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**Irish Principals' Emotional
Competencies and Affectively-Attuned
Change-Management**

Doctor of Education (Ed.D)

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CONTENTS	PAGE
List of Tables and Figures	v
Abstract	viii
Acknowledgements	x
Glossary	xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
The research question and sub-questions	1
Contribution to theory and practice	3
Structure	4
CHAPTER TWO: THE NATIONAL AND POLICY CONTEXTS	7
Voluntary secondary schools	7
The impact of austerity and hegemonic change in Ireland	10
The national education policy context	11
CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	16
Emotional epistemologies	17
Emotional Intelligence	22
Emotions and collaboratively-mediated change	27
The nature versus nurture debate	39
Conceptual framework	42
CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY, DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS	45
Methodological framework	45
Comparisons with the data-gathering approaches of other research	49
Grounded Theory	50
Mixed methods	51
Producing warrantable research	51
Ethical considerations	56
Focus group	59
Pilot survey	61
Online survey	62
Individual interviews	62
Procedure for analysis of the narrative	64

CHAPTER FIVE: PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS	68
The focus group participants	68
The survey respondents	69
The individual interview participants	75
CHAPTER SIX: THEME DEVELOPMENT AND PRINCIPALS’ INTRAPERSONAL EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES	77
Theme development	77
Influence of Life Story	86
Values as Foundational	90
Possessing Emotional Self-Regulation	93
Capacity to Build Trust	102
Problem-Solving	107
Developing Resilience	109
CHAPTER SEVEN: PRINCIPALS’ INTERPERSONAL EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES	119
Relationship Building	120
Communicating Effectively	125
Managing Conflict	128
Impact of Leadership Style	132
Contextualising Decision-Making	138
Artful Change-Management	141
CHAPTER EIGHT: SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	147
Synthesis	147
Answering the research questions	154
Implications for practice	165
CHAPTER NINE: REFLECTIVE ACCOUNT	169
Successes and limitations	169
Future research	178
Dissemination and personal outcomes	180

REFERENCES	183
-------------------	------------

Total Word Count: 50,258 words

APPENDICES	197
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APPENDIX 1: Letter to Focus Group Participants	197
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APPENDIX 2: Focus Group Question Plan	198
--	------------

APPENDIX 3: Questionnaire Design Matrix	200
--	------------

APPENDIX 4: The Online Survey	203
--------------------------------------	------------

APPENDIX 5: Letter to Interviewees	226
---	------------

APPENDIX 6: The Interview Questions	227
--	------------

APPENDIX 7: Confirmation of Ethical Approval	229
---	------------

APPENDIX 8: Development of Sub-Themes from the Survey Narrative	230
--	------------

APPENDIX 9: Axial Coding Matrices for the 12 Sub-Themes	233
--	------------

APPENDIX 10: Developing Themes by Identifying Relationship between the Consequences of the 12 Sub-Themes	237
---	------------

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLE	PAGE
Table 3.1: A summary of EI theories [after Cai (2011)]	23
Table 3.2: Core leadership practices (Leithwood, 2012: 65)	38
Table 4.1: Features of the data-gathering procedures	59
Table 4.2: The process of GT coding as applied to the narrative data	65
Table 5.1: Characteristics of the focus group participants	69
Table 5.2: Gender of survey respondents	70
Table 5.3: Respondent v actual gender balance	70
Table 5.4: Age category of survey respondents	71
Table 5.5: Years as principal (Total years if more than one school)	71
Table 5.6: School origin on appointment	72
Table 5.7: Sectoral origin on appointment	72
Table 5.8: School student population	73
Table 5.9: School type	73
Table 5.10: Is your school in the DEIS Programme?	74
Table 5.11: Is your school fee-paying?	74
Table 5.12: Characteristics of the individual interviewees	75
Table 6.1: GT Coding in Practice	78
Table 6.2: Axial coding matrix for the sub-theme ‘Influence of Life Story’	80
Table 6.3: The themes and sub-themes	82
Table 6.4: The domains, themes and sub-themes	83
Table 6.5: Principals’ ranking of emotional competencies – ‘Value driven’	91
Table 6.6: Principals’ response to: <i>‘I mean there’s a parent one minute, a staff member the next, then there’s a kid the next - there’s just such variety and there’s so many emotions you’re dealing with every day’</i>	94
Table 6.7: Principals’ response to: <i>‘The outcome of my reflection on that incident was very sobering for me emotionally and, I suppose, again made me look at all my mechanisms, procedures and responses’</i>	95
Table 6.8: Cross-tabulation: Age Category x <i>Your emotional response determines everything</i>	96
Table 6.9: Principals’ response to: <i>‘Don’t know if I would normally use the verb ‘managing’ with emotions – I do try ‘containing’ emotions, trying</i>	98

<i>to ‘segregate’ emotions, trying to have a cut-off point’</i>	
Table 6.10: Cross-tabulation: Experience as principal x <i>I do try ‘containing’ emotions, trying to ‘segregate’ emotions, trying to have a cut-off point</i>	100
Table 6.11: Cross-tabulation: Age category x <i>I do try ‘containing’ emotions, trying to ‘segregate’ emotions, trying to have a cut-off point</i>	100
Table 6.12: Principals’ response to: <i>‘I think empathy is an inherent part of my school relationships - it’s an emotional trust that builds-up between individuals and the principal. I think that that is really an essential dimension’</i>	102
Table 6.13: Principals’ response to: <i>‘It’s the smaller things that count – School improvement will follow’</i>	105
Table 6.14: Cross-tabulation: Gender x <i>It’s the smaller things that count – School improvement will follow</i>	106
Table 6.15: Principals’ ranking of emotional competencies – ‘Resilience’	109
Table 6.16: Principals’ response to: <i>‘I used to wake up at night-time and I’d spend two hours thinking about this, that and the other. I’m thinking about school...’</i>	110
Table 6.17: Principals’ response to: <i>‘It’s just constant...the large burden of administration from the Department, from the Board of Management and now the Trustees - it can actually subsume you and become all-consuming on every level’</i>	111
Table 6.18: Principals’ response to: <i>‘You’ve to call upon a deep well from within and try to appear to have this public persona that’s dealing with everything – that’s perhaps one of the greatest demands emotionally’</i>	112
Table 6.19: Principals’ response to: <i>‘Principals need support with the emotional side of their work from the very beginning’</i>	115
Table 7.1: Principals’ response to: <i>‘I think relationships are at the heart of what we’re doing in life’</i>	121
Table 7.2: Principal’s response to: <i>‘You can isolate the negative people, you know, where they realise that no matter what they say to you, it doesn’t really affect you’</i>	129
Table 7.3: Cross-tabulation: Gender x leadership style	133
Table 7.4: Cross-tabulation: Age category x leadership style	134
Table 7.5: Cross-tabulation: Experience x leadership style	135

Table 7.6: Principals' response to: ' <i>On a bad day I have written it down, when I've had a really bad day I would write it down, because it helps me to reflect on it and see how could I do better? ... what was it here that made me feel so terrible? ... and how I can look at it in a different perspective?</i> '	143
Table 8.1: The domains, themes and sub-themes	148
Table 8.2: The domains, themes and sub-themes with their consequences	151

FIGURES	PAGE
Figure 8.1: A theoretical model of Affectively-Attuned Change-Management	152
Figure 8.2: A framework of reflections emerging from the study	161

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to characterise the emotional competencies of principals in the Irish voluntary secondary school sector, determining what level of association these have with collaboratively-mediated change management and identifying professional development potential arising from the findings.

Emotions act as heuristics-of-value which influence school leaders' behaviour and an improved qualitative understanding of their emotional competencies can support an enhancement of principals' action, complementing cognitive/rational approaches in their management of collaboratively-mediated change.

A pragmatic methodological perspective is adopted and this is supported by a mixed methods approach. Overall coherence is achieved by undertaking data analysis and conceptual development within a grounded theory framework.

The initial study, a focus group, provided rich data from which themed extracts were used to frame a large-scale survey questionnaire distributed electronically to the entire cohort of 380 secondary school principals in Ireland. Findings from this survey and from three subsequent semi-structured interviews were analysed and supported the development of a conceptualisation called 'affectively-attuned change-management'. This theory argues that in seeking to bridge the gap between having a vision for improvement and the achievement of transformational change, a school leader will require to incorporate attunement to emotion, both intrapersonal and interpersonal, in the establishment of a moral and ethical basis for change ('Foundations'); the deployment of one's affective acumen and capacity to sustain ('Agency'); the activation of a climate of authentic collegiality ('Connection') and, ultimately, the mobilisation of energy and empowerment for collaboratively-mediated change ('Synergy').

This conceptualisation thus presents a synthesis of four overarching processes, each of which is examined in detail, grounded in the numerical and narrative data and linked to the literature.

The conceptualisation is then examined for applicability and an actionable heuristic developed, integrating both cognitive and affective considerations into the school leader's transformational efforts. Implications of the findings for professional development are then explored.

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Thank you to Katie, Ashley and Michael for your encouragement of an elder fellow student.

To Barbara, the centre about whom we all spin, this thesis is dedicated.

GLOSSARY

The Voluntary Secondary Sector: 380 ‘faith schools’, both Catholic and Protestant, representing over 50% of the post-primary schools in the Republic of Ireland.

Trustees/Trusteeship: Faith schools in Ireland are privately owned either by individuals (less than ten schools), or by Trustees. In the majority of cases, these are Catholic religious orders or lay Trust Bodies established by such.

VEC Sector: Vocational Education Committees – largely county-based, emerging from the technical schools of the 1930’s – 1960’s and now comprising 40% of the post-primary sector. VEC schools are fully state-funded, non-denominational and are legally owned by these Committees. They also provide a wide range of adult and further education courses. In late 2013, VECs were re-configured and re-branded as Education and Training Boards (ETBs). I have retained the VEC nomenclature throughout to remain consistent with the pre-2013 usage of the respondents.

Community & Comprehensive School Sector: Similar to VECs in that they are fully state funded, but schools in the Community and Comprehensive sector have stand-alone status and may also have religious representation on the Board of Management.

The Department of Education and Skills: DES does not own any schools but is both paymaster and policymaker.

SEN: Special Educational Needs

WSE: Whole School Evaluation – Similar to Ofsted inspection

Post of Responsibility: Promotion grade for teachers.

Joint Managerial Body (JMB): The representative, advisory and support body for voluntary secondary school management (principals and Boards of Management) in the Republic of Ireland. The organisation comprises the Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS) and the Irish Schoolheads Association (ISA) representing the Protestant schools.

DEIS: A Department programme of initiatives and supports designed to mitigate the impact of social disadvantage at school level.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction, the research question and sub-questions

The impetus for undertaking a research project into the emotional dynamics of principalship emerged from my practice in two related, though differing fields. My 14-year tenure as principal in two Dublin secondary schools established an in-practice belief in the centrality of emotional adeptness to effective school leadership. My current role as Research & Development Officer in a school management support and advisory organisation has introduced a broader dimension to my leadership practice and confirmed the existence of a gap in understanding at a national level of the role played by emotion in principalship in Ireland.

The requirement for increased awareness of the emotional forces at play in school leadership arises from two sources – a demand from teachers that principals become more aware of, and adept at, mediating the affective landscape of the school and secondly, an emerging imperative from educational policymakers that school transformation be mediated on a collaborative, ‘whole-school’ basis.

These demands led to the emergence of a focus in this dissertation on the role played by the emotional competencies of the principal in the leadership and management of collaboratively-mediated change. In the context of this research project, the term ‘collaboratively-mediated change-management’ comprehends the bringing-about of positive school transformational activity as a group effort, primarily between principal and teachers. Understandings of ‘emotion’ are explored in Chapter 3 and, while the word

‘emotionality’ strictly refers to a manifestation of emotion, the terms are used interchangeably throughout.

The aim of this research project is to discover and characterise association, as opposed to direct causality, between the self-identified emotional competencies of a distinct cohort of principals in Ireland and their leadership and management of collaboratively-mediated change in their schools. Thus the main research question is:

‘How are Irish secondary school principals’ self-reported emotional competencies associated with collaboratively-mediated change-management within their schools?’

Discerning such association has required firstly, the identification and investigation of how school principals characterise their own emotional practice and the first sub-question is:

1. How do principals characterise the emotional dimensions of their school leadership work?

The second sub-question seeks to discover how such competencies are related to collaboratively-mediated change-management processes within their schools:

2. How do principals’ emotional competencies emerge as being associated with their management of collaboratively-mediated change in their schools?

The thesis also provides for applicability of its findings to enhancing the effectiveness of principals’ decision-making and action in the real-time lifeworld of their schools and the third sub-question thus asks:

3. How can attunement to emotion be integrated with rationality into principals’ leadership of whole-school transformation efforts?

