, 2019) allowed thoughts and ideas to be explored collectively (Jones et al., 2018). Meaning became shared from open and meaningful interactions (Bokeno & Gantt, 2000) where mentors and mentees become reflective collaborators and paved the way for the mentoring model to be dialogical to align leader and follower perceptions of leadership efficacy. Equally, role modelling by the principal in talking to staff promoted reflection and subsequently facilitated the school's improvement process (Blasé & Blasé, 1999) in suggesting this leader and followers are generally aligned. Engaging with the aforementioned aspects of supporting built individual staff members' professionalism or agency to improve their capacity and so make leadership more distributed in our context. MacBeath et al., (2005) documented the Carpe Vitam Project from Cambridge University, examining how leadership for learning was made meaningful in varying contexts and conceptualised five different principles. One principle focused on learning as an activity and the belief that everyone within the community was a learner and that a professional learning agenda needed to include the learning of the school principal. MacGilchrist et al., (1997) emphasised the importance of school leaders being able to communicate; model implicit and explicit ideas to staff thus enabling a culture of learning to permeate throughout the whole school. This idea of the school principal being the 'head learner' demonstrates the connection between leadership and learning as interdependent. Forging this connection was important to me being a life-long learner who took responsibility to impart my acquired knowledge and experience to my majority non-Western staff in professional development and workshops, as well as mentor and role model actively. Equally, as Blasé and Blasé (1999) indicated that instead of principals exercising control over teachers, what should be sought as demonstrated by this current principal is creating professional dialogue communities from non-monologic mentoring episodes; and collegiality with staff in creating equity in discourse to develop open, two-way discussions. For Day et al., (1999, 2001) it appears I, similar to the heads examined in their research, believed in the importance of promoting staff development through mentoring and role-modelling. Leithwood (1994) conceptualised transformational leadership to include a dimension of the modelling of best practice and important organisational values was also perceived as effective leadership. My context was challenging, therefore major concerns of mine were to encourage positive morale, inspire staff and develop capacity within the school. This development did not just centre on what was

required to be of immediate benefit to the school but equally the development needs of all my staff as individuals to be able to take our school forward.

Having explored the theme of leadership in action and aspects of staff support through e.g. mentorship, the next section will examine how cooperation was developed to support staff further in my leadership practice.

Leadership in action and cooperation development

In this international context, data from the study indicated that developing cooperation through collaboration, teamwork and inclusion was an important aspect of leadership in action. These data are put into context by Hickman's (2010) suggestion that leading change in a challenging environment relies on the collective or collaborative abilities of its members. Allen at al., (1998) argue for contemporary leaders to be effective, group-centred bodies are needed in which their members 'learn continually' as 'answers are found in the community' (p.15). Leadership here does not rely solely on a principal to bring about improvement or provide innovative, adaptive solutions. Instead it uses the capacities and resources of all teachers. Through this, followers have an opportunity to become reconstructed and undertake novel roles in co-leading, lifelong learning, collaborating and functioning as adaptive leaders to develop and sustain a context where people are free to lead themselves (Allen et al., 1998, Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

The data from staff interviews indicated the connectedness between collaborative, team and inclusive practices initiated and the part they then played in developing cooperation within the school for improvement were considered by participants to be important aspects of supporting the effectiveness of my leadership in action.

May, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and twenty years at the school said:

> *I found the classroom management ones [Professional Development] especially really helpful to me. I learnt, picked up a lot of tips from that and it's a good way to get everyone to work as a team, get them together, and I think everyone has learned something from it because it's not just one person, everyone's putting their ideas……(Interview, June 2017).*

May's quote was chosen as it was representational of the interviewees with regard their perception of collaborative and teamwork efforts within the school. May was Western but had had no formal teacher training. In her home country she had met and married a Middle Eastern national and moved to her husband's home base to establish a life. She initially joined a lower part of the school as an assistant and then later took up the role of a librarian. From her longevity in the school, she had experienced its demise and turbulent history of revolving leadership. Above, she is referring to one of the professional development opportunities given to staff throughout the year. Interesting to note that as the school had employed a number of staff who were not trained, the professional learning came from areas of concern the leadership team and staff themselves had identified, one of which was behavioural management. May found difficulty controlling some of the more challenging classes during her library lessons and would often call upon a leader for help with student behaviour. '*Work as a team', 'everyone has learned', 'everyone's putting their ideas'* signifies time made for collaboration as these encounters were whole school based unless their focus was departmentally based i.e. only of benefit to a particular section of the school. According to Calvert (2016), this allocation of collaborative time is indicative of how school leaders improve educational agency in their respective professional learning contexts.

Anne, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and two years at the school said:

> *… 20 odd teachers and we need someone to listen to all our views and that's what we get: we have department, secondary departmental meetings, we give our ideas, our input, we go away, we think on it, we come back, we get given feed forward and we give our reflection of what we said and what we heard so that helps…. We work on it together and it's not just, you know, one idea, we look at all of them and try to solve all problems and that's what we get from her.*

And;

> *So, for me, I feel as though we get given a chance as a whole school community to give our ideas, forward to the principal and then we get …. what happens and what doesn't happen and how we can move forward as a whole school. (Interview, June 2017).*

Anne's quotes are chosen as they further exemplify the depth of collaboration and teamwork existent in the school, not only in specific school sections but as a whole international school to solve problems and make decisions. Here, this western trained teacher discusses collaboration in the context of problem solving and decision making within the school. She believes in me she has someone who *'listens to all our views',* and that takes place in all layers of the leadership structure, '*secondary meetings'* with her head of section and '*department*' with her head of department whereby '*we give our* ideas' then '*think on it',* '*feedforward*' is given and time for '*reflection*'. The staff with different leaders, work '*together*' and collectively '*try to solve all problems*'.

Here the data suggests the foundation conditions are being created for teacher learning and leadership which is connected to capacity building. Hopkins and Jackson (2003) looking at effective leadership for school improvement identified four dimensions of capacity building. One important facet was the importance of all people in an organisation and the expansion of their contributions. May and Anne elaborate how this occurs and connects also to another dimension; namely how organisation arrangements support personal and interpersonal capacity development (Pashardis & Johansson, 2020) given collaboration to affect change occurred within the school in a more lateral format. The staff perceptions also suggest in the school existed social cohesion, trust, well-being, involvement and being valued which ties into the culture observed in the school, which is another dimension of capacity building (Hopkins and Jackson, 2003).

Helen, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and four years at the school said:

> *.... so more voice maybe a little more but I understand why we couldn't always because you get too much of individualistic opinion but then what about those who can give, maybe, a more balanced opinion? So, like you're stuck. I don't know what the solution is. (Interview, June 2017).*

Helen's quote was chosen because it contradicts what the others have said but she is able to rationalise why inclusive problem solving and decision making may not have occurred as desired. Helen was a non-Western, non-trained teacher but had engaged with teaching roles in EAL and had as a child, in her home country, gone through British international education. She occupied a middle leadership responsibility at the school. Helen's voice disagreed with Anne's

perception beforehand regarding problem solving and decision making. Helen believes '*more voice'* is needed but at the same time identifies many voices means many opinions; some of which may not be for the team as a whole, more from personal wants or needs however she does suggest opinions such as hers would be focused on that 'bigger picture', therefore worthwhile. Helen worked in the primary section of the school and felt aggrieved the primary teaching and learning was placed under the control of a curriculum developer. The primary school had no British trained teachers and had the largest number of staff outside the Arabic department and the data from pupil assessment, scrutiny of pupil workbooks and staff appraisals, etc., demonstrated that student attainment was below UK averages and subsequently if continued would impact on the academic improvements already achieved in the secondary school as primary students entering secondary would not have secured the appropriate attainment level for their age. Primary curriculum control was a short-term measure while we worked on building staff capacity in teaching and learning. Perhaps some of her perception relates to this. Frost (2006) examined how human agency operated as the 'bridge' between leadership and learning; and understanding this was important to effective schools' capability to influence themselves and others. Likewise, in school improvement literature, Durrant and Holden (2006) signified agency as having capacity to make a difference, which extended beyond classroom teaching. Helen's data suggests that she and others are capable of making those wider differences but she perceives in my leadership in action that I had not conceptualised that teacher professionalism appropriately.

Another area for developing cooperation which held importance throughout the school and the leadership in action adopted lay with inclusive practices (Swaffield & Major, 2019). In the area of inclusion, Dorczak (2011) defines educational leadership which is inclusive as deriving from the organic leadership paradigm as it can incorporate both inclusive and for inclusion through development of conditions where all members of an educational institution can grow personally as well as the institution itself. Dorczak suggests that inclusive educational leadership is characterised by valuing social process and teamwork which is pivotal for personal and organisational development. It equally permits having voice, subsequently paving the way for good interpersonal and professional communication. It values mutual trust, respect and responsibility for others.

The data from staff interviews indicated that inclusive educational practices were considered by the participants to be an important aspect of supporting the effectiveness of my leadership in action.

Anne, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and two years at the school said:

> *Definitely, for me, even though, I'm from a Muslim background, it was a cultural shock to come here being raised in the West for the majority of my life. It helps that someone who's from the same kind of background as me culturally but understands other people's culture and trying to promote young women, especially in education was a breath of fresh air for me. (Interview, June 2017).*

Anne's quotes above and below were chosen because even though Muslim, coming from the West, and a trained teacher, inclusive support for her required my experience of living in this Middle Eastern country and being from the West necessary to support her being able to teach her art successfully which was a unique perspective given all the other interviewees taught subjects which were acceptable to the conservatism of the school. Anne touches on inclusion in the area of school leadership and management, assessing if a culture of innovation and experimentation was encouraged. Anne was not from the West but had been brought up in the '*West',* the UK and Europe as '*Muslim*' and was devout. However, she discovered that in this Middle Eastern country there were variances in interpretations of the Qu'ran between her, and the female students she taught, which initially caused conflict. Many students who were conservative, Arab Muslims in the school believed human form especially the face should not be drawn or painted therefore could not be the subject or task of an art lesson. Anne, conservative also, did not agree with this interpretation. In addition, as a Western art teacher, she had an obligation to teach the human form as part of the UK curriculum, as preparation for the international examinations and expand her art department to have a cross-curricular impact throughout the school. In order to ensure inclusion of all these to enable Anne and the school to grow, I mediated an understanding to those concerned that the human form was permissible if clothed appropriately but with no facial characteristics if it was being displayed outside of her classroom. Anne's classroom was also her 'studio', therefore appropriate human form was free to be displayed there.

Anne also speaks of having the ability to come to me, '*from the same kind of background culturally',* and as a result of my longevity in the country, experience of dealing with nationals and my effort to study Islam to understand where these stakeholders were coming from, I was able to work with her to resolve those above initial problems. As she taught a creative subject which in that country was not seen as 'academic', we worked in tandem to lift her subject specialism's profile to parents and students, and enhance it so that it equaled importance with the other subjects taught.

And;

> *Again, I can talk for my subject and I gave that 'often' because …… Key Stage 3 in secondary, you have to follow the National Curriculum within the United Kingdom and then we have IGCSE, we follow the curriculum for Cambridge international certification and because of that we have to be careful with the culture we're in and also the religious practices …… the understanding of the culture is that you need to cater to the community and make sure, we are sensitive towards their beliefs. Even though I am of a Muslim background, for me, it was difficult to actually understand and that's the kind of support that I achieved, received while I was trying to cater for those learners so that's one way …… (Interview, June 2017).*

Anne here touches upon inclusion in the area of curriculum development. The importance of this data is it is a reflection of her personal viewpoint on my efforts to integrate and administer all the curricula that was taught in the school to fit the National Curriculum for England and Wales as we were a British school. In her subject area, as discussed previously she needed to mediate what she taught and how she taught aspects of her subject specialism to meet preparing the students for their international examinations but equally being mindful of their religious interpretations to parents to avoid having a problem. To be inclusive, she would come to me *'for support'* and discuss problematic areas and how they could best be navigated to accommodate all positions and fit into the organisation of her teaching.

Dorczak (2011) suggested inclusive educational leadership came from valuing social process and teamwork to secure organisational development. Data from the staff surveys on school leadership and management in the area of *"Cooperates with the staff in creating a common*

vision for school improvement" was perceived to always occur. From the outset of my appointment as principal, I believed in staff having voice as a means to establish mutual trust and initiated this immediately through the collective creation of the vision, mission and learning definition for our school. This was the first time any of the staff, even those with twenty years' experience had ever had the opportunity to take collective ownership of their school. Daisy's quote below, being one of the longer serving members of staff accentuates the perception of the other interviewees in her discussion on the school climate as she said:

> *Obviously, when you started with us, before that, we'd never spoken about the school's objectives or where do we see the school going. I remember the first professional development we had with you. It was about teachers writing the objectives about the school and where do you see the school going and that's where we wrote the actual vision and mission statement and published so that's why I definitely thought or chose 'always' because you'd always looked for that in comparison to what we had before. (Interview, June 2017).*

Riley and MacBeath (1998) characterised leaders as effective if they developed a professional community within their school as it would result in teachers being more receptive to change if the perceived norm was collaborative leadership (Jäppinen & Ciussi, 2016). Gammage's (1985) definition of a 'good school' accounted for principal recognition of the importance of relationships, improvement and a collaborative community. As indicated by Anne above, it required inclusivity which Riley and MacBeath (1998, 2003) also cited as required for a good school.