This research addresses the above questions against a backdrop of the deepest and most prolonged recession in Ireland's modern history when Ireland is 'painfully at the epicentre' (Linsky and Lawrence, 2011: 4) of global economic turmoil. The psychological impact of the recession on Irish society has been severe (Ganzelben et al., 2012: 17) and presents the challenge of maintaining a focus on the perennial underlying features of the 'emotional geographies' (Hargreaves, 2008: 129) of school leadership while not ignoring the effects of increasing austerity on both schools and society.

Contribution to theory and practice

This research is important for three reasons:

1. A gap in understanding

Though an occasional focus for Masters dissertations (e.g. O'Connor, 2004), the affective landscape of post-primary school leadership in Ireland has received scant attention. No broadly based study of the emotional dynamics of voluntary secondary school principalship has yet been undertaken and a key purpose of the present study is to begin to address this gap in knowledge and understanding.

2. Professional development

Following my tenure as principal, I was seconded to the JMB as Research and Development Officer in 2009. This role involves meeting the needs of the organisation in three key developmental areas: education, training and leadership support. Responsibilities of the post include liaising with principals, board chairpersons and policy makers; providing induction programmes for newly appointed principals and deputies and training members of Boards of Management across the country; supporting the national council of JMB with research and position papers; negotiating with the Department of Education and

Skills, the Teaching Council and the Inspectorate and representing JMB on a range of national educational forums such as the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment of which I am the current Deputy Chairperson. Thus, while enhancing my professional capacity, I also have opportunities to engage in development work related to voluntary secondary school leadership at national level as well as having access to 380 school principals to support this exploration of an under-examined aspect of secondary school headship in Ireland.

3. Practitioner Focus

A key purpose of this research is to move beyond description and analysis to the development of a conceptual model which can be used to promote a better understanding of the emotional dynamics of one aspect of school leadership and support positive practitioner thinking and behaviour.

This research, therefore, sets out to make a significant contribution to the theory and practice of education by:

- (a) Carrying-out the first nationwide investigation of the emotional dynamics of principalship within the Irish voluntary secondary school sector, and,
- (b) Developing a new conceptual model of applied emotionality in secondary school principalship which supports an enhanced understanding of the affective elements required for collaborative school development.

Structure

This opening chapter has provided a brief introduction to the main focus of the thesis.

Chapter 2 explains the context of the research, including the voluntary secondary school

sector, the impact of austerity and hegemonic change in Ireland from 2008 to 2014 and the national education policy context.

Chapter 3 presents a conceptual framework drawing on the growing body of literature relating emotional competencies to effective school leadership and, specifically, to change management in schools.

Chapter 4 presents the methodological justification for the decisions taken in relation to the empirical approaches adopted for this study. It presents the epistemological perspectives associated with the research and explains the approach taken to supporting the warrantability and claims to knowledge made throughout the thesis, as well as the ethical provisions supporting the investigation. This chapter also describes the specific methods of data collection employed and the procedures adopted for subsequent data analysis.

Chapter 5 presents an account of the sampling strategy and a profile of the research participants.

Chapters 6 and 7 comprise a critical analysis of the two overarching domains of intrapersonal and interpersonal emotional competencies in the words of the respondents and linked to the literature, demonstrating their importance to participants and their impact on the principal's leadership and management of collaboratively-mediated change at school level.

The research questions are explicitly answered in Chapter 8, 'Synthesis of Findings and Conclusions'. This chapter establishes a theoretical synthesis of the findings and relates emerging conclusions to the work of other researchers. The conceptualisation of

‘affectively-attuned change-management’ is then examined for applicability and the implications of this study for school leadership development and support are explored.

Finally, Chapter 9 provides a reflective account of the project and considers the limitations and successes of the study, ideas for further research, personal outcomes and plans for dissemination.

As both the national and policy settings presented a changing and challenging backdrop against which this research was carried-out, we begin with an examination of the historical and contemporary contexts, presented in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NATIONAL AND POLICY CONTEXTS

Introduction

The imposition of a national austerity programme, significant hegemonic change in terms of church-people-state relations, a loss of trust in fiscal, ecclesial and political authority and the emergence of a neo-liberal, evidence-based policy framework driving educational reforms (Lynch et al., 2012: 10) have all conspired to produce a ‘perfect storm’ of unremitting change impacting on the psychological and emotional health of school communities (Harris, 2007: 1). This state of flux is reflected in the principals’ narrative explored in this thesis and coincides with an already challenging set of factors uniquely impinging on schools within the voluntary secondary sector in Ireland.

This chapter examines the historical background to such voluntary secondary schools and the contemporary societal, fiscal and policy contexts impacting on the emotional landscape of school life in Ireland.

Voluntary secondary schools

There are 730 post-primary schools in the Republic of Ireland. Though ownership of these enterprises is vested not in the State but in a range of bodies such as Vocational Education Committees (VECs) and religious trusts, the Department of Education and Skills does exercise control over curricula, examinations, inspections and teachers’ terms and conditions (Lynch et al., 2012: 26). In broad terms, a post-primary school will situate within one of three sectors – voluntary secondary, VEC or Community/Comprehensive. Vocational schools emerged in the 1930s from a state system of technical schools in place from 1899. This sector, intended to provide for ‘continuation education’ following-on from primary for pupils up to the age of sixteen, was organised through thirty-eight local and

representative Vocational Education Committees. Up to the introduction of universal free post primary education in 1967 and subsequent legislative and social change leading to greater homogeneity across the system, the reality was that secondary and vocational provision were characterised by a divisive polarity wherein ‘intelligent children continued into a secondary school if their parents could afford the fees and the less academic, or those who could not pay fees, attended the vocational school or ‘tech’ as it was known locally’ (Doyle, 2000: 31).

Ireland’s sixteen comprehensive schools were established between 1963 and 1987 to open up a geographical spread of possibilities for those who had formerly chosen vocational education by providing free, co-educational education with a curriculum including academic and technical subjects up to the terminal examination, the Leaving Certificate. The comprehensive system never flourished and was overtaken, in terms of model, by the emergence of Community Schools which provided a similar service to students aged 12 – 18 years as the comprehensive schools but also offered adult education and opened-up their facilities to the people of the local community. Management of Community Schools, many of which were established by the amalgamation of local voluntary secondary and VEC schools, was shared within a Board of Management comprising representatives of parents, teachers, religious authorities and the VEC.

Pre-dating both the VEC and Community/Comprehensive sectors, voluntary (i.e. privately owned) secondary schools were provided with a state funding mechanism by the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act of 1878. These schools were denominational and, reflecting the demographic, overwhelmingly Catholic. Denominational or ‘faith’ schools were thus in receipt of state funding though it was never adequate and trustees had to find the money for buildings and maintenance (Doyle, 2000: 29). Today, the 380 voluntary secondary schools in the Republic, 27 Protestant and 353 Catholic, continue to receive less

state funding per capita than either of the two 'state' sectors and bear a human resources legacy still impacting on modern principals, such as restrictive practices in the area of promotion (overwhelmingly by seniority, except in the case of principals and deputies), separate employer (the local Board of Management) and paymaster (the DES) and a range of union demands acceded-to when numbers of professed religious personnel were very high and manpower was not a limiting factor in running such schools.

One impetus for undertaking a study of the emotional dynamics of school enhancement within this sector of Irish education arises from the particularistic character of headship within voluntary secondary schools. History and current events have conspired to place faith-school principals at the vortex of a storm of unanticipated personal and organisational sustainability challenges, many of which apply to leaders within the other sectors, but a significant number of which are uniquely related to this division of post-primary provision. Voluntary secondary school management places a high premium on governance autonomy but the price of such separation from the State has been high, particularly in terms of resourcing. Schools within the sector uniquely must raise 30% of their day-to-day operating costs from within their own resources, placing both budgetary and fundraising burdens on local principals (JMB, 2012: 4); VEC schools have centralised human resource departments, removing much of this function from their principals' workloads; community and comprehensive schools have state-paid chaplains supporting the pastoral and faith development work not provided-for in voluntary secondary schools; VECs have centralised purchasing, accounting, insurance, industrial relations and education support departments, all of which functions lie within the responsibility of voluntary secondary principals; VECs make promotion appointments on merit as opposed to the seniority premium imposed on voluntary secondary appointments and the building stock of state sector schools is younger and better resourced in terms of additional paid caretaking staff than those within the voluntary secondary system.

Such a deficit in resourcing impacts on the day-to-day work-load and worry-load of voluntary secondary principals. Coupled with the systematic dismantling of schools' middle management structures under a moratorium on appointments to posts of responsibility introduced in 2009, voluntary secondary principalship has become an 'impossible proposition' (JMB, 2012: 9) with compliance, performativity and adaptive demands impacting on the psychological and physical health of school leaders.

Principalship in voluntary secondary schools can thus be differentiated from its counterpart in the other 50% of Irish post-primary schools and scope therefore exists for a comparative study of the affective landscape of school leadership across all three sectors in the future.

Meanwhile, a demand for principals to reclaim their leadership-for-learning role and to re-culture their teaching staff under new pedagogies, methodologies, assessment strategies and models of evaluation has necessitated a consideration of emotionally-engaged and collaboratively-focussed leadership which can account for the competing pressures of policy-driven renewal and recession-driven restrictions.

The impact of austerity and hegemonic change in Ireland

According to Flood (2011: 44), the past three decades have witnessed a particularly rapid period of change and transformation in Irish society. O'Sullivan and West-Burnham spell-out these changes as:

- The transformation of a mono-cultural Irish society into a multicultural one
- A global financial collapse with devastating consequences for Ireland
- Impact of political scandals and professional malpractice
- The 'catastrophic' fall of the [Catholic] Church, and,
- The return of mass emigration (O'Sullivan and West-Burnham, 2011: xii)¹

¹ Throughout the dissertation, Roman type is used for presenting quotes from the literature and italics for respondent quotes.

At the heart of these ‘shakings’ (Harris, 2007: 15), the loss of a central and dominant moral clarity may be reflected in a loss of trust and a consequent crisis of leadership across Irish society (O’Sullivan and West-Burnham, 2011: xiii). School leaders, however, have dealt pragmatically with challenges as they arose and Irish schools have endured without causing any real concerns about the quality of education (Flood, 2011: 44). The dramatically changed and changing societal setting within which Irish schools and their leaders operate thus underscores a need for role-clarity and action as earlier argued by Fullan:

My first conclusion, at this juncture in the Irish Education Reform agenda, is that principalship needs serious attention that it has not yet received. The time is right to change this and to follow through with action that will strengthen the role and impact principals can have in school improvement in the 21st century (Fullan, 2006: 13).

An interrogation of the literature demonstrates that both trust and values are strongly associated with emotionality (Beatty, 2000: 339, Slater, 2005: 323). The rejection of a very clear hegemony around core values (O’Sullivan and West-Burnham, 2011: xi), coupled with unprecedented cuts in capitation and support grants, salaries and staffing conspire to present a set of significant challenges in terms of the emotional dynamics of Irish schools at this time. It is therefore to be expected that feedback from principals on the affective landscape of their role will reflect their coping mechanisms as they grapple with the ‘repetitive change injury’ (Harris, 2007: 25) affecting today’s schools although it is not intended that the current recessionary backdrop should dominate the discourse.

The national education policy context

Policy-makers in Ireland see the fiscal context as an opportunity to implement what they see as long-awaited deep change in terms of school patronage, enrolment policy and practice, curricular provision, models of inspection, levels of school funding, school self-

evaluation, literacy and numeracy strategies, entry to third level, teacher pay and conditions etc. (Flynn, 2011: 6). The policy-makers' oft-repeated mantra 'never waste a good recession' was explicitly linked to education in the McKinsey report 'How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better':

Across all the systems we studied, one or more of three circumstances produced the conditions that triggered reform: a socio-economic crisis; a high profile, critical report of system performance; or a change in leadership (Mourshed et al., 2010: 4).

Ireland has, in the timeframe of this research project, experienced all three of these factors in the form of a deep economic recession beginning in 2008, poor PISA results in literacy and numeracy in 2009 and a Minister in a hurry at the end of his career (Flynn, 2011: 6).

My role within the JMB brings me into contact with national-level policy makers and three themes recur at virtually every meeting:

1. Keep within the ECF (Employment Control Framework)
2. Save €474m in current spending, and,
3. Protect the Minister

Parallel to these pressures runs a neo-liberal ideology which has dominated international discourses of reform during the past two decades or more (Sugrue, 2011: 59). Key characteristics of this ideology include:

- conversion of most social acts into market transactions
- artificial maximalisation of competition and stress
- maximalisation of hire/fire transactions in the labour market
- maximalisation of assessment factors, by which compliance with a contract is measured
- reduction of the inter-assessment interval
- creation of exaggerated or artificial assessment norms ('audit society')

The consequent focus on the rhetoric of accountability is evident in the emphasis on policy as numbers and outcome-accountability as empirical measures (Sugrue, 2011: 61). This is particularly apparent in the focus on literacy and numeracy outcomes as scaffolded in the new School Self Evaluation (SSE) process, compulsory in Irish schools from 2013:

By gathering evidence from a range of sources and using the evaluation criteria and quality statements as benchmarks when examining their practice in the selected themes, schools will draw conclusions about the quality of their practice (Inspectorate, 2012: 3).

The SSE prescription includes the implementation of a raft of instrumentalist accountability measures, the majority of which are the responsibility of the principal:

1. School Improvement Plan:
 - a. School improvement targets (*e.g. X% of our students are doing higher-level English for Junior Certificate. In Year 1, we will increase this to X+5%, in Year 2 to X +10% and to X + 15 % in Year 3*).
 - b. Required actions related to teaching and learning that will help to achieve the targets
 - c. Persons responsible
 - d. Timeframe for action
 - e. Success criteria
 - f. Measurable outcomes
 - g. Review date
2. Policy and statutory instrument compliance checklist
3. Teaching and learning review
4. Teaching and learning observation schedule
5. School protocols
6. Questionnaires

7. Interview schedules
8. Focus group schedules
9. Reflection sheets
10. Self-Evaluation Report templates (ibid: 40, 46).

In noting the significant, formative influence of such an ideology on school leadership, Brennan and McRuairc warn:

The potential for the field of emotions itself to be appropriated by the prevailing and powerful neo-liberal new managerial approach to school leadership has been identified as a concern ... confining enquiry to a narrow interpretation of the organisational, cultural and social utility of emotions (Brennan and Mac Ruairc, 2011: 130).

Such concerns surrounding the potential for emotionality within school leadership to become transactionalised and added to the performativity-list of principals emerges at several points throughout this study, beginning with the relevant literature, presented next in Chapter 3.

Conclusions

The porous boundaries of contemporary schools admit successive waves of influence emerging from the external environment. In the case of voluntary secondary schools, a range of such pressures will later be demonstrated by respondents as negatively impacting on the psychological health of both principal and school community. This chapter has identified inequitable resourcing, inapt middle management structures and diminishing commitment to ethos as historical legacies particular to voluntary secondary schools. Common to all sectors are the performativity demands of a raft of new externally mandated educational policies and the impact of a severe economic recession with associated funding and staffing cutbacks.

Such contextual factors are not, of course, unique to Ireland except perhaps in degree. A set of perennial human and organisational factors are universally intrinsic to school leadership and key dimensions of the affective landscape of principalship as are revealed in the literature, will be discussed next.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to establish a literature-informed conceptual framework which will underpin subsequent treatment of the topic in this thesis.

While the project, as I shall discuss in Chapter 4 next, was not wholly adoptive of a grounded theory (GT) methodology, the GT conception of literature-as-data supports both the assimilation of contemporary theoretical and empirical research findings on the topic into the establishment of a conceptual framework as well as a weaving of the research literature and theoretical arguments throughout the analysis (Charmaz, 2006: 164).

The present treatment of the existing research and theoretical bases differs from a strict interpretation of GT, however, in that the literature review was not conducted ‘*after* developing an independent analysis’ (ibid: 6 - emphasis in original). Indeed, I had conducted a systematic literature review on the topic for my earlier Masters study and thus, while I certainly retained a degree of ‘received theory’, I nonetheless consciously avoided the imposition of preconceived ideas on the emergent conceptual framework.

The framework is developed by critically examining four contemporary debates in the field of emotions in educational leadership and the role played by emotions in change-management in schools.

The first section of this chapter presents a set of emotional epistemologies in which rationality is complemented by emotion in the effective leadership of school transformation.

The second debate examines the emergence since the mid-1990s of Emotional Intelligence (EI) as the dominant discourse on the mobilisation of the power of emotions. Its subsequent impact on applicability to the field of school leadership is examined and critiqued.

The third section explores the association between emotion and collaboratively-mediated change. It explores a set of current debates underpinning linkage between leadership practice and collaborativity; the demand for a new, emotionally engaged ‘leaderliness’; the politics and power dynamics of emotionality, and, linking the emotional practice with teacher performance and student outcomes.

Finally, the nature-versus-nurture debate around leadership development is explored with a particular focus on the contested question of the ‘teachability’ of emotional competencies.

The chapter relates each debate with the project and concludes with a synthesis of the conceptual framework which underpins subsequent treatment of the topic in this study.

Emotional epistemologies

George Bernard Shaw’s admonition that ‘Reformers have the idea that change can be achieved by brute sanity’ (Fullan, 1985: 391) represents a call for the enrichment of change-management with factors complementary to rationality and such features were identified by principal respondents in the present study as lying within the domain of emotionality. It thus becomes important to comprehend emotion in school leadership and this section examines definitions of emotion, the emotions-versus-reason debate and emerging epistemological stances.

Given its subjective character, the existence of a spectrum of definitions of emotion is perhaps unsurprising. These range from the goal-linked, action-related focus of Oatley and Jenkins:

An emotion is usually caused by a person consciously or unconsciously evaluating an event as relevant to a concern (a goal) that is important. The core of emotion is readiness to act and the prompting of plans (Oatley and Jenkins, 1996: 96)

to Hochschild's interactionist model as an awareness of four elements that we usually experience at the same time:

- a) Appraisal of a situation
- b) Changes in bodily sensations
- c) The free or inhibited display of expressive gestures, and,
- d) A cultural label attached to specific constellations of (a) – (c)

(Hochschild, 1990: 118-119).

While the notion of 'feeling' is frequently linked to emotion, it requires to be differentiated from moods and dispositions as these have distinct relevance in terms of a longer-term impact on both leader and follower. Crawford differentiates her terms as:

- Feelings (what we experience)
- Emotions (feelings that we show), and,
- Moods (feelings that persist over time) (Crawford, 2007: 524)

while Hackett & Hortman define dispositions as:

- Ongoing tendencies that guide intellectual behaviour (Hackett and Hortman, 2008: 93).

Thus, while persistence or duration of emotional experience has supported some clarity of differentiation between experiential states, the most significant separation in terms of thematic impact in the literature is that between emotions and reason or rationality

(Fineman, 1997, Fullan, 1998, Beatty, 2000, Ginsberg and Davies, 2003, Blackmore, 2004, O'Connor, 2004, Slater, 2005, Moller, 2005a Crawford, 2007, Humphrey et al., 2007, Harris, 2007, Hargreaves, 2008).

The virtually universal premise in recent literature is that the continuing Cartesian notion of emotion as a polar opposite to cognition (Beatty, 2000: 354) has outlived its usefulness and that a holistic, reconstituted approach to the person of the leader is required if we are to propose a more dynamic, inclusive and relational stance towards school change (Harris, 2007: 2). The metaphor of leadership as a pair of binoculars wherein one lens represents the intellectual and the other the emotional is presented by Singh et al (2007: 543) and typifies the appeal for a return to what Fineman terms 'cogmotion' as the cognition/emotion distinction is untenable (Fineman, 1997: 16).

This rejection of a professional demeanour that is primarily rational and carefully controlled emotionally (Beatty, 2000: 335) has coincided with a changing school leadership and management landscape in which teachers want leaders to be more caring, connected, supportive and committed to relationship (Brennan and Mac Ruairc, 2011: 136). This demand is coupled with, in Ireland as elsewhere, a policy environment demanding the emergence of a culture of collaboration (Flood, 2011: 53).

This momentum towards a greater emotional enrichment of the hitherto largely cognitive and rational basis for school leadership and management is not without its critics however. Morrison and Ecclestone (2011: 199) challenge three key 'imperatives' in contemporary education discourse; that transformation is essential; that leadership succession is in crisis, and that leaders must be able to run organisations that address the emotional well-being of staff and students. There also exists a risk that leaping onto the 'emotional bandwagon' may be used to downgrade cognitive and substantive knowledge and skills (ibid: 211), a

perspective shared by a significant number of principal respondents in this study. Morrison and Ecclestone's argument is that this 'zeitgeist of leadership development' (ibid: 204) requires an examination of the theoretical constructs that underpin various claims for it and some of these are considered next.

In the search for meaning-making around the subject of emotionality, a number of writers draw upon the metaphorical in gaining and communicating understandings of the ideas and phenomena they describe. Hence Singh's (2007: 543) 'binoculars', Hargreaves' (2008: 129) 'emotional geographies' and Beatty's (2004: 329) 'cooked and raw' emotions. There nonetheless exists a range of attempts to circumscribe 'emotional epistemologies' employing thematic approaches as well as more positivistic, neurobiological understandings.

Beatty (2002: 5) posits that 'emotional processes too constitute a system of meaning-making that works epistemologically' and goes on to frame a progression of emotional expression:

Emotional silence wherein emotions can be ignored, suppressed, denied or not valued as meaningful;

Emotional absolutism in which organisations set up 'feeling rules' and particular emotions are identified as 'right' or 'wrong';

Transitional emotional relativism acknowledges inner emotional realities but suppresses outward negative displays, leaving deeper levels of significance unexplored, and finally,

Resilient emotional relativism involving a deepened embodied awareness of 'emotional knowings' and an openness to feel what is beneath the surface.

While such a framework has potential for awareness-raising and applicability within a school setting, particularly where intentional efforts are being made in terms of deliberate

re-culturing (Beatty, 2004 p.335), other epistemologies exist which may also support emotional understandings and processes. Goleman's 'hallmarks of the emotional mind' (2004 : 291-296) offers a list of the qualities distinguishing emotions from the rest of mental life:

A quick but sloppy response in which the rapid mode of emotional perception sacrifices accuracy for speed, making snap judgements while the thinking mind catches up;

First feelings – second thoughts describes a second kind of emotional reaction in which we make a conscious appraisal of a situation that leads quickly to feeling – usually with a more fitting emotional response than the 'quick and dirty' variety;

A symbolic, childlike reality refers to the associativity with which we allow elements that symbolise reality, such as the arts, to be the same as that reality, taking its beliefs to be absolutely true;

The past imposed on the present is where the emotional mind recalls an event similar to the one currently being experienced and triggers a response as if it were the past, and,

State-specific reality, describing how the working of the emotional mind is dictated by the particular feeling ascendant at a given moment.

An appreciation of such processes may have some potential to lend both understanding and deftness to, for example, a principal advocating for whole-school transformational activity as well as the micro-dynamics of a fractious staff meeting. Thus, while definitions, metaphors, themes and models have their limitations, each nonetheless offers scope for supporting a range of qualitative understandings which may, ultimately, be of greater day-to-day benefit to the practitioner leader than the more positivist findings of neurobiology or neurochemistry.

Emotional Intelligence

The argument that emotion is inherent in the practice of leadership rather than separate from it (Crawford, 2009: 9) is now established in organisational behaviour literature (Akerjordet and Severinsson, 2010: 363). This concept can be traced back to Thorndike's contention that social ability is an important component of intelligence (1920).

The popularisation of Emotional Intelligence (EI) by Goleman (1995) has generated a wave of interest in the examination of the affective components of corporate maximisation strategies (Beatty, 2000: 332). In the educational milieu, the popularity of EI is due, at least partially, to the fact that it reminds school leaders of what they already knew; that emotion and thinking do work together (Crawford, 2007: 522).

Few articles and books concerning the emotional landscape of school leadership since the mid-1990s fail to reflect-upon Goleman's synthesis. Goleman himself immediately acknowledges a fundamental debt to both Gardner's (1993) 'multiple intelligences' framework and to Salovey & Mayer (1990) who first proposed a definition and basic model of the emotional intelligence construct. Goleman equally acknowledges the influence of his mentor at Harvard, David McClelland whose work on motivation identified three main motivators; the need for power, the need to affiliate and the need for achievement (Goleman, 2011: 6). McClelland was the founder of what became the Hay-McBer consultancy which originally designed the Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers (LPSH) and which demonstrates an 'ideological lineage' (Luckcock, 2008: 379) with the work of McClelland on The Achieving Society (McClelland, 1961).

Three influential theories about emotional intelligence have emerged (Bulmer-Smith et al., 2009: 1626). Salovey and Mayer conceptualise emotional intelligence as an ability; Reuven Bar-On (2005) as a set of traits and abilities and Goleman (1995) as a combination

of skills and personal competencies. The following table, adapted from Cai (2011: 156), helpfully summarises the key characteristics of the three models:

Table 3.1: A summary of EI theories [after Cai (2011) emphasis in original]

Category	1	2	3
Represented by	Goleman	Bar-On	Mayer <i>et al.</i>
EI is defined as	A set of competencies and personality traits related to emotions, with <i>more focus on the competencies</i>	A set of competencies and personality traits related to emotions, with <i>more focus on personality traits.</i>	A kind of <i>mental ability</i> which processes emotional information
Model framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • Self-management • Social awareness • Relationship management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrapersonal skills • Interpersonal skills • Adaptability • Stress management • General mood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceiving emotion • Facilitating thoughts • Understanding Emotion • Managing emotion
Can EI be learned or developed in a short time?	Yes	No	No

A number of writers combine the range of domains encompassed by the various models into a workable definition of emotional intelligence for the purposes of clarity and engagement with their own research requirements. Cooper and Sawaf’s framing is perhaps the most concise:

Emotional intelligence is the ability to sense, understand and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy, information, connection and influence (Cooper and Sawaf, 1996: xiii).