In my personal reflection account, I comment on developing cooperation with staff to create a common vision for school improvement, I wrote that I felt:

> *My leadership style to be one of collegiality, whereby I lead from behind, in trying to get everyone 'on the bus'. In my school, staff would trial things and after significant time had elapsed as a staff cohort, we would come back to the drawing board to assess and re-evaluate what had been piloted and then decide what direction would next be taken.*

From my long experience and life-long learning, I have come to understand it is better not to seek 'consent' from staff but rather consensus in 'let's have a go' (see Bush, 2003). Equally, English (2011) encouraged staff school communities to agree to decision through consensus. English reported that too often in the educational field, during meetings, staff did not give their opinion; or if they disagreed did not speak up. This is turn led to apathy, resentment or even mockery of a proposed idea at the end of the meeting. Thus, in order to counteract this, individuals who are directly affected by a decision, according to English, should be permitted an 'unmediated voice' to reach that decision. One example of this came in the collective redraft of the school discipline policy and the introduction of sliding levels of misconduct:1 to 5 with allotted appropriate sanctions. One breach of the school conduct was bringing a mobile telephone to school and was considered a Level two offence. If it was the student's first time, the telephone would be confiscated and required a parent or guardian to come to the school to personally retrieve it. As the code of conduct was displayed in all classes and published to the parents, it left little room for debate therefore it did improve behaviour and supported staff consistency in issuing sanctions.

Leaders to be effective, need to have clarity of their context to be able to react appropriately. Leithwood et al., (1999) argued for leaders to be contextually sympathetic, Southworth (2004) and later (Ylimaki et al., 2011) argued that leadership should embrace its context. Muijs and Harris (2006) believed effective school improvement would come from creating capacity for change and development. To achieve this then requires leaders who display good relational management skills (Walker & Qian, 2018; VanGronigen at al., 2018). Thus, in building relationships, an invitational principal according to Stoll and Fink (1996) through their optimism, respect and trust of others 'acts with intentionality to build the kind of relationships which result in truly, collaborative school cultures' (p.114). Data from staff above in taking joint ownership of our school through collective, collaborative endeavours such as the redrafting of our behavioural code of conduct align with Moir's (2013, 2014) association between invitational leadership which fosters personal and professional development and transformational leadership's attention to mature relationships (Sarros & Santora, 2001).

Without doubt, the effectiveness of a leader is critical to success in any institution and it is tied closely to the outcomes and consequences of a leader's behaviours for followers and their

institution (Yukl, 2006). The most common gauge of leadership effectiveness, according to Erkutlu (2008) is how well an organisation achieves its targets or performs its task. Leaders who are skillful can fully engage followers in organisational strategies just as my staff collaboratively organised the vision and mission for their school. Therefore, for this to occur, data from staff indicate that I must have applied an appropriate leadership style which influenced staff to effectively carry out this task (Hur et al., 2011). The staff perceptions appear to demonstrate that in being effective, I had obviously established good relationships with them. Their taking ownership for the school's vision and mission enhanced their well-being and job performance: there was positivity and the school improved. Equally involving all the school sections to draft one vision and mission, brought the staff closer together via a sense of loyalty, gratefulness and inclusiveness (Hogg et al., 2005).

The data above demonstrate how transformational leaders can function as change agents and affect considerable organisational change as well as encourage deeper levels of intrinsic motivation and envision a better future which fosters a commitment from followers (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2008; Noorshahi & Yamani Dozi Sarkhabi, 2008). Its five leadership components motivate followers to higher levels of performance. Components of intellectual stimulation refers to what extent leaders stimulate followers' endeavours to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problems or approaching things in a different way (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Moss & Ritossa, 2007) and individualised consideration refers to the extent of support and encouragement given to followers where leaders attentively listen to the individual needs of followers and may delegate responsibilities to foster growth and achievement of followers through personal challenges, (Bass et al., 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Northouse, 2007). In essence, developing cooperation in the school observed these leadership behaviours occurring. The staff working collaboratively on what would be the vision and mission for our school and equally how we would as an all-through international school define learning permitted them to be the catalysts of change as my role in that professional learning was merely facilitating. I supplied the data for why we had to change and the research findings to facilitate our school improvement but the staff together discussed, debated, and agreed how we would set that 'in stone'. Kean et al., (2011) argued following was 'a complex process which was based on followers' socially co-constructed views of leaders' (p.515). For example, if followers opposed a particular leader then the leadership task/s potentially would fail. Just as, if leaders and followers

became interconnected, Jerry (2013) argued required followers to be 'willing and able to be inspired and be led' (p.348). As Jerry considered followership as a leadership practice, he accordingly argued followers should 'adopt some characteristics of leadership' (p.348). Yung and Tsai (2013) believed explanation of this lay in the shared values and 'indispensable conditions' (p.49) where leaders and followers collaborated together to deliver an effective organisation in which they both have what Jerry (2013) termed a 'collective responsibility' (p.351) to undertake joint roles in achievement of the same objective, which for us was school improvement.

Having concluded the theme of leadership in action and the development of cooperation, the next section will examine the importance of people-centred applications in supporting my leadership effectiveness.

Leadership in action and people-centred applications

In this international context, the theme of people-centred applications through listening, approachability and communication was found to be an important aspect of leadership in action with staff and principal. Tuohy and Coghlan (1997) believed teacher focus centred around their students, their own personal lives and appropriate response to both those personal and academic needs was actioned through 'an intensity of relationships' (p.67). This therefore requires principal leadership to focus on collaboration and interpersonal relationships. Relating to this, interpersonal leaders need to establish meaningful relationships with teachers, students and other stakeholders in their communities (O'Donohue & Clarke, 2010; Vangronigen et al., 2018). Similarly, in order to perform effectively with all these stakeholders, principals need to possess interpersonal skills which are advanced (Bush & Glover, 2003; Gurr & Drysdale, 2016).

The data from staff interviews indicated the interpersonal skills of listening, being approachable and skilled in communication were considered by participants to be important aspects of supporting the effectiveness of my leadership in action.

Anne, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and two years at the school said:

> *I do feel times when we have a PD session, we do give our ideas and I do feel, personally, that's taken away and whenever we have a meeting later on, we reflect back on it which*

is a great idea because that means that you've been listened to and one of the worst things about the teaching profession is when a teacher feels they are not being listened to and to have someone listening to you, it helps, you know, it shows that you can get on with your bit of the job because someone is listening to you, you can give your ideas, your opinions about something that could make your life easier as a classroom teacher or as an educator. (Interview, June 2017).

Anne's quote captures the perception generally of interviewees on the importance attached to the interpersonal skill of listening. Anne refers to aspects of listening here in the area of professional development and in-service. Her references to the delivery of PD sessions suggest collaborative discussions occur as she feels she can '*give our ideas',* which are '*taken away'* and later '*we reflect back on it'* which with use of the third person in '*we/our*' emphasises a collectivity to endeavours. She sees all this as positive because '*you've been listened to and one of the worst things about the teaching profession is when a teacher feels they are not being listened to and to have someone listening to you'* which she feels professionally '*could make your life easier'* which draws alignment to Tuohy and Coghlan's (1997) argument above concerning the preoccupations of a normal teacher's life with students and their academic needs which Anne feels have been addressed.

May, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and twenty years at the school said:

> *I think Margaret always, had an open-door policy and is always available to listen to parents whatever their concerns. …… listened no matter what, has tried her very best to resolve anything, any dispute, maybe a parent has or if they're, you know, feeling unhappy about something in the school …*

And;

> *I think as a leader you've been approachable.*

And;

> *Everyone knows where they are; the good communication with you that's what's been important…… (Interview, June 2017).*

May's quote not only emphasises listening like Anne but extends being approachable as essential to people-centred applications. May discusses the area of problem solving and decision making, focusing on listening to views to solve important problems in reference to dealing with parents. Her perception of '*an open-door policy', 'always available to listen to parents whatever their concerns'* touches on the less formal structure I introduced. Due to the context of challenge and the school's history, parents or staff did not have to make a formal appointment and building that community cohesion with no organised meetings, meant that there were times, the 'appointment' may have been something which was not pressing as she alludes with '*whatever their concerns'* but it did see me as more approachable. Equally, '*everyone knows where they are'* suggests in those interpersonal relationships, clarity of meaning was perceived to be understood which May had identified as '*important',* to move forward with improvement. An important aspect of parental voice to note in taking the school forward, was any discontent or unresolved issues from parents could end up either at the Deputy General Manager or the school owner's door which might mean that they, as my superiors, would then control a situation and make a decision which may not include all the facts and possibly lean to favour more the parents' perspective as paying customers.

Anne, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and two years at the school said:

> *I wrote 'always' because I've seen it first hand; students and parents, the whole open-door policy with teaching staff is the same for parents and students. Where you get that, you know, they're confident enough to come and talk to the person in charge because usually what you get is a principal behind a closed door and no child sees them so the communicating with students, staff and parents, you know, it was given 110%, personally, that's what I think, anyway and it helps because you can see the students, you know, there is that support there for them and they won't be afraid to speak to the person who is in charge of the school and that's sort of refreshing for me to see. (Interview, June 2017).*

Anne's quote further exemplifies not only with teaching staff are people-centred applications applied but she perceives them to extend to the whole school community. What Anne says above also connects to Anne's previous sense of community, linked to the degree of collaboration and

teamwork evident in the school. Anne in the area of student management in relation to effective communication in triangulation between the students, staff and parents perceived it to be embedded in the school as she uses '*always'* and '*given 110%'* to explain its occurrence. She also sees me using an open-door policy as approachable as her personal experience suggests her previous principals remained '*behind a closed door'.* As my engagement with parental or staff issues, involved all concerned parties being together, Anne saw it as supportive as well as instilling confidence in students who were female and for this teacher who promoted female empowerment, my practice fostered students not to be '*afraid to speak to the person who is in charge of the school'.* This promotion of equity and student voice for her had not been her experience in the UK as the approach was' *sort of refreshing …. to see'.*

Jane, who was newly appointed whilst I was principal said:

> *I think I would leave it at 'often' because whilst it does happen it links to my other responses in terms of the amount of time spent, if more time could have been spent doing that. (Interview, June 2017).*

Jane's quote is used to highlight a contradiction to what has been said above by other interviewees and threads in to fuel the other criticisms Jane perceives to hold of my leadership practices. Here a shortcoming with people-centred applications was identified by the newest member of the team who was previously identified as being 'critical'. Above, Jane's comment is in reference to the area of relations with parents and the community. This particular response was situated in how far she perceived me to encourage relations between the school with its parent stakeholders. She acknowledges that '*it does happen'* but believes more time could have been spent on it. Perhaps, never being out of her home country she had compared what occurred in her own personal context to this international context and she found it lacking in some ways. The constraints of how I organised my research analysis prevented further exploration of this as the interview questions were left open.

The identified shortcoming in the promotion of listening skills highlighted by Jane aligns with staff surveys in the area of problem solving and decision making in *"Tries to listen to many views and ideas before solving important problems"* which was perceived to occur only often and not always. However, promotion of approachability and communication in the survey,

featured in the area of school climate with "*Promotes open communication and flexibility in relations with the staff as opposed to strict adherence to bureaucratic authority"* was perceived to occur always. For the most part, staff data reflect a more collaborative, collegial approach to my management style which they seem to be receptive to. This in practice manifested in me as previously stated being visibly seen to 'roll up my sleeves' and help staff with teaching and learning; help with duties; clean and organise resource rooms; cover classes and actually teach examination classes as well as support them with their interpersonal relationships with other stakeholders which they had never experienced before. This aspect of the interactional exploration between myself in leading with my followers sought evidence of where the communication strategies of careful listening and open communication embraced by me associated with transformational leadership (Berson & Avolio, 2004). As principals lead through what they say and do, studying the communication between them and their staff will reveal how the leadership is done.

In my personal reflection and application of person-centred approaches focus lay with skill in listening and being approachable to establish:

> *some kind of community of good practice and for all stakeholders to be of equal importance. Many of the decisions and policies have had staff input and review when piloted for changes. I am a good listener and perhaps some of my strengths lie in being able to mediate* and this was achieved through operating *an open-door policy within my school, staff did not always as a first port of call have to pass through middle management,* indicating general alignment with staff perceptions.

I have always found power in the art of listening, especially in my leadership career of taking responsibility for faltering schools and turning them around in international waters. I have had to engage with diverse groups of people, therefore listening provides me with an explanation of the culture, i.e. how things are done at present and therefore provide the means in how I can influence team behaviours and aspirations from our systems of shared knowledge and meaning (Jackson & Parry, 2011). In being a good listener, I instilled in my staff a deep and strong commitment to academic achievement which Anne previously draws attention to in staff professional development where collaboration and collectivity existed for she believed '*you can*

give your ideas, *your opinions about something that could make your life easier as a classroom teacher or as an educator'*. Sergiovanni (1998) affirmed that a school's professional capital is crafted within a foundation of shared responsibilities and support. I believed it of utmost importance to involve my staff in the school's decision making (Bredesen, 2000) and trusted them professionally (Pashiardis & Johansson, 2020). Research on schools facing challenging circumstances found an important aspect of successful leadership lay in the influence of context (Day et al.1999; Gurr et al., 2019). Having lived in the culture itself for over twenty-five years and having longevity (albeit interrupted) of employment in the school, enabled me to be receptive to the difficulties and challenges within my school context. In order to manage the staff and cultural change, I had to negotiate external and internal environments which required aptitudes in communication, in supporting my teaching team's development so that they gained confidence to achieve my expectations of exactly how they would contribute to accomplishing our strategic goals. Staff perceptions appear to show that effective leadership came from the quality of relationships I had fostered which aligns with the findings of Sanzo et al., (2011). These relationships enabled staff to mature their leadership capacity as well as improve my leadership skills creating a hybridity of leadership (Crawford, 2012); but they also created authentic, collaborative cultures as staff and principal had a platform not only to be listened to, but had an approachability to be able to communicate their positions and engage in consultation and I, as principal, would be able to influence the staff over time (Bredeson, 2000). My leadership practice being female, emphasising the importance of listening and empowerment of followers contributes to previous research (Astin & Leland, 1991) which found this more prevalent in women than men. My data also suggests that I prioritise relatedness and connectedness to followers which Burke and McKeen (1996) argue occurs because my world view as a woman is different from that of a man's. My followers' data demonstrating commitment, positivity and cooperative communication may have been influenced by the school employing only females (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2004).