For perhaps the same reasons - clarity and applicability - Goleman’s four-domain model has greater traction in the literature and also attracts attention due to his stated aim of ‘understanding what it means – *and how* – to bring intelligence to emotion’ (Goleman, 2004: xii, emphasis added), and seeing emotional intelligence as a set of learned skills and

competencies (Bulmer-Smith et al., 2009: 1626). Both these features have had an impact on research in education and, according to Humphrey et al (2007: 246), ‘most of the literature in this area is drawn from work in schools’.

While respondent principals in this study employ the term ‘emotional intelligence’, they do so in a nonspecific manner, providing no evidence of its linkage to the EI construct *per se*. At this point, therefore, a distinction may be drawn between studies of the impact on school leadership of emotionality as a broadly conceived phenomenon such as *Getting to the Heart of Leadership* (Crawford, 2009) and *The Emotional Side of Leadership* (Ginsberg and Davies, 2003) and those relating specifically to an EI model as framed by Goleman or others, including *Can principals' emotional intelligence matter to school turnarounds?* (Cai, 2011) and *Importance of emotional intelligence in conceptualizing collegial leadership in education* (Singh et al., 2007).

Literature relating specifically to the EI model and school leadership is further divided into studies using measurement techniques and those taking a more qualitative approach. The measurement tools of EI vary between models, the three primary instruments being Goleman’s Emotional Competencies Inventory (ECI), Bar-On’s Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) and the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test, (MSCEIT). These instruments are based on different theories and set out to measure distinct sets of traits and capacities. The ECI measures emotional competencies and skills while the MSCEIT was designed to measure a person’s mental capacity, which is relatively stable and less likely to assess Goleman’s ‘learnable’ skills (Cai, 2011: 173). Two variables used to distinguish between them include relationships with personality traits (lower for Mayer et al’s MSCEIT) and test-retest reliability (lower for Goleman’s ECI).

Linking EI test outcomes to, for example, transformational school leadership practices, demands an equivalent set of domains on the leadership side employing models such as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Hackett and Hortman, 2008) and the Triumvirate Leadership Grid (TLG) linking EI with collegiality (Singh et al., 2007).

The question of whether linkage has been conclusively demonstrated between EI as a construct and school leadership domains remains a contested area. Hackett & Hortman (2008: 103), in their exploration of correlations between EI competency test outcomes and the MLQ instrument, claim to ‘clearly establish that emotional competencies as measured by the ECI-U are related to transformational leadership style as measured by the MLQ’. They further assert that over three-fourths (76%) of the competencies measured by the ECI-U are significantly related to transformational leadership attributes and behaviours (ibid: 103). Matthews et al (2004: 193) challenge such conclusions claiming that so far, applied studies provide little basis for supposing that either EI is strongly predictive of outcomes in real-world settings or that interventions to increase EI will be cost effective. Their paper is one of a range of critiques of the construct and these are considered next.

Central to Goleman’s premise is that it is possible to provide people with a range of tools, techniques and skills for managing emotionality both within oneself and in relating to others. Inevitably, a critique of this capacity-acquiring argument has emerged, focussing along the following lines:

EI is more about intelligence than emotions (O'Connor, 2004: 48)

Morrison and Ecclestone (2011: 203) report the unacknowledged depth of disagreement about whether EI is a distinctive or integral element of ‘intelligence’ in general. The term emotional intelligence itself is even described by Humphrey et al as ‘an oxymoron’ (2007: 236). At the heart of the concern is the possibility that EI is essentially founded on

processes of thinking and judgement that are targeted and refocused on emotions to enhance control of self and others (O'Connor, 2004: 48). Allen (in Morrison and Ecclestone, 2011: 203) asserts that while Salovey and Mayer's and Goleman's views of intelligence differ, they agree that EI is about being able to monitor your own and others' feelings, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide your thinking and actions. Thus, while EI could mature into a construct that is theoretically meaningful, differing definitions and neglected conceptual problems have led to considerable confusion in the literature (Matthews et al., 2004: 179, 181).

EI crudely captures and simplifies emotion, reducing it to measurement and quantification
(O'Connor, 2004: 48)

Fineman cites a web discussion of emotion researchers:

Are there any empathy tests out there?

We are looking for measures of the following:

1. Pride 2. Friendship 3. Generosity. Any help will be greatly appreciated (Fineman, 2004: 719).

Given that we can 'struggle with the limitations of language to express how we feel' and that emotion is 'wrapped up in the warp and weft of social practices' (ibid: 720), the key determinant of EI as a construct lies in its measurability. Methods used to quantify EI range from self-report 'trait' questionnaires to ability tests (analogous to IQ tests) and 'informant measures' and each is problematic (Humphrey et al., 2007: 243). Indeed the low correlation between results in self-report and ability EI measures points to the possibility that they are measuring conceptually distinct entities – emotional self-efficacy and cognitive-emotional ability respectively (ibid: 243).

Criticism of the quantification of emotions however, goes beyond psychometric validity to the moral and value-laden use of outcomes in organisations and society as a whole. The

core issue relates to ‘experts’ ascribing EI values that they regard as desirable or inappropriate in various contexts and individuals whose EI level is deemed low being considered to require counselling and training programmes (Akerjordet and Severinsson, 2007: 1408).

Emotional Absolutism (Beatty, 2007: 334)

The ‘conceptual sloppiness’ attributed to EI’s uses and understandings (Morrison and Ecclestone, 2011: 203) has in part fuelled a reaction against the construct but this has also been reinforced by a fear of its potential unethical use in the hands of the powerful. On an individual level, self-centred leaders or those with a Machiavellian personality are capable of abusing their EI – a warning against manipulation repeatedly made by survey respondents. Similarly at the organisational level, EI may lead to socially acceptable ways of expressing emotions which can be experienced as suppressive (Akerjordet and Severinsson, 2010: 371) and rejecting opposition as negativity. At the political level, EI exposes the instrumental, manipulative intentions behind an apparently personal approach (Fielding, 2006: 358), captured in the phrase ‘managing *through* relationships’. At the heart of this concern lies the idea that emotions constitute an influential dimension to agency and that to put the emotions on the professional agenda in schools is to enact a powerful transformational potential (Beatty, 2007: 334).

Emotions and collaboratively-mediated change

Contemporary educational policy in Ireland repeatedly demands that mandated change be mediated collectively as ‘whole school’ enterprises. This section examines and relates to the project a set of current debates underpinning linkage between leadership practice and collaborativity; the demand for a new, emotionally engaged ‘leaderliness’; the politics and power dynamics of emotionality, and, linking the emotional practice with teacher performance and student outcomes.

The New 'Leaderliness'

For the past two decades, according to McWilliam and Hatcher (2007: 236), emotions have been largely regarded as feminine, private and irrational and therefore remaining outside the domain of public, masculinised work. There has since, however, been an endorsement of soft skills achieving hard targets, demanding a new 'leaderliness' in schools – one that replaces distance with empathy, aloofness with warmth and power with partnership (ibid: 234).

Whereas the risk exists of the emergence of 'leadership by adjective', wherein a new qualifier is added to the term 'leadership' almost annually (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006: 202), there remains a strong argument for framing a new image of the principal, required to accommodate the more recent discourse around the diffuse nature of leadership (Slater, 2005: 322). Perhaps unsurprisingly, characteristics demanded of this new emerging leaderliness include that it be:

Distributive: Sometimes referred-to as 'giving leadership away', Beatty sites distributed, distributive and shared school leadership as 'grounded in notions of collaborative inquiry within dynamic learning communities' (Beatty, 2007: 328).

Collaborative: Collaboration is defined as 'working with someone to produce something', (Oxford, 2014c) and Blackmore asserts that 'the emotional work of school management is to build a positive emotional economy based on collaborative models of professionalism' (Blackmore, 2004: 456).

Transformational: Often set in opposition to transactional leadership, 'all transformational approaches to leadership emphasise emotions and values with the aim of fostering capacity development and commitment to organisational goals' (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006: 204).

Emotionally Intelligent: More broadly defined as 'bringing intelligence to emotion' (Goleman, 2004: xii), Singh et al claim that 'interpersonal and intrapersonal emotionally intelligent behaviours of principals are integral to an educator's attainment of job

satisfaction and ultimately crucial to the development of a sustainable and effective culture of collegiality in our schools' (Singh et al., 2007: 560).

Collaborative and collegial demands are therefore seen to be at the heart of the transformational leader's demeanour. The principal's role is now being reconstituted as supporter, reinforcer and facilitator (Slater, 2005: 322) of school-wide change efforts, as opposed to the more authoritarian approaches of the transactional leader. Aligning with the broad focus of the present study, Slater set out to uncover the understandings, attitudes and skills required of principals in improving their schools through collaboration. She lists a set of five capacities her focus group participants (parents, teachers and school leaders) identified in answer to her research question, 'How does the principal support collaboration?' (ibid: 325-330):

1. Developing healthy relationships

'Collaboration is very emotional work, committed for a considerable period of time'

'Supportive relationships show respect for teachers' competence'

Slater's respondents support Crawford's contention that relationships in schools are built up over long periods, unlike hospitals for example, and are also particularly challenging due to their ever-changing nature, unlike prisons (Crawford, 2009: 130).

2. Modelling

'All members, and particularly principals, need to practice their espoused beliefs about collaboration'

'People are smart and will know whether the principal truly wants collaboration or not'

Modelling is characterised as ‘exercising idealised influence’ by Leithwood and Beatty (2008: 105) and is, they – and this project’s respondents – assert, related to authenticity in leadership.

3. Communication Skills

‘Listening; Openness; Asking for input’

This particular quote from Slater’s respondent emphasizes the listening, ‘receiving’ aspect of communication rather than the speaking or ‘transmitting’, a point made succinctly by a participant in the present study: *‘You have two ears but only one mouth!’*.

4. Valuing people

‘Using others’ input to solve problems or make decisions – not just listening to them’

‘...not being watched or micromanaged but being seen, heard, approved-of and appreciated’

Such commentary aligns with Davies and Brighouse’s characterisation of invitational leadership which ‘begins and ends with people’ and requires a respect for each person’s competence and commitment to making the school a good place for everyone to be (Davies and Brighouse, 2008:49).

5. Advocacy

‘Promoting the value of collaboration in itself: Endorsing collaborative activities’

‘Effective advocacy puts collaboration on the launch pad for take-off in the school’

The etymology of ‘advocacy’ reveals its affectively rich origins as the old French verb *advocare*, meaning to ‘summon, to call to one’s aid’, (Oxford, 2014a) which intersects with both the invitational character of the new leaderliness and also an acknowledgement that the principal cannot do everything.

Emotion and Politics

Collaboration and collegiality are inherently political. The term ‘politic’ may be conceived as ‘seeking the will and welfare of a polity which involves an authentic concern for group preferences’, that is, where right action and right order find their legitimacy not in the individual, but in the group (Luckcock, 2008: 381). Thus value structures and behaviour operate simultaneously and inter-connectedly at the twin levels of the predominant societal culture (macropolitics) and that of the school (micropolitics).

Macropolitical

A debate is emerging around the impact of the societal and cultural foundations of the emotions-as-strategy proposition. Western materialist culture locates ‘problems’ in the person rather than within the social and political sphere and thus feeds into the individualistic thinking not necessarily characteristic of other cultures. The potential for loss of values such as solidarity and other-centred moral responsibility is evident (Akerjordet and Severinsson, 2010: 371) as is the possibility of pathologising those who express their non-conformity or dissent in a negatively emotional manner.

There appears to be a political agenda behind the tactical deployment of emotionality that emphasises positive psychology, human strengths and potentialities while the attendant suppression of negative emotions may impoverish rather than enrich our understanding of leadership (Akerjordet and Severinsson, 2010: 371). Negative emotions are just as important as positive ones which may increase conformity and superficiality, eroding organisational effectiveness which must, in the final analysis, be founded on sometimes harsh and threatening realities. Specifically, negative emotions and dissonance may facilitate empowerment and learning processes in the organisation, a facet of leadership practice specifically referred-to by some respondents during this study.

Micropolitical

School leaders are expected, on a daily basis, to balance micropolitical tensions in schools resulting from macropolitical, cultural and structural changes (Blackmore, 2004: 439). Specifically, the new political reality in publicly funded organisations, demanding fiscal restraint, accountability and change, creates a new set of challenges for school leaders. Since educational politics, values and emotions are intertwined (Beatty, 2000: 339), Hochschild's (1983) concept of emotional labour, where individuals modify their actual or displayed emotions to meet the demands of their job (Haman and Putnam, 2008: 61), therefore occupies an increasingly central position in the professional life of the principal (Beatty, 2000: 340).