Nevertheless, staff and principal perceptions evidenced for the most part leadership in action as I was visibly seen to be caring, knowledgeable and supportive. Several research outcomes have attributed effective leadership to be an 'influencing process' (Duignan, 2004) and as such argued for a move towards improving the leadership capabilities of effective leaders to be able to respond to change and improve circumstances. Fullan's (2003) moral purpose in leading refers to

leadership practice which is intent on making a positive difference to students, teachers and the school as one community involving positive and focused influence. Bryman's (2007) assessment of higher education leadership affirms as well as being strategic, effective leaders communicate a vision, foster trust, commitment and belonging but this is deepened through attention to interpersonal leadership. Being perceived to be effective in leadership required me to be sensitive to the context of the school (Leithwood et al., 2020) and the leadership practices I did engage with had to be situational (Southworth, 2004; Gurr et al., 2019) as we were unique and in challenging circumstances. Invitational leadership extends personal invitations to others in constructing relationships, and intentionally 'build[s] the kind of relationships which result in truly collaborative school cultures' (Stoll & Fink, 1996, p.114).

Staff demonstration of my perceived approachability, flexibility and open communication supports Pihie et al's., (2011) findings on Heads of Department's leadership styles whereby leaders transmit their personal vision and belief systems from direction, words and deeds; and ensure success of these from the way they interact with others. Adoption of specific human qualities according to Pihie et al., (2011) permits leaders to not only be effective but develop confidence in groups of people that their vision is worth following. Riley and MacBeath's (1998, 2003) analysis of effective leaders and schools suggest good leaders lead people by managing, motivating and inspiring them from individual one-to-one work or from developing a drive within schools which fosters and enables individuals to actively participate in school life. School leaders are transparent about the business of vision building. I tried to operate in a manner to secure my staff were receptive to embrace making the necessary changes within our school which ensured collaboration was the norm as we engaged in making choices, deciding on priorities and we were willing to learn and change interpersonally (Riley & MacBeath, 2003). As this is not a static model, it involved me being approachable, willing to listen, able to learn, reflect and then adapt my leadership approach.

Summary

This chapter's data analysis thus far examined how approaches to supporting such as mentoring, cooperation development and people-centred applications were considered by the research participants to be important factors of effective leadership in action.

In supporting, staff indicated that within mentoring, coaching and role-modelling were also important aspects of leadership effectiveness. My open-door policy of 'anywhere, anytime' created professional dialogic communities from non-monologic mentoring episodes; and collegiality in their use, created equity in discourse to develop open, two-way discussions (even dissent). Mentoring was perceived to be nurturing as I was the 'head learner' and I, 'led by example' which made our leadership and learning interdependent. In cooperative development; teamwork, collaboration and inclusive practices were conceived as important leadership practices. As the school existed in challenging circumstances, staff perceived problem solving together laid the foundation conditions for teacher learning and leadership; and built the school's capacity. Effective leadership was situated in inclusive practices and teamwork: staff having a voice took joint ownership of our school through collective, collaborative endeavours. In people-centred applications, the interpersonal skills of listening, being approachable and skilled in communication within my open-door policy, created community cohesion with all stakeholders, as I was visible, seen 'rolling up my sleeves' and viewed as caring, knowledgeable and supportive. As Crossley (2012) argues context matters, these findings provide new evidence on effective educational leadership through the eyes of followers.

Leadership in action and development of cultural, educational engagement

Introduction

In developing the organisational conditions to enable my school to be a learning school, required an active, professional learning culture to be established (Welsh et al., 2021) which aligns with the Cambridge Network's second principle of leadership for learning practice (see MacBeath et al., 2005) and the impact of a school's culture on leadership and learning. MacGilchrist et al's., (1997) identification of an intelligent school suggest three ways school culture can develop staff efficacy and how agency is displayed in practice firstly through; professional relationships between the principal, staff themselves and attitudes towards students; secondly in organisational arrangements such as decision making processes and means of communication and finally; opportunities available for student and adult learning. This section will examine how cultural, educational engagement of these was developed or not in my leadership practice and commence with how an enterprising culture was fostered in the school.

Leadership in action and fostering an enterprising culture

In this international context, the theme of fostering enterprise through promoting change in practical ways, endeavour and encouragement of innovation was found to be an important aspect of leadership in action with staff and principal. Caldwell (2006) observing educational leadership, argues that imagination is central to conceptualising what is best in education given few cultures exist which are not engaged with building capacity for creativity at all levels. For principals to secure success, Caldwell (2006) affirms re-imagination has to be at the core of this endeavour which Peters (2003) signifies as imaginative leadership, whereby personalised learning exists for school transformation but will only occur if teachers take the time and are flexible enough to know their students individually. Support here lies with the idea of the self-managing school (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988) where students are the core of the organisation and therefore require leaders to be at the forefront of knowledge to develop powerful learning organisations for school transformation or improvement (Pashiardis & Johansson, 2020; Welsh et al., 2021). Peters (2003) states leadership which has imagination entails organisational storytelling which Gabriel (2000) insists does not simply reflect organisational reality, instead it creates and generates meaning which together provide a type of 'sensegiving', which results in faithful employees.

The data from staff interviews indicated the promotion of change in practical ways, endeavour and encouragement of innovation to foster enterprise were considered by participants to be important aspects of supporting the effectiveness of my leadership in action.

Daisy, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and seven years at the school said:

> *Since you've started, you've given us each year like between four …… professional development days other than, sometimes we used to do it after school on Sundays. So, yes, I think by saying that you are a pro-professional developer especially for your teachers; and I remember that every time you try to send teachers through the school to learn something and would want them to come back and share with the rest of the teachers just because you want everybody to take advantage of whatever they have gotten out of PDs. (Interview. June 2017).*

Daisy's quote is chosen as it typifies the perceptions of the other interviewees regarding promotion of change. Daisy, in the area of professional development and in-service discusses how change was promoted in practical ways. Sundays (Mondays in the West) were used, being mindful of work/life balance for meetings and professional development conducted in a four-week cycle of full staff meeting, school section meetings, departmental meetings and PD sessions. The content for the PDs came from school improvement needs and staff voice. Daisy refers to '*professional development days*' which occurred once a term and entailed an in-service day, where all the company's sister schools came together for professional development and collaboration. For some staff, this was their first experience of inter-school collaboration. In addition, if teachers did attend outside professional development, to share and develop themselves as pedagogical professionals, they had to disseminate what they had learnt to relevant co-teachers. Daisy's use of '*a pro-professional developer especially for your teachers*' signifies the importance learning, and leadership for learning had in the school. The use of '*pro-professional developer*' also suggests at least to her, novel ways were sourced to access that professional development of staff.

Anne, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and two years at the school said:

> *We definitely get that. We make decisions, you know, you feel as though you are part of something important when somebody asks for your opinion and that's the best way to go forward, talk to teachers because if you tell them this is what I want, they're going to switch off because they're just like young people at times, but if you give them the chance to have their own input and understand what they're trying to achieve and try to get what they are affecting on from them, then you get more out of them if that makes sense to you. So, for me, I feel as though we get given a chance as a whole school community to give our ideas, forward to the principal and then we get …. what happens and what doesn't happen and how we can move forward as a whole school; how we can change certain ideology within the classroom or as a whole school, how can we do something to make sure our students achieve the best they can-yeah? So, to get that support is quite helpful.*

And;

> *Again, I gave that 'always' because everyone had one thing that they need to look at, for example, working with marking, the whole school staff, secondary would have looked at all of that together; all share ideas and that common vision was made clear to us and we could all go back to our classrooms and try to implement that so for me whenever we did something, obviously, I put my own input into it but there was community cohesion type of thing; work together to solve a problem. It wasn't just one person solving the problem so that was quite helpful and useful for me. (Interview, June 2017).*

Anne's quotes above provide concrete examples of how endeavour was practically implemented. With regard to communicating endeavour and the role of an individual in common endeavour, has her first response dealing with the area of problem solving and decision making. She is elaborating further her evaluation of how far the decision making in the school was participative as opposed to autocratic. Endeavour communication here was perceived to be established collectively as she states '*We make decisions',* and *'being part of something important when somebody asks for your opinion',* indicates as staff they are valued. Her idea of being '*a whole school community'* is centred around learning and transformation which aligns with Peter's (2003) imaginative leadership being personalised learning for school improvement as she reasons the school's decisions linked to learning and improvement will indicate '… *how we can move forward as a whole school; … change certain ideology within the classroom or as a whole school, … do something to make sure our students achieve the best they can'.* Anne's second response is in reference to the area of leadership and management, specifically how well I cooperated with staff in creating common vision for school improvement. She exemplifies an item from the learning improvement plan the school would improve that year, *'marking'* and explains how it was collective and individual in '*the whole school staff,'* then her section of the school '*secondary', 'looked at all of that together'* to then *'all share ideas'.* The learning was collective but was then left to staff to personalise it to be appropriate to the students they taught because *'that common vision was made clear to us and we could all go back to our classrooms and try to implement … I put my own input into it but there was community cohesion type of thing'.* Here is suggestion of Caldwell's (2006) notion of 'sagacity' where self-managing schools are recreated to be powerful learning communities where not only students but equally all staff

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are up-to-date with knowledge which Anne sees as '*community cohesion*' and Daisy earlier classified as '*pro-professional*' development.

Data from staff thus indicate that to be successful, I had to respond in new ways to our challenging circumstances and to their differing needs. My context, albeit non-Western, supports Western based principal research which concluded there was no single recipe for doing leadership, sticking to the same ingredients and then applying them prescriptively, (Riley & MacBeath, 2003). Definitely, in my scenario, staff were not used to having a voice and subsequently, their perception of leadership would be associated with particular national purposes, their current local context, their perceived notions of desired skills and attributes of an individual leader as well as the demands and expectations of our Middle Eastern school community (Santamaría, 2014) but ultimately the data does seem to favour how I had envisioned that 'endeavour' to be realised. Staff perceptions of my novel approaches to promoting change in practical ways and nurturing endeavour suggest in being successful, I needed to break rules (Pashiardis & Johansson, 2020) of what was normal for them (Riley and MacBeath, 2003) such as giving importance to their voice.

Helen, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and four years at the school said:

> [Innovation and experimentation] *Personally, I think, I felt even by both my leaders, you and Mrs X …. there was recognition …. (Interview, June 2017)*.

Mary, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and two years at the school said:

> *Obviously as a leader, I put 'always' because whatever I proposed, we had a go at it ……but I was given that opportunity as opposed to being told what to do …. I mean … you might say something like have you got, have you thought, what plans have you got for PSHE, what are they going to do for a month and I could go away, have a think about it, show you and then you would like, yeah, that's good, let's roll with it, see how it rolls …. (Interview, June 2017).*

Helen and Mary's quotes are representative of interviewee consensus on the development of creativity from my leadership practices. With regard to recognition and fostering of creativity such as innovation, both perceive it to exist. Helen believes it existed in some form, by '*both my*

leaders' which not only included myself but also other senior leaders; her head of school section but did not provide specific examples. Mary was a newly appointed senior leader who believed was given '*opportunity as opposed to being told what to do'.* She specifies an example in creating a PSHE programme for students in her section of the secondary school, and engagement with me, was coached with points to think about '*you might say something like have you got, have you thought'* but then would be given the freedom to pilot the initiative from a collective position, '*let's roll with it, see how it rolls ....'.* Here again referencing to building what Caldwell (2006) conceptualises as imaginative leadership to build capacity through creativity.

Helen, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and four years at the school said:

> *Curriculum- I think a little bit of flexibility should have been there .... I can see how it started off.......... working with all the schools and probably not just our school, I think you had a lot to deal with and that's hard. I think sometimes it felt just not for myself but sometimes, it felt, just general feedback from staff, maybe, I think at times, they felt a little bit targeted ... the ones who had been here for a while were used to the way things were .... I'm open for change; a lot of people are if it's for the better: a lot of people are stuck in their comfort zone and perhaps a little bit spoilt ...... it's always about, when you come from having all this and suddenly, it's like all these rules and regulations which perhaps are the right thing to do but maybe the way going about it could be, yeah, developed, I think. I wouldn't know myself how to, how to change it, I mean that's just my feedback. (Interview, June 2017).*

Helen's quote here is used to highlight some ambiguity in her perceptions of my leadership practices fostering an enterprising culture. Above in school leadership encouraging innovation and experimentation, she did perceive it existing, '*there was recognition'* however with regard to staff delivering the primary curriculum, she felt '*a little bit of flexibility should have been there'* not only for her, but also the primary staff she had a connection to '*sometimes it felt just not for myself but sometimes, it felt, just general feedback from staff, maybe, I think at times, they felt a little bit targeted'* which is reference again to the primary school. Two perceptions by the same member of staff which in some ways are contradictory. Helen embraces innovation and perceives it encouraged but above then sees there not being enough flexibility. The school focusing on

learning and improving student outcomes meant that the curriculum needed to be overhauled to fall in line with the National Curriculum to secure improved academic performance of all students. The majority of the school roll came from the primary age bracket and at that time, in that school section, there were no Western trained members of staff. An experienced member of staff was given the responsibility to be the 'Curriculum Developer' with authority to secure this as she was also a senior leader. Perhaps, rather than as alluded by the above perception, staff being left to do as they wished with regard teaching and learning, some resistance came from perceived 'control' or more the manner in which it was being 'enforced'. Given Helen's first response included evaluation of myself and this senior leader together for innovation, it continued that same flow in curriculum development when it was not under my remit as such but included me as I had appointed the 'Curriculum Developer'. Debate again touches on teachers' professionalism. Frost discussed agential learning being real learning enabling 'human beings to make a difference not just to themselves but to the world around them and opportunities to make a difference stimulate and drive learning forward' (p.4, 2006). Teachers may have felt less human given their agency was apportioned less expression. Thus, lack of staff voice previously articulated and control of the curriculum content here suggest Helen perceived a level of constraint and the teaching to be removed from the hands of the teachers; but this was only ever intended to be temporal. The teachers needed to be upskilled to move away from being technicians who delivered an inappropriate curriculum to being professional and effective enough to create it. Sharing the school's leadership required all teachers to have the capacity to influence which involved self-encompassing certain values and following self-determined objectives from self-conscious strategic direction (Frost, 2006). Some primary staff members were operating at a technician level and initially not happy with this perceived 'control' and lack of agency but when they experienced personally, the benefit of the changes with their students and therefore drove the learning forward, more came on board and the school would reach a point where teacher 'autonomy' with the curriculum could be returned. Some staff data indicates this was not clear to all.

Common endeavour through innovation and development of a common vision for improvement was encapsulated in the staff surveys in the area of school leadership and management where *"Cooperates with the staff in creating a common vision for school improvement"* and was perceived to occur always but *"Encourages a culture of innovation and experimentation"*

interestingly was perceived to occur only sometimes. This data and the data from staff interviews above suggest some alignment in findings.

My personal perception of fostering of an enterprising culture, in establishing common goals would align with staff perceptions as:

> *from previous personal research (McArthur, 2015, unpublished), I understand my leadership style to be one of collegiality, whereby I lead from behind, in trying to get everyone 'on the bus'. In the school, staff would trial things as a collective body and after significant time had elapsed as a staff cohort, myself and my staff came back to the drawing board to assess and re-evaluate what had been piloted and then decided what direction would next be taken.*

However, with regard to innovation and experimentation my perception did not align with some of the staff perceptions as I felt:

> *I tried to create a culture of collegiality within the school: dissemination of academic articles or research was forwarded to perceived, interested members of staff; follow-ups from discussions all come with the expectation of feedforward to the principal. Leaders or staff were encouraged to bring forward innovative ideas, etc. which would make a difference to our hedgehog concept of improved teaching and learning.*

As previously noted, interest in some of the interventions I choose to implement were only embraced by either trained members of staff or those with leadership responsibility.

In summation of above there is evidence of transformational leadership behaviour which Mary demonstrates in increased motivation (Barnett & McCormick, 2003) and commitment (Brauckmann & Pashiardis, 2011; Harris et al., 2017) to organisational change (Yu et al., 2002; Liu, 2015). Rather than controlling, here is evidence of me working with and through others in goal achievement. Transformational leadership here demonstrates as perceived by Mary, followers being both inspired and intellectually stimulated; and through the staff, leadership which is generally concerned with them as individuals. Moir (2013, 2014) argues that transformational leadership can lead to development of a collaborative staff culture which encourages innovation from those followers who feel inspired to take risks which in turn

develops the leadership capacity within a school. However, the data above suggest not all of the staff were inspired to take those risks all of the time as suggested by Helen.

Having discussed the theme of leadership in action and its promotion of change in practical ways, including endeavour and encouragement of innovation, the next section will examine how principal leadership constructed the school's culture.

Leadership in action and culture construction

In this international context, the theme of culture construction through the school's culture, clarifying of goals, taking followers with me, developing the school's moral compass and following through was found to be an important aspect of leadership in action with staff and principal. Headteachers through connecting teacher efforts to successful outcomes assist their schools in forming a greater sense of purpose. Transformational leadership suggested by Bass (1996: Griffith, 2004) creates environments which enhance follower performance beyond individual self-interest. Taylor et al., (2014) suggests visionary leadership is a configuration of transformational leadership but it also provides opportunities to nurture an organisation's capacity to connect to the needs of its members. This is done creatively by providing a foundation which can be used as a touchstone for goal setting, priority determination, structural organisation, principled beliefs and progress assessment (Taylor et al., 2014). Visionary leaders use vision for the core of their work. They develop their personal vision and then blend that with followers into a shared vision. Skillful communication by the visionary empowers followers to act, however, if this vision is not clearly articulated, followers will become confused about which direction to take, possibly fatigued and unresponsive (Heath & Heath, 2010). As well as nurturing behaviours and attributes of transformation leadership which harnesses followership (Yukl, 2006), these leaders also through confidence, pro-social power behaviours and organisational capabilities (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003) inspire and develop follower knowledge and skills to accomplish organisational goals in a relationship which is cohesive, committed, trusting, and motivating (Pashiardis & Johansson, 2020).

The data from staff interviews will discuss in what ways; the school's climate, clarifying of goals, taking followers with me, developing the school's moral compass and following through

were considered by participants to be important aspects of supporting the effectiveness of my leadership in action.

May, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and twenty years at the school said:

> *Everything that you have said, you have followed it through. (Interview, June 2017).*

May's quote was used as it voices agreement with the other interviewee perceptions of culture construction at the school. May encapsulates the aspect of following through, in relation to the school's leadership and management with how I presented my vision for the school and how it was actually lived by me in thoughts, actions and words in and out of our community. Her perception believes, it was evident in '*Everything'* and '*you have followed it through'* and suggests there was a moral commitment from me for the vision to be realised.

Anne, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and two years at the school said:

> *I had an incident when I first got here, obviously, culturally, this is something that I am not used to and this liaising with the parents .... I didn't feel that I was left alone, I had the support of someone who understands the culture very well, who's been here for a long time and for me it wasn't daunting ...... to get that support was for me, you know, really good and as an educator it helps you know that there is someone to support you and it helps the parents as well because then they know the principal's listening, she wants to help us change the things that we think are not working out for us and sitting together; the principal, the educator as a teacher in the classroom, and the parent that is the community of the school; the student there as well, so it helps to have that, just to talk it out and understand each other better, you know, for me that was quite helpful. (Interview, June 2017).*

Anne's quote gives an example how following through and display of moral compass demonstrated the climate of the school. Anne encapsulates having a moral compass and following through in the area of parental and community relations. Her response relates to how far relationships between the school and its parental community are connected. She refers back to initial problems she encountered with students and parents, dealing with behaviour management in being 'inclusive'. She refers to the culture as *'something that I am not used to'*

and '*liaising'* with parents, where her interpretation of religious application concerning malpractice did not align with theirs. Wrong was committed by a student and morally had to be addressed but it was addressed with support from me facilitating a school community collectively with staff, parent and student in mediation to '*change the things that we think are not working out for us and sitting together'* in learning that was fair and transparent for all concerned to result in a favourable outcome.

Anne's perception in my development of the school's climate and its moral compass sees it actioned collectively with all concerned stakeholders which created opportunities for my collective leadership (Raelin, 2018) aim for all of us to be on that same page and aligned within a context of varying diversities. My leadership in action is occurring in a time of change and its perceived effectiveness concerns itself with making choices, prioritising, and motivating the school to learn and change (Riley & MacBeath, 1998, 2003). My leadership model is contextualised and continuously evolving which requires me to have the capacity to revise my approach, learn, reflect and continue to learn which agrees with the findings of Riley and MacBeath (1998, 2003). Anne's data suggests I seem to embrace what Cammock (2001) argues leadership which is demonstrative of expertise and 'soul' coming from my identity and values as seen above not only to makes things better but I am also serving others i.e. this teacher and parent in conflict.

Jane, who was newly appointed whilst I was principal at the school said:

> *I think number one is self-explanatory that the school does very clearly state its objectives. (Interview, June 2017).*

Jane's quote is chosen here to indicate that even though my leadership practice does create a climate in the school, she as the newest serving member of staff is acutely aware that culture construction is impacted by outside forces. Jane above in consideration of building the school climate and identifying the school's objectives believes it '*self-explanatory'* as they are there. However as discussed previously, this member of staff did return to the principal after reflection to discuss further.

I've also come to understand over the short period of time that because the school is run, very much like a business by the owners, often the leader has to implement decisions autocratically as per instructions so as a result of this, in my opinion, running the school is based more on the needs and wishes which are often influenced by cultural norms of the owners and parent body and so on …… Other stakeholders, rather than as that of the leader and she, management and staff whose decisions would be guided by educational and pedagogical principles more, rather than cultural ones, to a large extent their decisions would more suit perhaps the educational needs of students and educators, so whilst the leader in this particular school in question receives, or perhaps receives is not the right word …… listens to the needs, queries, grievances of staff members, often the final outcome's determined by higher management. (Interview, June 2017).

Here Jane is looking at building culture in the area of decision making, its process and if it is perceived to be collective or not. Her response highlights the dichotomy of how education now needs to fit into the global market economy: the school she understands is a business to its owners and at times, in leading I have to implement '*decisions autocratically as per instructions'* which she believes are '*based more on the needs and wishes which are often influenced by cultural norms of the owners and parent body'* rather than '*management and staff whose decisions would be guided by educational and pedagogical principles'.* Although the vision is recognised to be clearly transmitted, there are times when conflict with the above may provide perceived shortcomings.

My exploration of principal leadership as previously discussed recognises it is embedded in context and while it does not seek to make universalistic assertions, rather, particularistic ones, it has highlighted commonalities with other leadership models which may be of use, namely transformational leadership infused with visionary leadership. The conceptualisation of leadership perceived by myself and my staff, dealt not with categoricals or emphasis on quantifiable output measurements, instead much of what has emerged from my data is that effective leadership is identifiable through my staff and I having a shared vision and passion; and the ability exemplified by Jane of having a critical disposition into the complex and demanding contextual role of collective leadership and responsibility, in this context, business and education, which may have an impact on leadership building the school's climate.

May, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and twenty years at the school said:

> *since you've been running the school, I think everything has been made very clear, you know, where we are going.*

And:

> *You've done what you said you were going to do, always outlined everything that you're going to do and you have always gone ahead with whatever it is. (Interview, June 2017)*

May's quote not only airs what appears to be the perception of the other interviewees with goal clarification, it also reinforces perception of how things are followed through. May is looking at culture building in the area of school climate, specifically clarifying goals in relation to my articulation of the school's objectives. She perceives building of the school's climate to be demonstrated by me effectively given that from my arrival in the school she refers to '*everything*' being '*clear*', '*always outlined*', '*gone ahead*', and I was also confident of the direction we needed to take to be successful, '*you know, where we are going'*.

Mary, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and three years at the school said:

> *School objectives are often shared but due to constant updating and reflection, and things which are like updates sometimes some staff are on an older version of something whereas it has been updated and therefore that creates a little bit of you know, inconsistency. (Interview, June 2017).*

Mary's quote is used to demonstrate a non-alignment with other interviewees regarding culture construction. Mary, similarly assessing construction of the school's culture and school objectives does not seem to share the same perception as May. She does perceive the objectives to be '*often shared*' but the '*constant updating and reflection*' she feels impacts application. Mary, also a newly appointed leader, highlights a shortcoming in the change process. As policies and practice were reviewed collectively, administratively, according to her perception, they needed improvement to ensure staff made use of the most current application. '*Inconsistency*' may be a personal reference to her leadership and the difficulties she encountered with her line-managed

staff in adhering to policy and practice rather than particular reflection of me, or simply the administrative system in place for identifying updates did indeed require improvement.

Building culture like common endeavour was encapsulated in the staff surveys in the area of school leadership and management within *"Cooperates with the staff in creating a common vision for school improvement"* and perceived to always occur. However, *"Clearly states the school's objectives"* was perceived to occur only often aligns with Mary's perception as she saw them '*often shared'*. Perhaps the administrative problem concerning the redrafts of collective endeavour impacted the perceptions. Overall, the data seem to suggest that staff perceptions in the interviews and surveys have some alignment.

My personal reflection of culture building and the school objectives aligns with the staff data as their development was collective:

> *It came firstly from dissemination to staff of the school's performance on its inspection for its national licence; its international examination results and a second inspection from an Ofsted body of inspectors seconded by the national government, to vet all British schools operating in this Middle Eastern country. The results of these I forwarded verbally to staff for thought and consideration. At the following week's professional development session, staff were forwarded a survey on high performing schools to complete and return to me for analysis. The following week's professional development session, all school section staff were gathered to collectively draft the school's vision and mission statement and then the school's learning definition. These were the first steps to pave the way for everyone to be 'working from the same page'. These documents became the catalysts for the major changes the school had to undertake.*

As previously explained, vision creation was a collective endeavour (Harris et al., 2013) but I had to work with staff to understand, the reality of the school from its '*inspection report'* and '*the international examination results'* and then upskill them through professional development on '*high performing schools'* for us to be able to create the future. Being collective I hoped would lead us to be '*working from the same page'* to ensure shared meaning which seems connected to the staff perceptions.

Jackson and Parry (2011) suggest a transformational leader in education is able to define the school's reality through vocalising a vision. This form of leadership, according to Parry (1999) improves the 'adaptability' of followers whereby the leadership approach is more than an influence process enforced upon followers. Instead, this leadership transforms follower motivation, attitudes and behaviours. As demonstrated from my leading, goal-setting is an effective intervention for followers to increase effort which aligns with research from Parry and Sinha (2005). Above, as articulated by staff in co-developing our goals, not only do they generally understand the task of what needs to be achieved but they also understand what they are, and are committed to them (Raelin, 2018). Bass and Riggio's (2006) transformational leadership components; inspirational motivation involves leaders and followers believing in a possible future state. Leaders articulate clear expectations which inspire followers' commitment to the vision which my staff perceptions believe for the most part to occur.

Having discussed the theme of leadership in action and how it was perceived to develop the construction of the school's culture, the next section will examine how principal leadership promoted student learning.