As a challenge to the 'bounded rationality' (Simon, 1976) of organisational cultures that gives primacy to patriarchal modes of organising and exerts overt and covert control over emotional displays (Mumby and Putnam, 1992), Mumby and Putnam introduced the concept of 'bounded emotionality'. This concept complements the toughness, stoicism and emotional detachment characteristic of many Western cultures with 'feminised emotional expressions' such as nurturing, caring and serving (Tracy, 2008: 27). Within an organisation governed by bounded rationality and emotional labour, hierarchical goals and values become fixed and difficult to change, whereas framing an organisational culture in terms of bounded emotionality opens its members to 'heterarchical goals and values' which are flexible, relational and socially fluid (Mumby and Putnam, 1992: 475). Rationality (whether bounded or otherwise) is not bad *per se* but has the potential to exclude alternative modes of organisational experience such as intersubjective understanding, community and shared interests (ibid: 480). Mumby and Putnam's conclusion that rationality is a social phenomenon in which emotion plays an integral role thus carries implications for the micropolitical landscape of the school, in supporting a wearing down of the contrived polarisation of head and heart.

Emotion and Power

The subjects of authority, power and control also emerge as significant forces in change-management processes. The central role of the principal in developing school culture is well acknowledged but has been premised on the principal as having positional power in a hierarchical organisation – the sole decision maker in school change efforts (Slater, 2005: 321). The shift towards a more collaborative approach to leadership generates emotional forces in both the leader and the led as positional power is shared and hitherto ‘un-flexed muscles’ are awakened by teachers.

The essential moral purpose at the heart of educational leadership is nonetheless vulnerable to those who can abuse their emotional skills in pursuit of their own good:

In other words, self-centred leaders or those with a Machiavellian personality are capable of abusing their EI, treating followers as vehicles for their own good, as well as exhibiting a lack of concern and the moral dimension of empathy. (Akerjordet and Severinsson, 2010: 371)

Thus, while it is impossible to eliminate the manipulative and the Machiavellian, one of the purposes of research into the affective forces in headship must surely be to underscore the importance of emotionally mature leadership and enhancing the principal’s ability to create a safe and trusting school environment - an emotional capacity in itself (Slater, 2005: 323).

Emotion and Gender and Class

Schools inform the appropriateness of emotional displays in ways that are gendered, racialised and classed (Blackmore, 2004: 444). Gender distinctions with emotions impact on intra and interpersonal dynamics across the spectrum of human activity. In particular, the gendered order of caring sets the stage for an important debate in terms of a schooling and leadership that has been overwhelmingly cognitive, calculative and stereotypically masculine in nature (Hargreaves, 1998: 292). While caricatures of male leaders persist;

(‘being a man is about being in command and control – it is not about being a carer’ (Lynch et al., 2009: 220)), sources of resistance to that order also exist. In the Irish context, Lynch’s findings that those men whose circumstances placed them in caring positions exhibited a capacity to and an orientation towards care that was similar to that of women, offers enquiry potential for research such as the present exploration of principalship as she concludes that ‘gendered order of care is not inevitable’ (ibid: 221).

Emotions are often the surface response to deeper dissonance issues (Blackmore, 2004: 447). Hargreaves’ (2004a) exploration of the emotional politics of school failure offers insights into the impact of both race and class as they demarcate emotionally laden differences between the passionless distinction of elite success and the ‘viscerally threatening emotionality of lower classes’ (ibid: 27). The policy language of failure resonates emotionally with the sensibilities of middle England, Ireland and America. Ability and achievement are defined as ‘singular, antiseptically neutral qualities’ (ibid: 38) that disguise their emotional and social bias and allow for seemingly socially neutral labelling (‘cruising’, ‘struggling’, ‘sinking’) of both schools and individuals. Strong external accountability linked to a disciplinary system of judgements and targets for evaluation mean that working class schools, in reality achieving extremely well, become tainted with failure and demoralised (Blackmore, 2004: 449). Defining failure in these terms ensures that failing schools in minority settings will always exist. Such schools will require an emotionally engaged leadership capable of both comprehending and mitigating the reality that the basic challenges come not from a lack of strategies for improvement but from having to endure the scourge of impoverishment (Hargreaves, 2004a: 39). Significantly, Hargreaves includes ‘make emotions matter’ in his list of approaches to sustainably combat school failure and argues that we should treat emotions in teaching and learning, standards and achievement, as central and not peripheral to the reform and improvement agenda (ibid: 39).

Emotion and School Enhancement

Linking the emotional practice with teacher performance and student outcomes intersects to some degree with the school improvement and school effectiveness movements but has become even more closely aligned with the recent emphasis on school renewal. The effectiveness proposition is that students in effective schools ‘make more progress over time than comparable students in comparable institutions’ and seeks quantitative measures of student inputs and outcomes (Martinez, 2003: 266). School improvement is about raising student achievement through focussing on the teaching-learning process and the conditions which support it – a ‘what works?’ discourse. Both traditions however, agree that while schools cannot compensate for society, they can make a difference in determining their students’ life chances and that improvement effects, while complex and multilayered, are amplified at the level of the classroom (Mortimore and MacBeath, 2003: 233).

Fullan declared the school improvement and school effectiveness movements to be ‘politically and philosophically at odds’ (1991: 7), but predicted the factions would lead to combinations of the two approaches as a function of ‘the politics of strange bedfellows’ (Beatty, 2007: 329). It is into this space that the concept of ‘school renewal’ emerges. The assertion by Beatty (2007: 328) that holistic school renewal demands a qualitatively different discourse from the ‘turf wars’ of school improvement and school effectiveness drivers resonates with the views of other writers. This is particularly true of researchers and theorists from the many Anglophone countries (e.g. Australia (Blackmore, 2004) and Canada (Slater, 2005)) adopting a devolved ‘government to governance’ restructuring policy for their schools, yet to emerge in Ireland. The resulting new set of accountabilities has been accompanied by a changed state of relations in site-based, self-managed schools, wherein a sense of alienation and anger has emerged resulting from the dissonance

between teachers' and leaders' 'real work' and the type of performative work demanded by the new systems (Blackmore, 2004: 440). Management of such affective complexities requires a new image of the principal, more in keeping with new visions of schools (Slater, 2005: 322).

For Beatty school renewal is a reaction against depersonalising performativity and contrived collegiality of the current 'intensification era'. At its heart lies a process of re-invigorating, re-energising and in effect, re-inventing the whole school as a dynamic learning community. The key to such renewal, she argues, lies not in going through the motions of a sterile professional discourse rooted in the standardised testing and continuous data-gathering of school effectiveness drivers but in 'going through the emotions' with the aim of re-culturing the school as an authentically collaborative and holistic community.

Recent research has sought to link leadership factors with teacher performance. Taking altered teacher practices and consequent student assessment gains as key outcomes, Leithwood and Jantzi (2006: 143) examine the specific leader practices impacting on such transformations. Their aim was to generate theory identifying a plausible chain of variables linking leadership effects to organisational conditions and, eventually, to student outcomes. The large scale study, based on a 4-year evaluation of England's National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, led to three important conclusions:

1. School leadership has an important influence on the likelihood that teachers will change their classroom practices.
2. Transformational approaches to school leadership seem to hold considerable promise for this purpose.
3. There is a significant gulf between classroom practices that are 'changed' and practices that actually lead to greater pupil learning; the potency of leadership for increasing student learning hinges on the specific classroom practices which leaders stimulate, encourage, and promote (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006: 223).

Thus Leithwood and Jantzi identify a set of transformational leadership practices as ‘Setting Directions’, ‘Developing People’ and ‘Redesigning the Organisation’ and later adding ‘Improving the Instructional Programme’ (Leithwood and Seashore-Louis, 2012: 57). These dimensions are underpinned by an emphasis on emotions and values and share in common the fundamental aim of fostering capacity development and higher levels of commitment to organisational goals on the part of leaders’ colleagues (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006: 204).

As a key aim of the present study is to discover what association exists between the principal’s emotional competencies and the process of change-management, Leithwood’s identification of teacher motivation, capacity building and workplace settings as the most influential variables of school leadership practice point to the potential that the affective foundations of such factors do indeed impact on teacher practices. His examination of these leadership practice categories is worth summarising here as virtually every element is reflected later in the data analysis in questionnaire, focus group or interview commentary by principal respondents:

Table 3.2: Core leadership practices (Leithwood, 2012: 65)

1. Setting Directions (<i>Motivation</i>)	
Building a shared vision	Fostering the acceptance of group goals
Creating high performance expectations	Communicating the direction

2. Developing People (<i>Capacity Building</i>)	
Providing individualised support	Offering intellectual stimulation
Modelling appropriate values and practices	

3. Redesigning the Organisation	
<i>(Workplace Setting)</i>	
Building collaborative structures	Modifying structures to nurture collaboration
Building productive relations with families and communities	Connecting the school to the wider community

4. Improving the Instructional Programme	
<i>(Workplace Setting)</i>	
Staffing the instructional programme	Monitoring progress of students and teachers
Providing instructional support	Aligning resources
Buffering staff from distractions to their work	

As if to underline the significance of the emotional foundations of these specific principal behaviours, Leithwood collaborated with Brenda Beatty, researcher and much-cited author on emotions and school leadership, in the production of *Leading with Teacher Emotions in Mind* (Leithwood and Beatty, 2008). Their objective was, in a ‘decidedly instrumental’ way, to clarify how those providing leadership in schools can help nurture and maintain positive emotions among individual teachers and a positive emotional climate across the school as a whole (ibid: 6). They use as their ‘conceptual glue’ the four-point framework of core leadership practices above, even crystallising Leithwood and Jantzi’s model into a mathematical function expressing workplace performance as a function of the motivations, abilities and situations in which teachers work:

$$P = f(a, m, s)$$

where P = teacher performance

a = teacher ability

m = teacher motivation, and,

s = the setting in which teachers work (ibid: 89)

The authors' point-by-point elucidation of the leader practices under each category is supported by extracts from a number of qualitative studies by the authors and others, bringing both teacher and principal voice to bear in developing each element. A similar approach was adopted in this study and such specific behaviours and competencies as were identified by Irish principal respondents will be explored in greater depth in Chapters 6 and 7.

The nature versus nurture debate

An extension of the discourse around the identification of leadership factors introduces the question of 'nature versus nurture' in the development of particular competencies.

Logically, if emotional competencies can be learned through awareness and practice, then leadership dispositions can be assessed and growth experiences can be designed to facilitate the emotional competency growth of leadership candidates (Hackett and Hortman, 2008: 107). Such claim and consequence are, of course, deeply contested and form a core question for principal respondents in this study.

Proponents of the nurture argument, essentially a Golemanite perspective, argue for a range of interventions fostering emotional awareness, empathic understanding and emotional management for prospective school leaders, at selection and induction, for continuous professional development and remediation and even in preparation for retirement. Typical of such interventions is the set offered by Johnson et al:

1. Education leaders must learn to be responsible for knowing their emotional selves supported by, for example, narrative writing and safe-dialogue with peers
2. University educational administrative curriculums require reform, to embed emotional awareness in certain courses or as ‘stand-alones’
3. Professional development with the support of mentors is required as leaders will benefit from being with others who have experienced or are experiencing emotionally charged situations
4. Scholars in the field of education should consider conducting research on this important topic to extend the existing body of literature and ultimately enhance development programmes (Johnson et al., 2005: 249)

More recently, an expansion in the number of books on the emotion in school leadership is noteworthy with such titles as:

- *Getting to the Heart of Leadership: Emotion and Educational Leadership* (Crawford, 2009)
- *Leading with Teacher Emotions in Mind* (Leithwood and Beatty, 2008)
- *Supporting the Emotional Work of School Leaders* (Harris, 2007)
- *Passionate Leadership in Education* (Davies and Brighouse, 2008), and,
- *Passionate Principalship: Learning from the life histories of school leaders* (Sugrue, 2005a)

A common approach throughout the book genre is a consideration of principal voice, rich in interview and other extracts and with an emphasis on uncovering themes from life histories, in-school scenarios and the recounting of critical incidents. Harris (2007) is typical in not pretending to offer ‘a set of techniques aimed at short term solutions’ (ibid: 2) but invites readers, as does Crawford (2009: 2), to undertake an ‘emotional journey’, surfacing cognition and exploring experiences with the aim of enabling principals to ‘engage in trusting, collaborative relationships that are necessary for leadership success’ (Johnson et al., 2005: 250).

Challenging the view that the role of the headteacher is grounded in emotion, shaped by emotion and acted-out in an emotional context (James and Vince, 2001: 316), McWilliam and Hatcher (2007: 242-243) argue that passion, emotion and caring do not let anyone off the hook of, for example, effective financial management – rather it nestles beside it. It is troubling, they assert, that ‘gurus like Goleman’ know what the right emotions are and how to experience them and that these ought to be understood as skills that are teachable through formal programmes of learning. Pointedly, they remind us that the recent inventories of emotional competence that are being made available to educational leaders do not emanate from communities of educators, resonating with O’Connor’s warning that handling our emotions and using them to manage others has become another in a long list of work competencies to be quantified and judged by external standards (O’Connor, 2004: 48).