Leadership in action in promoting student learning

In this international context, the theme of promoting student learning was found to be an important aspect of leadership in action with staff and principal. Robinson et al., (2008) argued that too much educational leadership research paid more attention to leadership that was transformational i.e. on the relationships between those connected to a school community than on instructional leadership which would impact student outcomes. They argued the combination of both leadership approaches would have a more impactful effect. Collaborative leadership is argued to positively impact student learning in a process of mutual influence whereby the school capacity both moulds and is moulded by the school's collective leadership (Hallinger & Heck, 2011). Ofsted (2009) reported educational catalysts for change in curriculum management comes from strengthening creativity and personalised learning as well as monitoring students' progress. Kaparou & Bush (2016) in comparative research found importance in the collaborative and reciprocal nature of instructional leadership. The research data has already demonstrated evidence of transformational leadership evident in the school.

The data from staff interviews will now discuss in what way the promotion of student learning was considered by participants to be an important aspect of supporting the effectiveness of my leadership in action.

Anne, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and two years at the school said:

> *You have all types of learners, I gave it 'always' because the principal expects some things from us and this is why, we have like lesson observations and all that stuff but also it's about learning how to check the type of learners you have in the classroom. (Interview, June 2017).*

Mary, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and three years at the school said*:*

> *Yeah, we do that, we have a formative tracking unit and a summative tracking unit …... We also have baseline assessments and things like that, mid-year, end of year, so that we can track individual student's progress……. (Interview, June 2017).*

Anne and Mary's quotes are used to illustrate different ways student learning was secured through my leadership practices. Anne and Mary are looking at the promotion of student learning in the area of curriculum development. Anne reflects on what developed actions were in place for the adaptation of the curriculum to the students' needs. She understands in teaching and learning, there lies quality assurance as '*the principal expects some things from us'* which involves formal evaluation such as '*lesson observations*' but there is also teacher professional learning in '*all that stuff*' to help '*learning how to check the types of learners you have in the classroom*'. Mary assessed if the monitored, systematic instructional processes in place ensured our teaching related to the expected outcomes and was captured through the school being data-informed from its use of '*formative*' and '*summative tracking*', '*baseline assessments*' '*mid-year'*, '*end of year*' to '*monitor individual student's progress*'. Here perhaps suggested is an area where teachers were empowered to lead in deciding how to facilitate students' learning and where leading was distributed. As Anne acknowledges, improving the quality of learning for the teachers did not mean to adhere to one correct approach, they were permitted to use their professional knowledge and judgement to select whatever appropriate approaches enabled them to be effective leaders of learning (Harris et al., 2013). Similarly, in being a teacher leader, Anne

is a leader of her students but also a curriculum specialist and developer of new pedagogical approaches (Katzenmayer & Moller, 2001).

In promoting student learning, what emerged from the qualitative data above demonstrated leadership was identified from staff and I not only having vision and passion, but being able also to have a critical disposition into the complex and demanding role of collective leadership and responsibility (Raelin, 2018). My focus on staff performance such as the approaches I adopted to observe lessons from team appraisal and students themselves; and developing pedagogical approaches in my teachers' professional learning with how students learn align with what Riley and MacBeath (2003) consider effective leadership. My leadership in action improved the quality of learning outcomes and achievement through morals, dispositions and capabilities as well as engagement with change and improvement strategies which supports the findings of Day et al's., (2011) empirical research on primary and secondary principalships in the UK. Although my leadership desired to serve others and was morally driven to have a positive and purposeful influence on all stakeholders in my school community, this charisma as evidenced by Fullan (2003) achieved short-term success, but long-term success was my goal and this as Moir (2013) suggests necessitated my staff to have that ability to voice, even critically, to enable me to reflect also.

Quantitative data from the staff surveys in the promotion of student learning seem to align with the staff interviews. Quantitative data was encapsulated in *"Monitors systematically instructional processes to ensure that teaching activities are related to the expected outcomes"* and was perceived to occur often. However, *"Develops actions for the adaptation of the curriculum to the students' needs"* was perceived to occur only sometimes which Anne believed always occurred. Anne coming from the secondary school, and not from the primary school already flagged as contentious over the perceived control by the curriculum developer, had a seemingly different experience.

My personal reflection of promoting student learning supports the perceptions of Anne and Mary. I said:

> *I utilised these funds to make the best possible provision for the teaching and learning as it is the heart of the school. Leaders used pop-ins, learning walks, 'coaches', peer to*

peer, to support staff in the school's transition. Tracking has now been introduced into the school's teaching and learning programme although we do not have actual investment yet in benchmarked examinations. The curriculum coordinator designs the assessment and controls its security well to ensure validation of the results. The school's quality assurance measures ensure attainment and progression occur in the curriculum… Staff have also brought to the table ideas for integration, which where possible are also incorporated into the curriculum.

These interventions were introduced to enable us to be more data-informed which in turn would inform the quality of teaching and learning. Initially, staff viewed it as 'more work' but with professional development of how to read data, the majority came to realise its value. However, this operated at a more macro-level and had still to be developed at the more micro-level with staff's teaching and learning in monitoring students' progress effectively within lessons.

Overall, this dilemma of what generates principal efficacy and subsequently, the most appropriate actions to adopt have been subject to academic debate over decades. Earlier my data demonstrated applications of transformational leadership attributes and above, attributes of instructional leadership. It also supports theory on instructional leadership which gives focus to outlining the mission of a school but also coordinates and monitors the school's academic programme as well as create a positive learning culture (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, 1986; City, 2013). Robinson et al's., (2008) analysis of school leadership on school outcomes and of the differential effects of leadership types identified five leadership features; (1) establishing goals and expectations; (2) resourcing strategically; (3) planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum; (4) promoting and participating in teacher learning and development; and (5) ensuring an orderly and supportive environment. Features 1 and 4 had the greatest impact on student performance therefore supporting what Southworth, (2002) concluded that effective schools require strong, directive principals who focus on the teaching and learning. Grissom and Loeb (2009, 2011) cite these as hands-on with teaching and learning, but also unafraid to work directly with teachers, and often visible in classrooms which formed part of my make-up in leading. Another part of that make-up was demonstration of transformational leadership which Printy et al., (2009) perceive as 'integrated leadership', combining instructional and transformational leadership and argued, the most effective schools are those where these two

models or more co-exist (Smith & Squires, 2016). This data on my leadership practices above add extension to the depth of literature on a principal's role in influencing school performance given I also employed instructional approaches. This was encapsulated in varying ways such as building a sense of community, establishing routines and ensuring teachers had the necessary resources e.g. access to data and how to read it to inform next steps in teaching and learning. In addition, Hallinger (2005) and Leithwood et al., (2004) found school leadership impacted learning outcomes by influencing the staff and school structures. Staff being leaders of learning demonstrated a leadership in action that was distributive, being the product of joint interaction between myself and my followers in aspects of our particular working contexts.

Having discussed the theme of leadership in action and how it promoted student learning, the next section will examine how school leadership capacitated teachers.

Leadership in action and capacitation of teachers

In this international context, the theme of teacher capacitation through establishing a positive culture, acknowledgement and recognition; developing personal qualities and professional capacities was found to be an important aspect of leadership in action with staff and principal. Blasé and Blasé (1999) assigned certain behaviours; supporting, developing professional learning opportunities and giving praise for effective teaching prevalent in instructional leadership. Commitment to instructional leadership develops teacher capacity through developing teacher leadership and a continuous learning culture (Duze, 2012). Teacher professional practice (Danielson, 2006) is defined as; supporting other people to achieve shared aims; retaining their commitment and taking action which fosters teacher capacity development (Jusoff et al., 2011).

The data from staff interviews will now discuss how staff capacitation was considered by participants to be an important aspect of supporting the effectiveness of my leadership in action.

Anne, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and two years at the school said:

> *You are given the support, the place to grow as a professional and you try to, you know, given the help to achieve and accomplish your goals so that's quite useful to have in the teaching profession. (Interview, June 2017).*

Anne's quote is used as it is typical of what the other interviewees have said. Anne refers to the development of professional qualities within personnel management and if the leader collaborated with teachers about their professional growth, its development and accomplishment of goals. She believes this occurred through '*support*', '*place to grow as a professional*' and with '*help to achieve and accomplish goals*'. My illustrated leadership and opportunity for workplace professional learning provided the social support important to develop teacher capacity (Harris & Muijs, 2005). Just as my organisation of time for teachers to meet and engage in professional dialogue concerning teaching and learning provided the logistical support for them to not only improve their skillset but equally their agency as leaders (Muijs & Harris, 2003).

Mary, who had worked with me whilst I was principal, and three years at the school said:

*For me in particular, because I was appointed [*a leader*] …. I was given that opportunity…. But it allowed me to have a little bit of angle, a little bit of a taster of improving myself, so I was really happy with that. (Interview, June 2017).*

Mary's quote is used to exemplify personally how her leadership capacity was supported. Mary refers to leadership providing recognition for excellence and achievement in the school's culture. Her '*opportunity*' of being '*appointed*' a leader she identified as a way of '*improving*' herself was subsequently well received as she was '*happy*'. Mary views my leadership to secure collaborative processes of learning where she feels treated as a professional, entitled to ongoing scope for learning, leadership and participation, seemingly leading her to experience feelings of instrumentality and dedication (O'Donoghue & Clarke, 2010).

Above staff interviews indicate my recognition of their capabilities and achievements are required for successful leadership (Lingam & Lingam, 2015; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Staff equally demonstrate focus on our shared vision and goals, and in the recognition of their efforts and contributions to accomplish these, see leadership empowering them to be capable and motivated to innovatively experiment in their attainment, (Lingam & Lingam, 2015). Hargreaves' (2005) research on emotions in teaching and educational change found that teachers needed recognition to improve them in their professional work, more so in challenging circumstances such as those evidenced in my school. Whitaker et al., (2000) stressed the

importance of staff positivity, thus using recognition and reward to boost teaching and learning in turn made the quality of our educational provision better and more sustainable.

Data from staff surveys, encapsulating teacher capacitation came in "*Confers with followers regarding their professional growth; works jointly with them to develop and accomplish goals*", was perceived to occur often which generally aligns with Anne and Mary.

My personal reflection of conceptualising teacher capacitation seems to align with development of professional competencies and personal qualities. I wrote:

> *I have taught throughout my four years, modelled and mentored the teaching and learning…. ran all of the professional development for staff and organised inter-school PDs with the sister schools to create communities of good practice. I, with the management team created an environment of mentoring, peer to peer sharing, passing of academic literature, establishing a professional library for staff, appraisal system that allows for staff feedforward on their appraisals, targets and outcomes*

which all staff on some level and variation participated in. Our school vision of improvement was clear which Riley and MacBeath (2003) declare is a requirement, as well as our attainment performance being satisfied. These occurred from the development of a professional learning community (Duze, 2012) within the school which was a key component of my perception of leadership but sometimes not evidenced by all staff.

Summarising, Riley and MacBeath (2003) suggest the practice of leadership lies between certainty and uncertainty and is deeply embedded in the acquisition of tacit knowledge of one's context. In addition, it further emphasises this complexity cannot fit one single model of leadership. Within school contexts, as previously discussed, leadership needs to be shared to cope with these different dimensions as it is beyond the scope of the so-called heroic principal. Riley and MacBeath (2003) argue good principals are able to capitalise on the distinct leadership capabilities of others and empower them to adopt a leadership role within their areas of expertise. They are also able to not only direct but also motivate and inspire team members and this may materialise as Anne above states through one-to-one engagement with specific teachers or

through fostering a motivational organisation where everyone can participate actively in the school's life.

Summary

Overall the findings demonstrate significant alignment between my staff and I but not complete which is similar to Pashiardis' findings (2001, 2005) in Western contexts. This non-Western context adds depth to global research on leadership effectiveness. Equally, it adds development to the theory of followership and its recontextualisation as an important phenomenon in the leadership in action equation. The leadership behaviours I demonstrate do not seem to align to a particular style but encompass several models dependent on the goals to be achieved. These findings correlate with Harris' (2002) findings of effective leadership in challenging contexts where researched leaders were far from uniform in adopted leadership styles. The analysis of my empirical data indicates that, similar to Harris' headteachers, I embraced a shared model of leadership which sought to build both positive relationships and the empowerment of others to lead. My leadership context dealt with a turnaround school. According to my followers, with respect to this, I was perceived to embrace a form of transformational leadership, which aligned with my focus on social values, is a leadership style which Bass (1985) notes prevalent in times of challenge and change. The evidence from the data indicate that this leadership approach was considered to offer an important foundation to build the collective belief or strength required by my team to surmount successfully our difficult challenges which had to be confronted. Thus, my relationships with my staff necessitated me to model specific ways of working, and developing mutual trust and respect.

The data provides evidence to suggest that I aspired to Yung and Tsai's (2013) description of a leader and follower relationship akin to a miniature democracy embodying Thody's (2003) 'egalitarian collegiality'. School leadership should be concerned with being honest and having the desire to receive candid feedback from staff even if some perceptions are 'negative' as cited above in my contextual analysis because it demonstrates 'buy in' and development of a school climate that is transparent, collaborative, open to change and heading in the direction of a holistic approach to leadership. Voicing the truth, reveals what Maroosis (2008) states should be the

concern of leadership and followership which is 'doing the right things …… saying the right words and hearing them in the right way' (p.21).

This section of the chapter's data analysis examined how far approaches to cultural, educational engagement such as fostering an enterprising culture, culture construction, the promotion of student learning and teacher capacitation were considered by the research participants to be important factors of effective leadership in action.

In construction of culture, staff felt my 'pro-professional' approach found not only new ways to access professional development but permitted them to share knowledge also. Breaking rules of what was normal to staff, created cohesion which they felt established a powerful learning community. Staff perceived our moral culture arose from collective leadership and endeavour. Leadership of teaching and learning, staff believed came from having voice and being able to critique, to enable me to reflect also. This with my visibility and 'hands on' approach integrated both transformational and instructional leadership. Staff believed their capacity and agency as leaders were developed through professional dialogue. Also, recognition of staff capability and achievements, they believed fostered a motivational organisation. Already context signified as mattering (Crossley, 2012), these findings provide further new evidence on effective educational leadership through the eyes of followers.