Summary

- The practice of school leadership that is primarily rational and carefully controlled emotionally is widely challenged in contemporary literature. This development coincides with a changing school leadership and management landscape in which teachers want leaders to be more caring, connected, supportive and committed to relationship. Such a requirement is coupled with, in Ireland as elsewhere, a policy environment demanding ‘whole-school’ approaches and the emergence of a culture of collaboration.
- In the search for meaning-making around the subject of emotionality, epistemologies have emerged which employ metaphor and measurement as well as incorporating the more positivist findings of neurobiology.

- The popularisation of Emotional Intelligence by Goleman reminds school leaders of what they already knew; that emotion and thinking do work together, but the question of whether linkage has been conclusively demonstrated between Emotional Intelligence as a construct and school leadership domains remains a contested area.
- Collaborative and collegial demands are now seen to be at the heart of the transformational leader's demeanour with the principal's role newly reconstituted as supporter, reinforcer and facilitator of whole-school mediated change. There exists a demand for an emotionally engaged 'leaderliness' which is underpinned by values and which can comprehend the politics and power dynamics of school life while linking the emotional dimensions of practice with teacher performance and student outcomes.
- There exists deep contestation around the 'teachability', through awareness and practice, of emotional competencies and whether growth experiences can be designed which can promote the development of emotional competencies.

Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework may now be drawn which is founded on perspectives elicited from this examination of the literature.

Reflecting both the literature and the principals' discourse, emotions in this study are primarily conceptualised as 'heuristics-of-value' in which they act as an important and useful source of information about values (Szigeti, 2013: 846).

While 'groundbreaking' in its framing of the adaptive processing of emotions and the relevant information that one can apply toward solving personal and organizational problems (Johnson et al., 2005), the EI construct may serve to highlight the broader set of

phenomena relating to the affective domain of school leadership rather than fully circumscribing it. The present exploration thus adopts the qualitative approach articulated in Fineman's conclusion:

'It is certainly possible to research emotion without measuring it. In doing so, the researcher's sovereignty and tools give way to more interactional, context-focussed inquiry. The understandings so produced are inherently less precise than the simplifications of measurement but they are likely to be abundant in insight, plausibility and texture' (Fineman, 2004: 736).

It is now beyond argument that collaborative approaches to organisational development are, and will remain, integral to the implementation of contemporary educational policy for schools in Ireland as elsewhere. This thesis presents a bias toward enhancing understanding and action in service of affective capacity-building for principals in creating such collaborative communities.

The following conceptual framework will now inform subsequent treatment of the data in this project:

'Emotions in this study are primarily conceptualised as 'heuristics-of-value' in which they act as an important and useful source of information about values influencing school leaders' behaviour'.

'Emotion may be researched without measuring it and this study adopts a qualitative approach which is contextually aware and aimed at achieving an empathic understanding of respondents' experience'.

'An enhanced understanding of school leaders' emotional competencies offers applicability, complementing cognitive/rational approaches in principals' management of collaboratively-mediated change'.

Emotionality in school leadership is now firmly on the agenda in terms of its relationship with the change strategies demanded by emerging education policy. That such a conversation has reached reflective practitioner level has, as we shall see from participants in this study, become a reality. That emotionality is *central* to the successful navigation of the collaborativity challenges demanded of contemporary principalship is contested by many within the same cohort of respondents.

Capturing and synthesising principal perspective has thus become an important tool in uncovering the story of modern school leadership and Chapter 4 now presents an account of the methodological framework, the data-gathering methods and subsequent initial analysis of principal narrative as were adopted in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY, DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

Part 1 of this chapter describes the pragmatic and interpretive underpinnings of this investigation. Comparisons with the methodologies of other relevant research are explored and the adoption of a mixed-methods data-gathering approach is justified in terms of appropriateness. Validity, reliability, and generalisation are examined in a claim to warrantability and finally, the ethical provisions underpinning this study are specified and discussed.

Part 2 examines the focus group, online survey and interview methods used to gather data relevant to the research questions.

As successive decisions around sampling choices were based on emergent findings and tentative thematic development, Part 3 of this chapter provides an account of how the data were initially analysed.

PART 1: METHODOLOGY

Methodological framework

This thesis presents as a research project aimed at creating useful knowledge about one aspect of the reality of school principalship. Justifying methodological choices demands that four elements of this overarching purpose be explicitly investigated and discussed; ‘research’, ‘useful’, ‘knowledge’ and ‘reality’.

Research

Research may be seen as a sustained activity primarily concerned with the generation of knowledge and requires being both systematic and open to public scrutiny. ‘Systematic’ implies alignment between research design, its implementation and analysis of its findings.

For the present study, the research design sought to gather as much data as were ethically and practically possible, to carefully analyse them and to present an evidence-based synthesis aimed at enhancing one aspect of practice. On the continuum between ‘discipline research’, primarily aimed at understanding, and action-oriented research, this project will tend toward the latter, aligning with a key aim of the professional doctorate.

This research is also an exercise at self-reflective enquiry, which is not unproblematic. The advantages of adopting a reflexive stance within this research project (possession of *a priori* professional knowledge, bringing ‘insider’ insights, tacit understandings of subjects’ experiences, absence of language barrier, ease of access to subjects, familiarity with respondents) offers potential for adding insight to data-gathering, analysis and synthesis. Risk of bias on my part and reactivity on the part of my respondents similarly exist and are associated with my insider position on the ‘insider-outsider continuum’ (Hellawell, 2006). While issues of validity and reliability will be discussed later in this chapter and sources of potential bias discussed in the reflective account, a commitment to honesty throughout the project is intended to steer the reader more towards an appreciation of the richness of a reflexive account than towards a concern around bias.

Useful

The distinction between research that is either ‘discipline-based’ or ‘practice-focussed’ polarises understanding and action which jointly lie at the heart of behaviour. While this project aims at enhancing practice for principals, it does so by accessing meaning-making and employing such understandings to frame subsequent applicability, integrating both affective and cognitive perspectives into the principal’s behaviour. Thus, while an action-orientation is prioritised, the search for knowledge and subsequent theoretical development are in service to such an aim and lay no claim to abstract neutrality or being a curiosity-driven quest for knowledge (Griffiths, 1998: 67).

Knowledge

Given the complex, subjective and socially contingent nature of the research focus, a description of knowledge as ‘soft, subjective and based on insight of a unique and essentially personal nature’ (Burgess, 2006: 54) presents as appropriate. This is not to relegate understandings of emotionality in school leadership to the intangible or untransmissible but does represent an epistemology which seeks to get close to ‘*verstehen*’ or ‘empathic or meaningful understanding’ of social behaviour (Kim, 2008). Such a stance carries implications for the methodological choices made throughout the project.

Declaring that ‘the social sciences and the humanities would be impossible without *Verstehen*’, Mokrzycki makes the challenging claim that ‘one has access to his own thoughts and experiences through introspection, but he can have access to other people's thoughts and experiences through *Verstehen* only’ (Mokrzycki, 1971: 340). Thus accessing and interpreting the first-person narrative emerging from the focus group, survey commentaries and interviews remained a key objective, underpinning methodologies, analysis and theoretical development as the project unfolded.

Reality

This project accesses subjective and social reality in the affective domain. This is not to deny the influence of positivist reality such as recent insights offered by neurobiology as employed by Goleman (1995), but such ontologies are beyond the scope of the socially-constructed, educationally-contextualised epistemology adopted here. The two worlds, natural and social, are not completely distinct and separate from each other and ‘people are part of both worlds’ (Plowright, 2011: 178). Siting this research in the transitive, mind-dependent ontology (ibid: 179) of affectively-informed reflection on human experience, locates the research approach within a philosophical perspective based on the belief that

‘all realities are constructed by the perceiver’ (Grogan and Simmons, 2007: 38). The adoption of a mixed-methods approach does not, in fact, represent a philosophical or paradigmatic intersection but rather the employment of a range of tools, all designed with the same purpose – accessing emotional reality as described by a significant sample of Irish secondary principals.

Paradigm

The sidelining of the rigour of positivism in favour of a focus on meaning-making and its implications for action allow for an acceptance of subjectivity and fallibility as a price worth paying in the search for worthwhile, applicable knowledge. This attention to consequences of emerging understandings sites this research within a pragmatic theoretical domain which

‘... argues that if statements about the world do not lead to consequences or actions that are instrumental in enabling us to make appropriate decisions, take effective action and successfully get things done, then those statements or beliefs will not count as knowledge’ (Plowright, 2011: 184).

More specifically, this research project sets out to realise the features of pragmatism as characterised by Charmaz:

- Foster openness to the world and curiosity about it
- Encourage an empathetic understanding of research participants’ meanings, actions and worlds
- Take temporality into account
- Focus on meaning and process at the subjective and social levels

(Charmaz, 2006: 184)

Treatment of the data must therefore move beyond reportage into interpretation and construction of meaning and, although the study cannot be characterised as strictly interpretive or constructivist in terms of paradigm, ‘pragmatist foundations encourage us to

construct an *interpretive rendering* of the worlds we study' (ibid: 184, emphasis in original).

Comparisons with the data-gathering approaches of other research

In treating the emotional dimension within educational settings, a significant increase in scholarship and literature is notable from 1990 onwards (Brennan and Mac Ruairc, 2011: 130), generally of a theoretical nature though occasionally supported by empirical data. The majority of empirical research studies adopt one or more of three data-gathering approaches:

1. The Focus Group - Reconnaissance

A focus group study comprises a small, informal group of selected people, managed with skill and with prepared questions and with the goal of eliciting feelings, attitudes and ideas about a selected topic (Arthur et al., 2005 Part 2: 27). Slater (2005: 325) points to a key limitation of the focus group as the possibility that participants may censor or conform what they say in spite of the skill of the moderator and that the presence of the group may affect what some participants say about the topic, as well as how they say it. The potential, however, to 'brainstorm' ideas made the focus group an attractive proposition for an initial attempt at reconnaissance in the present study, particularly in terms of informing approaches to subsequent questionnaire and interview phases and my preliminary research activity thus employed a focus group of four principals, described further in Chapter 5.

2. Surveys - A National Sample

It is almost axiomatic that researchers call for further investigation to support or challenge the as yet limited set of empirical findings in this area (Beatty, 2000, O'Connor, 2004, Johnson et al., 2005). Research by Ginsberg & Davies (2003) and by James & Vince (2001) utilized a sample-base with 23 and 40 subjects respectively and Leithwood and

Jantzi (2006: 222) point out that ‘it is unusual for educational leadership research to be based on national samples’. This study attempts a remediation of this gap in the literature by undertaking a large scale survey of the entire cohort of 380 voluntary secondary school principals in Ireland.

3. Interviews and Storytelling – Reflective Conversations

The focussed reflective conversation in one form or another has provided a rich source of data to researchers in this still emerging field (Beatty, 2000, O'Connor, 2004, Johnson et al., 2005, Crawford, 2007). The value of storytelling and one approach to systematic analysis have been explored by Maslin-Ostrowski and Ackerman (1998) who adopt an interpretive line of enquiry and thematically categorise principals’ stories as ‘*quest*’, ‘*restitution*’ or ‘*chaos*’, depending on the identity the principal self-ascribes in the telling and subsequent reflection. Such use of metaphor can offer a richer understanding of the complex and subjective meaning-making processes at the heart of an exploration. In this study, initial focus group and interview respondents were asked to recount a ‘critical incident’ which supported the elucidation of affectively demanding dimensions such as creative problem-solving and staff-meeting resolution approaches.

Grounded Theory

The foundational text of Grounded Theory (GT) by Glaser and Strauss is entitled ‘*The Discovery of Grounded Theory*’ (Glaser, 1967 emphasis added) precisely because it captures the essential uncovering of theory in an inductive process and not founding the research on a pre-existing hypothesis as with other methodologies. While the present project did begin with some preconceptions or ‘sensitizing concepts’ (Charmaz, 2006: 16), approaches leading to the identification of themes grounded in the data were nonetheless structured by adopting an open-minded, iterative GT coding methodology. I was thus selective of GT components rather than wholly adoptive of the approach and employed

solely its systematic coding procedures as a ‘rigorous approach to the generation of concepts’ (Burgess, 2006: 82). This approach offered immediacy to the researcher as even a modest set of data, for example the focus group transcript, collected at the early stages of the project provided a basis for tentative categorisation, early conceptualisation and further sampling decisions.

A grounded theory approach to data analysis also suited this research as it offered a high level of congruity with the complex, subjective and social character of the research topic and, on an operational level, its fit with the qualitative data analytical software programme *NVivo*.

Mixed methods

Correspondence between methods, literature and theoretical development underpinned the research design adopted for this project with each data-gathering activity nested-in and informed by another. The decision to use a mixed methods approach represents an attempt to ‘hoover-up all data by whatever means it takes’, as ‘it is very difficult to imagine why anyone would want to do anything different’ (Gorard and Taylor, 2004: 5). Nonetheless, integrating quantitative and qualitative methods is not an uncontested practice as each is better at answering some sorts of questions than others (Hammersley, 2007: 171). The approach undertaken in this research is not, however, intended to represent an artificial combination of conflicting methods but rather, as discussed earlier, to seek to incorporate complementary methods of data-gathering as the social phenomena under investigation are themselves complex and merit a synthesis of appropriate collection strategies.

Producing warrantable research

In leading up to a synthesis of findings and arriving at conclusions, the notion of justification or warrant demands a critical review of the decisions taken and outcomes

uncovered as the research progressed. Plowright's (2011: 144) framework for the production of warrantable research seeks to underwrite the emergence of conclusions by supporting the research scaffold with an explicit exposition of contextualising factors which he calls 'backing conditions' (from Toulmin, 1958) in order to back up or support emerging explanations or argument. These conditions include the appropriateness of the case selection strategy and methods of data collection and correspondence between the types of data and their subsequent analysis (ibid: 142).

The validity of inference from evidence to claim – whether the research captures what it claims to capture (Hammersley, 2007: 144) – is threatened both by error and by a failure to make explicit its backing conditions. The complexity of both the subject matter and the qualitative research process in educational enquiry demands that great care needs to be devoted to how it is carried out and to interpreting its findings (Hammersley, 2007: 127). If appropriate decisions are made within each of the components of a project's contextualising conditions, then it will be possible to provide relatively strong warrants for its subsequent claims (Plowright, 2011: 142).

While the data and their analyses will be discussed in detail in subsequent sections, the influence on validity of case selection and data collection strategies are discussed here.

Cases

The cohort of voluntary secondary principals in Ireland represented a distinct, identifiable population and a key concern underpinning decisions around case selection was representativeness across this group.

Of the three strategies for selecting cases in educational and social research; experiment, surveys and case study (Hammersley et al., 2001: 114), the questioning orientation of this research demanded a survey approach in which the generalisability potential of a large-

scale questionnaire survey was supported by accessing the more detailed and personal insights provided by in-depth interviews.

Social science research is conducted with the primary interest of understanding whether, and to what extent, a variable of interest (in this case principals' emotional competencies) influences some outcome (collaboratively-mediated change management) (Konisky and Reenock, 2013: 361). External validity, the extent to which such causal inference can be extended to the wider population, can be threatened by the 'fuzzy' generalisation of the studies of singularities (Bush, 2007: 99), a potential weakness in the present study which involved just three interviews. Such limitation, however, was addressed by methodological triangulation in which a balance between scope and detail was achieved by linking the outcomes of each phase of the investigation to case selection for the next and also by integrating the subsequent treatment of both the distance (online survey) and face-to-face narrative data.

Details of the case selection strategy and rationale for each specific data-gathering phase are presented in Chapter 5, Profile of the Respondents.

Decisions around case selection were also affected by more pragmatic concerns and, in the case of this research, included considerations of access and permissions as well as availability of time (in respect of both researcher and participants) and also costs.

Method of Data Collection

Quantitative data collected within the mixed-methods approach, such as questionnaire Likert-type Scales and ranking of emotional competencies, were used to support the qualitative development of emergent themes and were integrated into the narrative. Indeed, whether or not emotions, or school leadership factors for that matter, can be measured in

any numerical sense is, as we have seen, at the heart of contested debates within education and beyond. Recent Masters dissertation research on occupational stress amongst voluntary secondary principals in Ireland (Hand-Campbell, 2012) sought to correlate empirical measures of stress indicators against self-report leadership inventories and such an approach was, as we have seen, used in the US by Hackett et al (2008: 108) who also discovered correlation between transformational leadership as measured on the MLQ and emotional competencies as measured on the ECI-U.

Decisions against the use of such inventories were taken on the basis of:

Experience – I have been using the ‘TEIQue-SF: Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short-Form’ (Petrides and Furnham, 2006) to surface affective self-awareness amongst participants in newly-appointed principal training sessions and have encountered significant resistance to the quantification of emotional intelligence as an appropriate or useful tool in such settings as well as strong reluctance to discuss personal outcomes, insights or ‘results’ from such an instrument during or after such sessions.

Trustworthiness – Self-report inventories suffer from inherent threats to their validity (Humphrey et al., 2007: 243) and demand triangulation against some mode of external validation, such as teacher or employer feedback, not comprehended by this study.

Paradigm – Reliance on correlations between ‘measures’ represents an appropriate approach under a more positivist paradigm, not comprehended by the broadly qualitative and interpretive approach of this project.

Access – Gaining access to respondents’ subjective experience and seeking to gain insights to their meaning-making of such, demands a different discourse to the numerical and, while measuring and correlating such factors offers potential for further research, this qualitative study remained consistent with Fineman’s (2004: 736) assertion that ‘it is certainly possible to research emotion without measuring it’.

The concepts of reliability (test-retest replicability) and validity (corresponding with reality) find their roots in the positivist tradition (Golafshani, 2003: 599). Thus if reliability and validity are conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigour and quality in a qualitative paradigm then the task is to increase the researcher's truthfulness of a proposition about some social phenomenon (ibid: 604). Sources of bias will be made explicit and discussed in the reflective account in the concluding chapter and, while truthfulness is difficult to determine, the tests of plausibility and credibility may equally lend support to arriving at a decision around legitimacy.

It is, of course, premature at this point in the thesis to argue for plausibility (likelihood of truth) or credibility (judgement accuracy) (Hammersley et al., 2001: 28) in relation to the claims but methodological provision for features such as piloting, methodological triangulation and respondent validation point to an orientation towards rigour and reflections on such aspects of warrantability will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

Generalisability

While Hammersley (2007: 118) asserts that qualitative researchers do not emphasise the importance of the generalisability of their findings to the same extent as some quantitative researchers, it was nonetheless a concern in this project, given its pragmatic focus on eventual applicability in the real-time lifeworld of the school.

Generalisation from the cases studied to the larger whole demands we know the identity of the 'whole'. In this case, the population presented as 380 principals operating within a distinct sector of Irish education. As discussed earlier, a sampling strategy in which the entire national cohort of this group was targeted with an online questionnaire may present as a strong argument for generalisability as it does in fact represent a census, but the 46% survey return-rate and the small sample sizes of the face-to-face data-gathering exercises

militate against claims to complete applicability across that population. Nonetheless, the ambitious scope of the sample size and the richness of the emerging narrative support a claim for plausible statistical generalisation within the Irish context at least, greater than the more limited approaches of a case study or observation strategy.

Ethical considerations

The ethical principles underpinning this project were not to cause harm and to capture truthful views about a particular phenomenon (Busher and James, 2007: 114).

Compliance with relevant ethical procedures followed the BERA Guidelines (2004).

Approval for carrying-out this research was received from the General Secretary of the JMB with respect to accessing the membership for focus group, survey and interview purposes and communication with the leadership was maintained throughout the project as members (correctly) understood that this research had JMB authorisation. Invitations to participate in the focus group and interviews were made initially by email and then more formally by letter (Appendices 1 and 5) which acted as an information sheet and allowed for the participants to provide a signed agreement to take part under the outlined terms or to opt-out without giving reasons. Similarly, participants in the online survey were invited by email with information and an opt-out clause included in an introductory paragraph. Proceeding with the online survey and clicking on ‘Submit’ was deemed to be an acceptance of the conditions.

Data protection and provisions for anonymity were assigned a high priority throughout this project and staff at the Secretariat of Secondary Schools, (the executive of the JMB), are bound by the Data Protection Act 1998 and Amendment 2003. Survey anonymity was provided-for by selecting the *SurveyMonkey* platform settings option excluding the gathering of respondents’ IP addresses and by not seeking personal or school identification

within the questionnaire. Some respondents self-identified and such information was excluded from the report.

Focus group and interview recordings and transcripts were maintained on a secure server within the Secretariat. This has restricted access, was encrypted and secured in an alarmed building with password protection. No identifying characteristic other than general demographic information was used in the thesis and pseudonyms were utilised for all people and schools. Original data are being maintained for four years following collection to allow for the writing-up of the thesis. All data will then be destroyed.

No recompense or inducement of any kind was offered or provided to participants and no level of deception was demanded by this project.

A key consideration in operational terms and in seeking formal ethical approval centred on the risk of harm to respondents. This project involved the voluntary sharing of experiences and understandings of the affective elements of school principalship on the part of non-vulnerable adults who were aware of the context and ethical provisions of the study. Surfacing emotional memory had the potential to bring with it a return of the feelings associated with an event or situation. Although, as claimed by Sanders et al (2014: 247), painful and stressful encounters can be harnessed to deepen analysis and to strengthen the impact of research findings on practice, I was not in any way seeking such outcomes and was prepared to suspend or terminate, for example, any interview where distress emerged on the part of the subject. There had been no intention to have anything other than a reflective professional conversation such as may be had under normal circumstances in daily life and, in the event, no such instances emerged.

Respondent validation was provided-for by offering interview respondents the opportunity to review their relevant transcript. In terms of debriefing, the eventual thesis will be made available to participants and more widely and it is intended to publish a work based on the thesis under the auspices of the Secretariat.

Ethical approval was sought and received from the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee and the letter of confirmation is attached as Appendix 7.

Concluding comments

This research project is aimed at creating useful knowledge about one aspect of the reality of school principalship.

- The study may be characterised as ‘pragmatic’ in attempting to link meaning with process at the subjective and social levels and exhibits a bias towards understanding for action and applicability.
- A mind-dependent social ontology is assumed in which respondents’ understanding of reality is accepted as being the result of subjective cognition.
- An epistemology is adopted which seeks to get close to ‘*verstehen*’ or ‘empathic or meaningful understanding’ of respondent perspective.
- The study aims for validity – whether the research describes what it is intended to describe – by taking a range of steps to ensure warrantability.

Part 2 now presents an exposition of the specific empirical methods used to gather data and Part 3 describes the initial approaches to analysis.

PART 2: DATA COLLECTION

Introduction

This section presents a rationale for each of the data-collection strategies adopted in this study and provides details of their implementation.

Key features of the data-gathering procedures are summarised in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Features of the data-gathering procedures

Method	Purpose	Sampling Strategy	Number of Participants	Timeframe
1 Focus Group	Initial reconnaissance	Non-Random, Purposive: Balanced for key variables	4	20 th October 2010
2 Pilot Survey	Preliminary testing of survey design	Non-Random, Purposive: willingness to participate	5	January 2011
3 Online Survey	Data-collection: National	Whole population: a census	175	January/February 2011
4 Individual Interviews	Data-collection: Individual	Non-Random, Purposive: Illustrative of different leadership styles	3	November and December 2011

1. Focus group

Concerns for practicality and appropriateness led to the consideration of a focus group as an initial foray into data-gathering and analysis. The rationale for such an approach emerged from a paper by Johnson *et al* (2005: 238) and their list of purposes for their own ‘preliminary self-study’, in italics, mirrored my own:

1. *Surface our own cognition about 'emotionality'*: This was the first time I had had a formal conversation with peer principals about the role of emotion in school leadership and, although I had prepared open questions in advance, it was reasonable to expect that new perspectives, quite different to my own, would surface to enrich my initial tacit conceptualisations.
2. *Create a language around which we could better shape our interview questions*: Though not planned in advance, verbatim extracts from the focus group provided the prompting quotations used to generate the subsequent survey questions.
3. *Sharing our own critical incidents*: Each participant was invited to recount a recent school event which was emotionally meaningful to them. The purpose was to go deeper into the participant's emotional experience than the day-to-day and to seek insights arising from their subsequent reflection.
4. *Improve engagement with our participants*: Each of the participants was known to me and I wished to steer the conversation into a more formal mode than we had hitherto been familiar with. My aim was also to create a safe-space for the sharing of experience and to develop the skills of active listening.
5. *Develop a level of respect around potentially sensitive revelations*: Participants had been advised in writing that the conversation would involve reflection on critical incidents and therefore had time to pre-select an event which they felt comfortable in sharing. The dialogue nonetheless had the potential to surface less well-prepared revelations and, while I was prepared to omit elements in which subjects became upset or needed confidentiality, such material was potentially rich in insight and I determined to await respondent validation of the transcript than edit in advance.
6. *Learn how to sustain a rapport with participants*: As well as reconnaissance around the central topic, this initial focus group served to augment my skills in human connection such as respectful listening and maintaining eye-contact. The exercise also acted as a 'safe-space' for my making mistakes such as over-affirming, speaking too much and inefficient time-management.

Questions were framed beforehand with the objective of exploring a specific range of areas while leaving scope for exploration of surprises and new avenues of relevant experience. The semi-structured group interview was held on Wednesday 20th October 2010 at my office in the Secretariat and the letter of invitation and questions are attached as Appendix 1 and 2 respectively. The sampling strategy and a profile of the participants are presented in Chapter 5.