The concluding chapter will tie together how the research contributes to the knowledge and understanding of being a principal in such contexts.

Chapter 6-Conclusions and Significance

Introduction

This chapter summarises the key findings of the study, the main conclusions, and the study's significance. The key findings and their significance arising from the data analysis chapter are discussed initially, then the limitations of the research are considered. After this, recommendations will be discussed which clearly emphasise fruitful avenues for future research, and recommendations for practice to support international educational leaders to be more effective in managing change in a context of culturally diverse educational communities.

Key Findings and Significance

The key findings of the study concern leader and follower perceptions of school improvement effectiveness in an as-yet under researched context of a struggling international school in the Middle East.

The first significant finding concerned leadership in action and indicated that mentoring, coaching and role-modelling were important aspects of leadership effectiveness. Staff perceptions disclosed that my open-door policy of 'anywhere, anytime' were valuable in creating professional dialogic communities from non-monologic mentoring episodes. From this it was evident that collegiality in their use created equity in discourse to develop open, two-way discussions (even dissent). Mentoring was perceived to be nurturing as I was the 'head learner' and I 'led by example', making leadership and learning interdependent. In the context of cooperative development, teamwork, collaboration and inclusive practices were considered as important leadership practices. The school's challenging circumstances meant that staff perceived problem-solving together as laying the foundation conditions for teacher learning and leadership, which was fundamental to building the school's capacity. Findings indicated that effective leadership was situated in inclusive practices and teamwork: staff perceptions that they had a voice meant they took joint ownership of our school through collective, collaborative endeavours. In people-centred applications, interpersonal skills of listening, being approachable and skilled in communication were seen as instrumental in creating community cohesion with all stakeholders. I was viewed as caring, knowledgeable and supportive.

In the context of this demonstrable and supportive leadership in action and the construction of culture, staff felt my 'pro-professional' approach led not only to new ways to access professional development but permitted them to share knowledge also. These modes of doing leadership were felt by staff to have created cohesion and established a powerful learning community. Staff perceived our moral culture arose from collective leadership and endeavour. Leadership in action entailed having voice and being able to critique, which enabled me to reflect also. This approach integrated both transformational and instructional leadership. Staff believed their capacity and agency as leaders were developed through professional dialogue. It was also clear that recognition of staff capability and achievements fostered a motivational organisation.

These results indicate that leadership to affect change is a collective process; no one concept of leadership would have achieved the required change/s my school needed to undertake to turn it around. These findings support Hickman's (2010) suggestion that engagement with a compilation of leadership practices such as charismatic, adaptive or team, is required in guiding action to better position my school organisation to deal with change.

A second key finding from my study concerns the subtle and flexible leadership practices I demonstrated which Collinson & Collinson (2009) term 'blended leadership' (p.199). This term was used by them to both explain and practise leadership where competing dichotomies, such as delegation and direction, were re-assessed to be inter-related and mutually required. My staff indicated they valued being consulted and listened to as well as being given clear and consistent directives from my leadership in action. The kind of distributed leadership I employed initially entailed 'top-down' delegation which appeared to be positively received as it improved team-working and staff commitment; and the results also indicated staff were positively receptive to direction, vision and clear expectations

My literature review evidenced heroic discourses being critiqued for romanticising leaders in overstating what individual leaders could actually achieve (Meindl et al., 1985) and subsequently paved the way for post-heroic discourses where 'top-down' hierarchical frameworks could be replaced by 'enhancing communities through dispersed and networked interactions' (Collinson & Collinson, 2009, p.191). Post-heroic research viewed effective leadership more relationally (see Gronn, 2002) and educationally, Spillane (2006) advocated leadership as distributed to be

pertinent given teachers practised pedagogical leadership in their classrooms. Post-heroic discourse also contributed to followership (Howell & Shamir, 2005) specifically in flattening hierarchies and increasing teamwork. Although these respective discourses in essence perceive effective leadership as either an individual or collective phenomenon, they should compete against one another, however, data from staff survey and interviews concurred instead of heroic and non-heroic discourses being competing, they were perceived to be complimentary, and present where my leadership was effective just as Collison and Collison did. My staff valued shared and distributive leadership but they also valued me being directive; able to conceive the 'bigger picture', as well as being 'approachable' and having a 'sleeves rolled up' approach. Thus, my staff seemed to prefer leadership practices which integrated a contradictory blend of apparently incompatible qualities These outcomes in an international school demonstrate alignment with Collinson and Collinson's (2009) research outcomes in the UK's Further Education sector. According to Collinson and Collinson important in these practices is their versatility, for they 'take different forms' and 'shift according to specific circumstances and interpretations' (p.198) as conveyed by staff perceptions of my leadership practices.

Other western research, notably from the USA, claim focus on paradoxical dichotomies and blended leadership may enable wider generalisations. Kaplan and Kaiser (2003) suggest effective leaders are able to mediate oppositional leadership practices which require them at the same time to be 'forceful' and 'enabling' or 'strategic' and 'operational'. These versatile managers were perceived by organisational employees as most effective. My research outcomes from a non-western educational organisation add to this body of research as similarly my staff perceived blending of leadership practices to be effective in improving our school. Staff data evidenced an effective blend of being led and managed. They felt that I did lead by example and allowed them opportunities to develop in leadership but under an umbrella of 'monitoring' as they perceived me to be learning-focused in forming the vision and mission of our school. Contemporary developments in leadership studies align with these above arguments. Noted in my literature review section on leadership was criticism of the over-simplistic dualistic assumptions between for example, transactional or transformational styles of leadership. Instead of problematising binaries such as participative and autocratic leadership, Fairhurst (2001) contends the main dualism in leadership research lies between individual and collective forms of analysis. Binary opposition between leaders and followers, Bowring (2004) argues is deepened through gender

dualism which privileges men and leaves women marginalised. This research in conducting a mixed methods approach to leadership study and making use of both principal and staff analyses outside the global North, rather than label or problematize leadership, provides a platform to widen generalisation of what effective leadership in action actually represents.

A third key finding from my study concerns examination of effective leadership through the eyes of a number of stakeholders, namely a female principal enacting leadership which was then evaluated by herself and the teachers in her school. Results infer my staff preferred leadership which integrated a contradictory blend of apparently incompatible qualities, thus these aforementioned tensions substantiate Gronn's (2008) suggestion of refocusing distributed leadership to 'hybridity' of leadership. Accepting that both individual and collective dimensions will continue to appear in leadership configurations, Gronn's conceptualisation of hybridity is in tune with Collinson and Collinson's 'blended leadership' which I found evidenced by my staff in the leadership practices they found effective in me. Perhaps, overall, my dialectical study of leadership provides another approach to deal with the powerful tensions and interplay between oppositional binaries and contributes to this growing conceptual interest. Making use of my empirical research in an international school arena adds to dialectical analysis interest as it focuses on the value added examination of teacher perspectives on effective school leadership and the hybridity of leadership practices which can incorporate seemingly incompatible opposites through a focus on paradox and inter-connectedness.

A final finding which is methodological comes from my longitudinal, explorative case study (Yin, 1993; 2014), using the perceptions of myself as a principal, with the perceptions of my staff, in perceived realities towards a holistic exploration of school effectiveness provide a deeper foundation for perceived generalisations (Guetterman & Fetters, 2018). Again reiterated, my research data enabled in-depth scrutiny of complex phenomenon (Burgess, 2011) and gained a more thorough comprehension of lived experiences for myself as a Western principal serving a Muslim community in a non-western context and those of the staff who followed me through truths that have been constructed from personal voice. Through this triangulation of myself, the staff questionnaires and staff follow-up interviews, more objective accounts on principalship and followership were obtained.

Limitations of the Study

In line with other individual case studies, much can be learned from my case insights, particularly those gained from a culture other than my own. However, my research was never designed to have universal applications (which from a positivist framing could be viewed as a limitation) but as an interpretive mixed methods study, it sought to capture a unique episode in time and particular process/es of leadership in action. The results generated from my case add to the current body of research on leadership practice, where my, and my staff perspectives from a non-western base, could over time be compared and contrasted to other research, specifically to other leaders, particularly female leaders, to assist the academic world to reach greater understanding on what leadership actually is. In spite being a small-scale study, it did incorporate a mixed methods approach to validate its findings, and as such it is likely to be of some value to both female and male headteachers serving Middle Eastern or other international schools.

One important consideration as an insider researcher was the extent to which my reflective role and researching my own practice might impinge upon staff involved in the research, for example, the power relationships of being principal and researcher. I have to acknowledge that, within power dynamics, my possession of the title of 'principal' apportioned much privilege and shaped my researcher positionality. It is noted that in the survey completion, despite my physical efforts to remove myself from staff presence, my influence and power as principal may have had some impact, including staff feeling obligated to continue with the research survey, as previously noted.

In my research, I was classified as a total insider (Chavez, 2008), as I shared several identities and experiences with my school community. I had lived and worked with them for a number of years. However, as a new researcher at this level of study, my positionality was in state of flux: as my research evolved I found so, too, did my personal conceptualisation of positionality which no doubt impacted my thesis. Preedy et al., (2012) suggested the need for educational leaders to transcend national frontiers in their conceptualisations of leadership but this is questionable given my multiple positionalities (head, teacher, researcher, plus my other personal attributes) brought their histories with them and had to have impacted. While much can be learned from my professional endeavours in light of the insights I gained from a culture other than my own, these

endeavours and insights are entangled with my positionality, and in that sense are both a strength and a weakness.

I aimed to shape the research project to what Takacs (2002) refers to as an 'assets model of multiculturalism' (p.170). Most of the participants in this project were non-Western and English was their second language. In some international school contextual research, these could possibly be viewed as deficiencies. However, as one aim of the project was a move away from Western research dominance, this becomes an advantage. As my staff were insiders, they were able to help me, an insider-outsider Westerner and a native English speaker, see things that I might have missed and offer newer insights into my position as principal and my leadership practices. On the other hand, a limitation which arose from conducting the research in English occurred during survey completion. On hand to assist was a member of staff translating but it could not be assessed the accurateness of the translation into Arabic. Evidenced also from the interviews, some staff did not understand what exactly they should be evaluating, given some interviewees qualified interpretation of meanings of survey descriptors from myself, the interviewer. All of this may have impacted the reported outcomes.

Research Contribution

This empirical research and the new data found contributes to the base of knowledge and understanding surrounding present-day leadership in schools by combining theoretical perspectives stemming from literature (Pan & Chen, 2021) who argue for a newer frame of reference for school leadership which is decentralised and shared. New approaches to school leadership argue the importance of teachers within leadership endeavour, collaboration and capacity for school improvement, and bring to the fore the pivotal importance their perspective may hold of a school's leadership (Kin et al, 2019; Van Wyk, 2020). My research contribution was both empirical and theoretical; and supports the need to move away from the heavy Anglo-American bias existent here. It contributes to current interest in the international perspective of leadership by adding depth to the importance of not unthinkingly enforcing Western models of thought and action without due diligence to the cultural context (Walker & Qian, 2018). Leadership research as discussed previously is not without its problems but this research of leadership in action created and stimulated a multi-dimensional perspective of leaders and

leadership, which was not only broader and empathetic, but also part global with its origins in a non-western context. In observing and recording perceptions between myself and my staff to 'what is going on' in school improvement effectiveness and moving away from the traditional bias of Western domains offers a newer frame of perspective to adopted Western frameworks on leadership to make a substantive contribution to the field of leadership studies. Not only does my research represent a useful step in the direction of lessening dependency on the dominance of leadership research from the West but as a Western principal serving a Muslim community in an Arab country, it personally enabled me exploration of how my own identity was entangled with the dynamics and structures of western dominance through its narrative dimension. Already referenced Preedy et al.,'s (2012) requirement of educational leaders to transcend national frontiers in their conceptualisations of leadership. hence, much can be learned from my professional endeavours and the insights I gained from a culture other than my own.

Crossley (2012) argued the importance of context, these findings provide new or deeper evidence on effective educational leadership through the eyes of followers and not solely leaders. Where my research goes further, is in providing a more holistic appraisal of leadership effectiveness. The leadership practices embraced by myself correlate with the practices of educational leaders identified in the literature reviews of for example, Bush's (2007) advocacy of contingent leadership. This alternative necessitates leaders capable of adapting their leadership style to a best fit approach which, Bush and Glover (2003) argue, responds to the diversity of school contexts, their exceptional organisational circumstances and the challenges they confront. However, my research takes this one step further demonstrating my leadership in action was evidenced not only by myself in leading but equally visible and evidenced by the staff who followed me in turning the school around. I argued we needed to unpick previous frames of reference on school leadership as those cited in my literature review in order to construct newer conceptualisations. Thus, this research's desire to move the field of leadership research away from an asymmetrical focus on leaders, to focus on followership, builds on latter studies to offer newer insights into the contributing role my followers played in successful leadership.

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Although my findings demonstrated overall significant alignment between my staff and I, there was not complete alignment which was similar to Pashiardis' findings (2001, 2005) in western contexts. This non-western context adds depth to global research on leadership effectiveness. Equally, it adds development to the theory of followership and its recontextualisation as an important phenomenon in the leadership in action equation. The leadership behaviours I demonstrate do not seem to align to a particular style but encompass several models dependent on the goals to be achieved as indicated in the literature review and above. My findings do correlate with Harris' (2002) findings of effective leadership in challenging contexts where researched leaders were far from uniform in adopted leadership styles. The analysis of my empirical data indicate that, similar to Harris' headteachers, I embraced a shared model of leadership which sought to build both positive relationships and the empowerment of others to lead. My leadership context dealt with a turnaround school. According to my followers, with respect to this, I was perceived to embrace a form of transformational leadership, which aligned with my focus on social values; and a leadership style which Bass (1985) already cited in the literature review, noted prevalent in times of challenge and change. The evidence from the data indicate that this leadership approach was considered to offer an important foundation to build the collective belief or strength required by my team to surmount successfully our difficult challenges which had to be confronted. Thus, my relationships with my staff necessitated me to model specific ways of working; develop mutual trust and respect which has already been cited as important in the literature review.

Recommendations

One arching outcome of the present research was to provide a more holistic appraisal of what constituted effective leadership in action, to support movement towards a 360-degree evaluation of it in an international educational setting. This research considered the perspectives of both principal and staff in assessing what constituted effective leadership within school improvement. Given both the exponential growth in international schools and future demand for international educators, it would be professionally prudent if this drive towards a 360-degree perspective was to be emphasised in future leadership and management training programmes for international leaders coming from western hemispheres to help curb the 'copy and paste' mindset of importing

Western dominated research to instead challenge these adopted frameworks on leadership by embracing or constructing newer conceptualisations.

Given the importance of leadership practice itself on a global arena, it is vital that further research into hybridity of leadership is conducted in more non-westernised locations to find out gaps in knowledge and skills 'as a basis for making informed decisions about addressing them', (Lingam & Lingam, 2015, p.45). Future inquiry emulating Pashiardis' (2001, 2005) research in other locations or types of international schools or even including other stakeholders such as parents may provide data to not only correlate my findings but also yield more potential knowledge or highlight lack of knowledge in transforming leadership practices away from westernised dominance. Review of these studies would also provide insight concerning future training programmes revolving around the content of principal leadership and management training to help national or international principals cope better with the ever-changing landscapes of their own bespoke educational contexts.

Clearly what does impact leadership is its context, the dominant epistemological grounding of a specific community as well as social culture and context (Fisher, 2019). This, therefore, points to a need to conduct further research into school leadership and culture to make further assessment of how leadership manifests itself in different cultures and equally to understand what engagement of leadership attributes might be most effective for leaders employed in non-native cultures or even working in communities with diversity of staff as I did.

As this research provides some counterbalance to the prevalent one-sided focus on leaders held in and out of the academic world, it offers a more holistic picture into how leadership may succeed or fail. As follower-centred perspectives are relatively new and moderately formed, research opportunities exist to expand this field. Most of all, within the role of following, it provokes deep reflection on what change initiation could be implemented to co-develop higher quality leadership.

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Appendices

Appendix One-Academic Author's permission

28th November 2016

Dear Dr. Pashiardis,

I am a doctoral student at the University of Bath in the UK working on a degree on educational leadership and learning. I plan to begin the study in the spring of 2017 exploring my own reflective practice and perceptions of myself as a principal with the perceptions of my staff at an international school from Foundation to Secondary school, in a non-western context. I would like to use the questionnaire devised for the principal research in Cyprus and Portugal as I see it to be a reliable tool. I have a copy of the questionnaire from the appendix in the research from Portugal. I am requesting your permission to use the questionnaire and would appreciate a written electronic response indicating such for the appendix of my dissertation. For electronic reply I can be contacted at mmcarthur@

Thanking you for your time and consideration of this request.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret McArthur.

Leadership Ratings

Date:

Years with this particular leader:

School Section (Primary/Secondary):

1: School climate
 1. Please think about the following definitions when considering how you would rate your leader with the statements below.

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

This leader…	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Often (3)	Always (4)	No Opinion (5)
(1) Clearly states the school's objectives.	O	O	O	O	O
(2) Communicates and promotes high expectation levels for staff and student performance in an enabling, supportive way.	O	O	O	O	O
(3) Provides recognition for excellence and achievement.	O	O	O	O	O
(4) Leaves enough autonomy to teachers in order to organise and programme their teaching.	O	O	O	O	O
(5) Offers opportunities for dialogue and cooperation between groups, classes and lessons.	O	O	O	O	O

	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Often (3)	Always (4)	No opinion (5)
(6) Mediates and facilitates effective resolution of conflicts in a timely fashion.	O	O	O	O	O
(7) Promotes open communication and flexibility in relations with the staff as opposed to strict adherence to bureaucratic hierarchy.	O	O	O	O	O
(8) Promotes an environment which facilitates learning and which is orderly and coherent with the school's goals.	O	O	O	O	O

2: <u>School leadership and management</u>

> **2. Please think about the following definitions when considering how you would rate your leader with the statements below.**
>
> **<u>Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:</u>**

This leader…	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Often (3)	Always (4)	No opinion (5)
(9) Cooperates with the staff in creating a common vision for school improvement.	O	O	O	O	O
(10) Encourages staff to be actively involved in the planning and implementation of this vision.	O	O	O	O	O
(11) Presents her vision for the school to all educators in the world.	O	O	O	O	O
(12) Her values and vision are evident through the things she does, the way time is spent and importance.	O	O	O	O	O
(13) Encourages a culture of innovation and experimentation.	O	O	O	O	O
(14) Her authority is presented through her knowledge and abilities instead of her position authority.	O	O	O	O	O

	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Often (3)	Always (4)	No opinion (5)
(15) Closely cooperates and contributes to the work of the Ministry of Education.	O	O	O	O	O
(16) Applies research findings to facilitate school improvement.	O	O	O	O	O

3: Curriculum development

3. Please think about the following definitions when considering how you would rate your leader with the statements below.

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

This school…	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Often (3)	Always (4)	No opinion (5)
(17) Develops actions for the adaptation of the curriculum to students' needs.	O	O	O	O	O
(18) Provides instructional resources and materials to support teaching staff in accomplishing instructional goals.	O	O	O	O	O
(19) Monitors systematically instructional processes to ensure that teaching activities are related to the expected outcomes.	O	O	O	O	O
(20) Effectively administers and integrates all curricula taught in the school with the national curriculum.	O	O	O	O	O

4: <u>Personnel management.</u>

   4. Please think about the following definitions when considering how you would rate your leader with the statements below.

   <u>**Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:**</u>

This leader…	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Often (3)	Always (4)	No opinion (5)
(21) Used class observation to help the teachers' professional growth.	O	O	O	O	O
(22) Confers with subordinates regarding their professional growth; works jointly with them to develop and accomplish improvement goals.	O	O	O	O	O
(23) Uses a specific teacher observation instrument and ensures that evaluations clearly and accurately rate staff performance.	O	O	O	O	O
(24) Clearly defines expectations for staff performance regarding instructional strategies, classroom management and communication with the public.	O	O	O	O	O

   5: <u>Administration and fiscal management</u>

   5.   Please think about the following definitions when considering how you would rate your leader with the statements below.

   <u>**Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:**</u>

This school…	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Often (3)	Always (4)	No opinion (5)
(25) Makes sure that different reports to the Ministry of Education are accurate and timely submitted.	O	O	O	O	O
(26) Complies with educational policies, as well as laws and regulations.	O	O	O	O	O

	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Often (3)	Always (4)	No opinion (5)
(27) Is effective in scheduling activities and the use of resources needed to accomplish determined goals.	O	O	O	O	O
(28) Develops budgets based upon documented programme needs, fiscal needs, personnel costs and operates within the given budget.	O	O	O	O	O
(29) Monitors the use, care and replacement of capital equipment.	O	O	O	O	O
(30) Manages all school facilities effectively, efficiently supervises their maintenance to ensure clean, orderly and safe buildings and grounds.	O	O	O	O	O
(31) Is punctual to meetings and gives attention to the discussion of the various issues raised in the meetings.	O	O	O	O	O

6: Student management

6. **Please think about the following definition when considering how you would rate your leader with the statements below.**

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

This leader…	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Often (3)	Always (4)	No opinion (5)
(32) Effectively communicates to students, staff and parents school guidelines for student conduct.	O	O	O	O	O
(33) Insures that school rules are uniformly observed and that consequences of misconduct are applied equitably to all students.	O	O	O	O	O

	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Often (3)	Always (4)	No opinion (5)
(34) Effectively conducts conferences for parents, students and teachers concerning school and student issues, conveying both the positive and negative aspects of student behaviour as well as problem areas.	O	O	O	O	O
(35) Protects learning time from outside and unnecessary interruptions.	O	O	O	O	O
(36) Tries to implement such teaching methods where 'higher order from of learning' is facilitated.	O	O	O	O	O
(37) Promotes the use of knowledge in a variety of forms.	O	O	O	O	O
(38) Promotes the interconnection of learning experiences in the school with practices which are followed outside the school.	O	O	O	O	O
(39) Encourages and she is a good example of life-long learning using new ideas as well as successes and failures as examples.	O	O	O	O	O
(40) Maintains and updates student folders.	O	O	O	O	O

7: Professional development and in-service

7. **Please think about the following definition when considering how you would rate your leader with the statements below.**

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

This leader…	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Ofte n (3)	Always (4)	No opinion (5)
(41) Uses information which accrues from school inspections and other teacher appraisal in order to improve personnel.	O	O	O	O	O

	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Often (3)	Always (4)	No opinion (5)
(42) Strives to improve leadership skills through self-initiated professional development activities.	O	O	O	O	O
(43) Utilizes information and insights gained in professional development programmes for self-improvement.	O	O	O	O	O
(44). Disseminates ideas and information to other professionals; provides leadership in addressing the challenges facing the profession.	O	O	O	O	O

8: <u>Relations with parents and the community</u>

8. **Please think about the following definition when considering how you would rate your leader with the statements below**

<u>Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:</u>

This leader…	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Ofte n (3)	Always (4)	No opinion (5)
(45) Encourages relations between the school on one hand and the community and parents on the other hand.	O	O	O	O	O
(46) Promotes cooperation with other organisations and businesses from the community so that students' needs are addressed.	O	O	O	O	O
(47) Creates such relations with the community and parents so that they are encouraged to participate in decision making within the school.	O	O	O	O	O
(48) Demonstrates awareness of school/community needs and initiates activities to meet those identified needs.	O	O	O	O	O
(49) Demonstrates the use of appropriate and effective techniques for community and parent involvement.	O	O	O	O	O

(50) Emphasises and nurtures two-way communication between the school and the community.	O	O	O	O	O
(51) Projects a positive image in the community.	O	O	O	O	O

9: Problem solving and decision making

9. Please think about the following definition when considering how you would rate your leader with the statements below.

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

This leader…	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Often	Always (4)	No opinion (5)
(52) Presents discussion and searching for solutions as commonly accepted practices within the school.	O	O	O	O	O
(53) Shares information and facilitates decision making among all personnel.	O	O	O	O	O
(54) Solves problems in a cooperative way with teachers.	O	O	O	O	O
(55) Is open to different approaches and solutions and does not insist in any one way of solving problems.	O	O	O	O	O
(56) Tries to listen to many views and ideas before solving important problems.	O	O	O	O	O
(57) Implements decision-making processes which are participative as opposed to autocratic.	O	O	O	O	O

Appendix Three-School owner's permission

28th November 2016

Dear Mr. Nasser,

As you know I am a doctoral student at the University of Bath working on a degree in Educational Leadership and Learning. I plan to begin the study in the spring of 2017 exploring the personal perception of my leadership with my whole staff cohort and each individual staff member's perception of my leadership in order to see where there is agreement or disagreement. I would like your approval on behalf of the owner to conduct the study on site. The name of the school and those who participate amongst the staff will be completely anonymous. I will also seek each teacher participant's consent. The school may also have access to the study when completed if it so desires.

Thanking you in advance for your support.

Yours sincerely,
Margaret McArthur.

Appendix Four-Staff permission letter

Dear Staff Member,

RE: Participation in Research Project

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the above project. This project will contain no references to the school or any individual who has taken part therefore all those who have participated will be 'anonymous' within the findings of the research. If you have agreed to either/and completed the interview and the survey have the right to withdraw or request the non-use of what they have submitted.

Thank you once again for your support of the above research.

I agree to complete the survey or/and participate in a subsequent interview for the above research study.

Name: ………

Signature: ……….

Date: …….

Yours sincerely,

Margaret McArthur Reid.

University of Bath

Department of Education

Research Students: Ethics Approval Form

This document aims to help you to reflect more carefully about the ethics of research projects. It further commits us to incorporate ethical practice within our research strategies. Four main guidelines structure the formal approval form: informed consent, deception, confidentiality and accuracy. The underlying principle is that without considering these guidelines, the standard as well as the quality of our research will be undermined.

If your research involves another body or association (Local Authority, local charity, co-operatives and so forth) where ethical approval has to be granted, please attach appropriate evidence.

In completing the form, you should consult:

- http://www.bath.ac.uk/internal/ethics/committee/   (and its links)

- British Educational Research Association: http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/

- British Psychological Society: http://www.bps.org.uk/

- British Sociological Association: http://www.britsoc.co.uk/

- Social Research Association: http://www.the-sra.org.uk/

- ESRC Research Ethics Framework:
  http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/information/research-ethics.aspx

EdD PROGRAMME: ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED RESEARCH

To be completed by the student and supervisors, and approved by the Director of Studies for the EdD before any data collection takes place

Introduction

1. Name(s) of researcher(s)

Margaret McArthur

2. Provisional title of your research

Towards a 360-degree perspective on leadership: principal perspective versus staff perspective comparison and contrast

3. Justification of Research

The research will build on work undertaken by Petros Pashiardis (2001, Cyprus and 2005, Portugal) which looked at principal and staff perspectives on leadership to draw comparisons and contrasts within European contexts. Little has been done with regard to this in the Middle East hence I wish to look at the Middle East and its British International Schools. I wish to make a comparison between myself as a leader in a school undergoing transition, my perspective of my own leadership and the perspective of my staff to ascertain where and how we agree and/or contrast. Much research to date has focused on a leader as a person, or from his or her perspective of leading but rarely from the perspectives of those they lead. The guiding assumption for the project lies in that leader efficacy is dependent on how subordinates view him or her as a leader. Generally, the results should demonstrate consensus between the staff and the principal regarding the principal's perceptions of herself and the teachers' perceptions of her. This research through inclusion of staff will help to justify the assumption of the importance of finding out if teacher perceptions match those of a principal's in relation to management as all parties will conduct themselves to their personal points of view and not necessarily to the reality of how things actually are.

Thus what is actually believed to be the reality is precisely what actions will be based upon whether we are ready to accept this or not.

To conclude, an argument could be made that reality will stem from what is perceived. On completion, this research will represent a step forward to lessen dependency on the currently weighted research base from the West.

Consent

4. Who are the main participants in your research (interviewees, respondents, raconteurs and so forth)?

A principal and her teaching cohort

5. How will you find and contact these participants?

The research involves an in-house context whereby a principal of an international school in a Middle Eastern environment will make use of her current role and her teaching cohort to conduct the study.

6. How will you obtain consent? From whom?

Written permission has already been sought from the owner of the school to conduct the research. Written permission has already been sought from Dr Pashiardis to make use of his research tool.

Verbal consent was sought from staff before administering the survey part of the study. Staff were free to leave the after-school meeting if they did not feel comfortable in participating.

Deception

7. How will you present the purpose of your research? Do you foresee any problems including presenting yourself as the researcher?

I have explained to the agreed parties what the purpose of the research is i.e. it is part of my studies towards my doctorate. However, some of the staff have participated in other research as part of my studies so they are somewhat used to this. Yes, I shall have to be aware of bias as I am both researcher and a participant.

8. In what ways might your research cause harm (physical or psychological distress or discomfort) to yourself
    or others? What will you do to minimise this?

All participants have been informed that the focus shall be on their views to a questionnaire related to their perspective of how they view me in the position of leading them as staff in the school. The questionnaire should not take more than 15/20 minutes to complete which will be done during an after-school meeting time so as not to burden them in addition to their workload. The surveys will be anonymous apart from those who would feel comfortable undertaking an interview with the researcher/principal to discuss further the reasons/justification for their answers: the concerned personnel will identify themselves on their surveys only but in the research document will still remain anonymous. Staff will also be informed that the research will be available for them to read before publication. Staff participating in the interviews, will be able to read their transcripts before being analysed in the 'Findings' section of the research.

All participants and the location shall remain anonymous to minimise the 'risk' of identification.

Confidentiality
9. What measures are in place to safeguard the identity of participants and locations?

As previously indicated the location, school, staff names shall be anonymous. Obviously the principal who is also the researcher must make her identity known. All that will be stated within the research is a school in a Middle Eastern context.

Accuracy
10. How will you record information faithfully and accurately?

The questionnaires shall be filled in personally by the participants themselves and kept by the researcher for analysis and evidence. At the interview stage, all interviews will be kept in an audio file and transcribed: these will also be kept for analysis and evidence.

11. At what stages of your research, and in what ways will participants be involved?

Only in the research stage i.e. by completing the questionnaire; undertaking an interview and subsequently viewing the transcription if desired.

12. Have you considered how to share your findings with participants and how to thank them for their participation?

I have explained to the participants that confidentiality shall prevail. In March, there is a staff social after school for coffee and cake at a local restaurant, which will be my treat and a thank you.

Additional Information
13. Have you approached any other body or organisation for permission to conduct this research?

Yes, Dr Pashiardis for permission to use his research tool.

14. Who will supervise this research?

Dr. Janet Goodall

15. Any other relevant information.

Student: Margaret McArthur	Signature: Margaret McArthur Reid
	Date: 13th February 2017
Supervising Member(s) of Staff:	**Signature(s):**
	Date:
Director of Studies for EdD	**Signature:**
	Date:

A copy of this form to be placed in [1] the student file, and [2] an Ethics Approval File held by the Director of Studies for EdD Research Students.

…….. Opportunities for dialogue and cooperation in Point 5 are encouraged in our drive to improve our standards and in our membership of being involved in communities of best practice within the company schools. The staff meet in year groups for planning and we have a programme of mentoring and buddying; our management learning software permits dissemination of what we do to students and parents with an open forum for students, parents and staff to enter in dialogue. As previously stated, educationally related material is forwarded to staff for their thoughts and every opportunity with leaders e.g. break time in staffroom or up on the roof for staff who smoke to participate in academic conversations/debates.

Point 6 as previously mentioned, staff are informed of the complaints procedure in the school, also there is a grievance committee comprised of staff members of all school and levels to deal with issues on offer to staff as a stepping stone. Conflicts within staff or student body are initially resolved if possible at middle management level: if no resolution can be achieved then concerned parties come to the principal for mediation. This principal will mediate and if the resolution fails or no agreement can be arranged, then the ultimate decision will rest with the Principal.

Given the adoption of the open-door policy in operation within the school, staff do not always as a first port of call have to pass through middle management. However, staff are aware that problems may be brought to the principal who will then undertake a full investigation with all parties concerned to try and mediate a fair resolution which may not always be to everyone's pleasing. Generally, resolutions are concluded through word of honour however, if the problem dictates, a written 'contract' may be drafted for agreement and a binding document for all parties concerned.

The school has undergone great transition in the last four years in its effort to become a British international school, therefore as previously indicated moving it from unsatisfactory to probably satisfactory to good (in some areas) may have seen to some staff chaotic given there was resistance at the commencement of the school's learning journey. Given the job title of this researcher makes her privy to 'insider' information as she alone really has dealings with either the DGM or owner on a one-to-one level. As a result, she probably has a better understanding of the higher management vision however this knowledge, out of confidentiality, cannot always be shared with staff thus to the best of her ability this principal tries to facilitate learning within her remit or where she actually has some control. This principal who from the commencement of the school learning improvement journey has placed the teaching and learning as the hedgehog

concept of the school: everything that emanated from this as initiatives, etc. stemmed from the hedgehog concept.

Section 2: School leadership and management

On Points 9 and 10, the leader and from previous personal research (McArthur, 2015) understands her leadership style to be one of collegiality, whereby she is leading from behind, in trying to get everyone 'on the bus'. She in her long experience and life-long learning has also come to understand that she does not seek 'consent' from her staff body rather consensus in 'let's have a go': staff will trial things and after significant time has elapsed as a staff cohort the principal and her staff come back to the drawing board to assess and re-evaluate what has been piloted and then will decide what direction will next be taken.

On point 11, the school vision has collectively come for all staff within the school: they collectively decided through whole staff workshops……. Its dissemination 'in the world' is visible within the school itself in large print throughout the corridors……… As previously discussed, this principal tries to create a culture of collegiality within her school: dissemination of academic articles or research is forwarded to perceived, interested members of staff; follow-ups from discussions all come with the expectation of feedback to the principal. Leaders or staff are encouraged to bring forward innovative ideas, etc. which will make a difference to our hedgehog concept of improved teaching and learning.

With point 14, I believe that my authority comes from my knowledge and ability. In my leading, I believe and vocalise that I am a leader but my staff as part of a growth mindset also have titles of leader; Maths leader, Year 4R leader, the Principal-Whole School leader, I am at the heart of me always a teacher but with added responsibility.

Section 3: Curriculum Development

For point one in this section, the principal appointed, after the school's first year of transition, a British trained HOP who had the additional responsibility of being the curriculum developer. This leader is a sound practitioner, insider knowledge of the culture and embraced the New National Curriculum. She created the planning from Foundation to the end of Primary in all core primary subjects; Numeracy, Maths, Humanities and Science which incorporated the resources and learning objectives and outcomes, differentiated activities, assessment etc. which catered for the wide range of teacher abilities employed at the school therefore Point 17 is well catered for. Staff have access to teacher resources and the above in Point 17. The school with regard finance, utilises these funds to provide as best as possible for the teaching and learning as it is the hedgehog concept of the school. Leaders use pop-ins, learning walks, 'coaches', peer to peer to

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support staff in the school's transition. Tracking has now been introduced into the school's teaching and learning programme and although we have not actually invested in benchmarked examinations as previously stated the curriculum coordinator designs the assessment and controls its security well to ensure validation of the results. The learning walks, pop-ins, appraisal system and audits e.g. books ensure attainment and progression in the curriculum. Integration is a work in progress-difficulty with time allocation which is less here than in the UK as we have demands with government regulated subjects such as Arabic, Islam, etc. however, lesson planning incorporates inter-curricular links, themed weeks, etc. also help in this. Staff have also brought to the table ideas for integration, which where possible are also incorporated into the curriculum to increase inter-integration.

Section 4: Personnel management

…….. Staff with respective leaders develop their own learning improvement plan based on agreed targets and monitor this several times a year. The appraisal system works on first time the teacher choosing the lesson; the second time, the leaders give the class, lesson, time to the teacher well in advance. On the third, the leader will turn up without warning therefore what would be constituted as a normal lesson. The targets from the previous appraisals are logged for review. The appraisals are not teacher led, they also take data from the students to build up a picture of 'looking for learning'. All expectations are listed in the staff handbook and policy handbooks, learning improvement plan which staff at the commencement of the year sign commitment to and acceptance of.

Section 5: Administration and fiscal management

This section would be difficult for staff to answer as they are not aware– at least many of them of the connection of the principal to the owner. Principal does act in accordance with ministerial regulations-staff sanctions come from the local ministry ………Within her limited power and authority, uses school resources to the maximum. Prior to her arrival between staff was 'every man for themselves' whereby staff were permitted free reign with regard ordering and the longest serving members of staff were storing the maximum amount of resources. Resources became centralised and housed in one area under lock and key for accountability and the use of everyone. Staff are not aware that there is no actual budget created, the school submits its requirements to the owner and the ultimate decision will rest with them. The principal will keep the staff up to date with use and damage to capital equipment as the school operates as a community……. The principal chairs many meetings or delegates to other members of the SMT, an agenda and

minutes are published for most meetings. The principal will generally come back with feedback on the issues raised.

Section 6: Student Management

Point 32, with regard effective communication to all stakeholders in the community ….... At the commencement of every school year, parents and students are forwarded a bilingual home/school agreement which has to be signed by both parties and then it is housed in each student's pastoral file. Regularly, in parental newsletters, parents and students are reminded of school rulings on issues- which the principal may feel needs to be addressed perhaps due to an increase of a particular recurring offence. …..... Also, should parents not accept the school's decisions and wish to take a complaint further, they can lodge a complaint with the local educational ministry who will send out an inspector to investigate. This inspector will deal with the Principal. The Principal with her leaders discuss issues related to discipline to ensure that the results are as fair as possible. The principal is an advocate of restorative justice. She will deal with situations with the involvement of others: counsellor, and other school personnel to reason with students and work through problems.

She will thank and praise students who take responsibility for their actions; often she will ask the students for the solution to the problem. The school works as a team with regard to solutions; an example of which at present is a solution to the chronic failure of some students to complete homework. The hedgehog concept of this school is on the teaching and learning thus the principal tries to ensure that all school life has to evolve around this concept. Also the school operates the British National Curriculum however, the school year in the Middle East is shorter. Much of the PD for staff is initiated and delivered by this Principal who comes from a western trained background and understands and has endeavoured to train her staff on a move away from a rote learning culture. PDs have covered areas such as; what is learning; questioning; Afl; active learning in fact learning which bases its foundations on higher order thinking skills. The Principal has also run workshops on; and the Curriculum Developer has created lessons planning and resources, which cater for different learning styles. The school is very restrictive due to its religious observances however, through extra-curricular and educational visits, the Principal tries to ensure the students' learning to have exposure to the outside world.…..... Both the staff, students and parents are aware of how important education is to her: she is given the title of 'academic mother'.…..... Every student in the school has a folder lodged with the registrar which is the responsibility of administration to maintain. Within the school walls, each student has both an academic and pastoral folder which follows the student year to year until their

school life is complete. The responsibility for these lies with the Head of School overseeing with the class teacher or form tutor.

Section 7: Professional development and in-service

From a personal point of view, I view myself to be a life-long learner and use at every opportunity, my abilities and knowledge acquisition to impart it to staff whether in workshops, informal chats, structured meetings or the forwarding of research/academic documentation. There is no PD budget given from this current employer, however the current principal has initiated a scheme whereby, staff may apply for finance to do self-improvement and the company will pay on the understanding that the staff member will stay in the company employment X number of years. Appraisal system comes being teacher and student centred. Targets are given to staff which are monitored next time around. Appraisals are done three times a year; one a term. Informal 'appraisals' are undertaken on a monthly basis looking at specific foci; one known to staff, the second unknown. A report is then written up by each leader which is forwarded to the principal and the reports are then reviewed at an SMT meeting with school section leaders. Pop-ins also are a current feature on the school premises……. Staff who venture outside on PD, are asked to run a workshop to disseminate to other staff members the knowledge gained.

Section 8: Relations with parent and the community

Realistic relationships with the parents are encouraged. We have the monthly gazette and other letters, open days, parental appointment times bi-annually. Also, at the commencement to the year, parents are forwarded details of one lesson a week whereby staff give up one of their free lessons for parents to call and make an appointment to discuss any issues they may have……. The parents have access to the complaints procedure to put into writing concerns and the principal or a senior leader will contact the parent. Many parents feel at ease to pop into school to have an informal chat with the principal with regard issues or ideas. Every two years, the parents have been forwarded a survey to complete which is then analysed by the principal. As much as possible and within her remit, the principal nurtures the communication between the school and the parents.

Section 9: Problem solving and decision making

Of prime importance to this principal during her tenure at this school has been the establishment of a community of practice and for all stakeholders to be of equal importance. Much of the decisions and policies have had staff input and review when piloted for changes. This principal is a good listener and perhaps some of her strengths lie in being able to mediate. She has learnt

through experience never to seek consent as that infers 100% agreement which for her beliefs is impossible, rather she will look for consensus whereby she can negotiate with staff to 'have a go'. She is very much a believer in building a team and self-study has led her to believe she demonstrates more female leadership characteristics of leading from behind; building collegiality, etc.