The focus group conversation was digitally audio-recorded and fully transcribed. Initial analysis involved sentence-by-sentence coding of the transcript using the qualitative data analysis programme *NVivo* as a scaffold and this procedure elicited 292 codes, subsequently condensed into eight themes. The richness of the data led to a decision to use a set of extracts from the focus group transcript as a foundation for the online survey questionnaire.

2. Pilot survey

An online questionnaire was used as a data-gathering tool for three reasons:

1. To expand on the set of themes uncovered thus far
2. To collect relevant data quickly and electronically, and,
3. Surveying the entire national cohort of principals on this topic had not been attempted in Ireland before

This method, however, assumes that (a) respondents understand the questions in the terms intended and what information is required and (b) that they have this information and are willing to divulge it (Hammersley et al., 2001: 175). I therefore relied on ‘principal-voice’ as the medium of enquiry and asked respondents to react to verbatim statements. I then assumed, on the basis of a relatively successful engagement with the focus group, that

principals nationally had both the capacity and willingness to share their reflections and stances through the use of a questionnaire survey.

Each of the themed categories of principal-voice extracts underpinning the survey was developed from the eight themes emerging from the focus group. Four principal-voice quotations, representing thematically strong outcomes from within each of the selected categories, gave a total of 32 quotes for the wider cohort of principals to engage-with. In addition to Likert-type Scales to record levels of agreement with the quotations, a 'reflection box' was provided after each statement to allow for development of the participants' thinking and a concluding commentary space offered in advance of submitting.

To maintain coherence with the aims of the project, a Questionnaire Design Matrix linking survey questions to my key lines of enquiry was generated and is presented as Appendix 3.

The draft survey was piloted with five principals in January 2011 and reviewed in light of their feedback.

3. Online survey

The final instrument was electronically distributed using the *SurveyMonkey* platform to the wider population of 380 principals in late January 2011. The questionnaire proper is presented as Appendix 4.

4. Individual interviews

The choice of individual interviewing as a data-gathering technique was made on the basis of methodological triangulation. The aim was to allow for in-depth probing of issues and immediacy of follow-on questioning, neither of which features were realistically

achievable in the group or distance modes. There existed a potential for bias, which is 'likely to be endemic, particularly in semi-structured and unstructured interviews' (Bush, 2007 : 98). To reduce both bias and reactivity, I prepared for each interview by following the advice of Hammersley et al (2001: 170); clarifying in a question framework the information I required; placed the questions in a logical sequence beginning with simple closed questions; paid particular attention to non-leading phrasing of questions, and set out a preamble to introduce the conversation. The letter of invitation and interview question framework are attached as Appendices 5 and 6 respectively.

The interviews, which were carried-out in November and December 2011, took around an hour each and were held in the principals' offices, then digitally recorded and fully transcribed. Transcripts were made available to the participants for commentary or editing, though none elected to make any changes. Field notes supported subsequent reflection and analysis.

PART 3: PROCEDURE FOR INITIAL ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Procedure for analysis of the narrative

Analysis of the narrative data emerging from both the survey and interviews was carried-out using an integrated approach. The decision to integrate the presentation of both sets of narrative data could be taken on the grounds that a mixed-methods approach lent itself to such an integrated analysis and also because there were just two qualitative differences between the sources – the survey data were wider in scope and the interview data had more depth of treatment of the issues.

Combined, the survey and subsequent interviews generated a significant quantity of narrative data of over 72,000 words. Beginning with the survey reflection-box commentaries and subsequently the interview transcripts, the processes of data-reduction and thematic analysis were structured using the grounded theory practice of qualitative coding, defined by Charmaz as:

‘... the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data. Through coding, you *define* what is happening in the data and begin to grapple with what it means’ (2006: 46, italics in original).

GT coding consists of two main phases: data reduction, where large quantities of data are reduced into common sub-themes and data integration, where relationships between such sub-themes are incorporated into a theoretical explanation of the phenomena under study.

The process of GT coding as was applied to the narrative data is summarised in Table 4.2:

Table 4.2: The process of GT coding as applied to the narrative data

GT Phase	Purpose	Using	Began with	Outcome of Analysis
1. Open Coding (initial data reduction)	To label the narrative (survey and interview) statements as ‘initial codes’	The qualitative data analysis programme <i>NVivo</i>	72,000 words of narrative data	1,333 initial codes; 831 from the survey and 502 from the interviews
2(a). Focussed Coding	To identify links between the initial codes and group them into ‘focussed codes’	<i>NVivo</i>	1,333 initial codes	136 focussed codes; 97 from the survey and 39 from the interviews
2(b).Focussed Coding (further data reduction)	To identify links between the focussed codes and group them into sub-themes	<i>NVivo</i> This process, as applied to the survey, is summarised in Appendix 8	136 focussed codes	12 sub-themes; 10 from the survey and 2 additional themes from the interviews
3. Axial Coding (initial data integration)	To examine the sub-themes for relationship and organise them into ‘overarching themes’	12 axial coding matrices, presented in Appendix 9	12 sub-themes	4 overarching themes
4. Selective Coding (further data integration)	To identify the central phenomenon at work within the data	A selective coding graphic	4 overarching themes and 12 sub-themes	A graphical presentation of the central phenomenon

The data reduction phases of open and focussed coding phases are now described in greater detail.

Data Reduction

1. Open Coding: initial data reduction

The task of condensing the narrative began with open coding of the survey data. Open coding of the survey commentaries identified 831 initial codes using the qualitative data analytical software *NVivo* as a platform for generating, storing and subsequently managing the coded extracts.

Interview transcript data were processed in the same way and open coding generated a total of 502 initial codes, giving a grand total of 1,333 extracts from the narrative to work-with.

2(a). Focussed Coding

Sub-theme development, in which the data are condensed and an effort made to compare peoples' experiences, actions and interpretations, '...requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorise your data incisively and completely' (Charmaz, 2006: 57). The 831 survey open codes were examined for relationship and condensed into 97 focused codes. To make the decision-making procedure explicit, coding of the survey data is illustrated in full in Appendix 8.

39 focussed codes then emerged from the interview narrative.

2(b). Focussed Coding: Further data reduction

The 97 survey focussed codes were next brought together into 10 sub-themes. The 39 focussed codes emerging from the interview narrative aligned with the sub-themes from the survey but also generated two additional sub-themes.

Thus, with 12 sub-themes identified, the process of interrogating the newly structured data could be undertaken and this is presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Concluding comments

Theme-development, in which the sub-themes are conceptually linked, provides a framework for subsequent examination of the narrative and is given structure under the GT process of axial coding, described in Chapter 6.

As the selective coding phase of GT analysis in fact culminates in theory development, this process is presented in Chapter 8, 'Synthesis of Findings and Conclusions'.

It is necessary in the first instance, however, to engage fully with the participant principals' narrative and numerical responses and a systematic and detailed critical exploration of the data will now be undertaken. In support of this analysis, a profile of the research participants is first presented in Chapter 5, next.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 now present the research findings. This brief chapter provides a justification of the sampling strategies employed in the study as well as outlining the demographic information emerging on the focus group, survey and interview respondents and their schools.

The focus group participants

Identification of focus group participants was non-random and purposive. While such a selective approach would not support any degree of generalisability to the wider population, I prioritised a set of purposes such as surfacing cognition, developing a language around emotionality and improving engagement with participants, while leaving the achievement of representativeness to the census approach of the online survey.

It was nonetheless important to incorporate a degree of diversity to allow for a spectrum of perspectives and experience and I therefore invited four distinctive principals, selecting for:

- Gender – two men and two women
- School type – two girls' schools, one boys' school and one mixed
- Social context – two working-class schools with 'disadvantaged status' and two middle-class schools
- Experience – ranging from one year as principal to fourteen

Specifically, the characteristics of each principal are presented in Table 5.1:

Table 5.1: Characteristics of the focus group participants

Pseudonym	Gender	School Type	Social Context	Experience
Martina	Female	All Girls	Middle-Class, City	14 years
Patricia	Female	Co-Ed	Middle-Class, Provincial Town	8 years
Paul	Male	All Girls	Working-Class, City, with Disadvantaged Status	6 years
James	Male	All Boys	Working-Class, City, with Disadvantaged Status	1 year

The survey respondents

The census approach to whole-population sampling for the questionnaire survey was undertaken for two reasons. Firstly, as has been discussed, a nationwide study of principals' emotional competencies had not previously been undertaken and the potential for providing a comprehensive representation of this under-researched aspect of practice in Ireland was compelling. Of equal importance were the pragmatic possibilities of electronic dissemination, data-collection, storage and initial analysis offered by the *SurveyMonkey* platform. The time and cost limitations of a paper questionnaire would have been prohibitive on such a scale as well as the reduced likelihood of receiving a sufficiently high response rate for subsequent analysis and reliable conclusions to be drawn.

By late February 2011, 175 principals out of 380 contacted had completed the survey.

Given the nature and length of the questionnaire, the reported extent of 'survey fatigue' among principals and the pressures of seasonal workload (staffing allocations and spring examinations), this response rate of 46% was very gratifying, particularly when it is appreciated that up to 40 of the 'reflection boxes' at *each* of the 32 extracts were completed, sometimes at length. Respondent numbers in tables presented throughout this

account do not total 175 in each instance as not all participants provided an answer to every question.

The following account presents a summary of the demographic information provided by survey respondents.

Table 5.2: Gender of survey respondents

	n	%
Male	89	52.0
Female	82	48.0
N	171	100.0

The JMB database of principals provided the actual gender balance at the time of the survey and allows for a comparison:

Table 5.3: Respondent v actual gender balance

	Survey		JMB Database	
	n	%	n	%
Male	89	52	157	41
Female	82	48	223	59
N	171	100	380	100

As can be seen from Table 5.3, the initial expectation that women may be more likely than men to respond to a survey on emotions was not borne-out as females were under represented by 11% and males responded by an equivalent 11% greater than their ratio within the principal population. One possible explanation for this phenomenon was expressed by a male interviewee who, when asked about the high levels of engagement in this research by principals in general, said ‘Who else do we talk to about this stuff?’ The survey offered a safe and anonymous space for principals to reflect-upon and express their feelings and, though speculative and stereotypical, it is possible that male principals have

(or take) fewer such opportunities for emotional self-expression and thus found the online format attractive.

Table 5.4: Age category of survey respondents

Age Range (years)	n	%
25 - 35	1	0.6
36 - 45	35	20.2
46 - 55	91	52.6
56 - 65	46	26.6
N	173	100.0

Although departmental regulations allow for appointment to principalship following five years' permanent service, the age-range distribution illustrated in Table 5.4, if reflective of the whole, points to a pattern of both mid-to-late career and mid-life tenure in the role and a possible concurrence of both significant professional and life-stage expectation and demand.

As longevity in the position as principal could have a bearing on emotionality – positive in terms of acquired resilience or negative in terms of erosion – years' experience data was also sought and is presented in Table 5.5:

Table 5.5: Years as principal (Total years if more than one school)

Years Experience	n	%
3 years or fewer	50	29.1
Between 4 and 6 (inclusive)	41	23.8
Between 7 and 9 (inc.)	24	14.0
Between 10 and 12 (inc.)	20	11.6
Between 13 and 15 (inc.)	14	8.1
Between 16 and 18 (inc.)	9	5.2
Between 19 and 21 (inc.)	7	4.1
More than 21	7	4.1
N	172	100.0

Post primary students in Ireland typically complete a six-year cycle from ages 12 to 18 years. The JMB has calculated that over 60% of contemporary secondary principals have yet to complete one such cycle, which is evidence of both the high levels of attrition in principalship in recent years and also a significant experience-deficit across the cohort – each factor presenting challenges in terms of sustainability and in negotiating the emotional demands of the role.

As the insider-outsider status of a newly appointed or settling-in principal may have an impact on factors such as their relationship history, levels of acceptance within the staff or their appreciation of the nuances of some of the unique micro-political dynamics within the voluntary secondary sector, two queries addressed respondents' origins:

Table 5.6: School origin on appointment

	n	%
Within the school staff	102	59.6
From outside the school	69	40.4
N	171	100.0

Table 5.7: Sectoral origin on appointment

	n	%
Voluntary Secondary	153	88.4
Community/Comprehensive	10	5.8
VEC	8	4.6
Other (e.g. from abroad)	2	1.2
N	173	100.0

The preponderance of appointees from within the sector and indeed the school itself, as illustrated in Tables 5.6 and 5.7, may be attributed to factors within the selection process, such as familiarity with ethos, or may also be due to a scarcity of applicants from the other two sectors seeking principalship in voluntary secondary schools.

Other information sought, included school-context factors such as size, gender-mix and status in terms of designated disadvantage or fee-paying:

Table 5.8: School student population

	n	%
Less than 200	10	5.8
200 - 350	35	20.2
351 - 499	37	21.4
500 - 699	54	31.2
700 - 850	26	15.0
851 - 999	7	4.0
Over 1000	4	2.3
N	173	100.0

Post-primary school size in Ireland demonstrates a predominance of medium-sized schools clustered around a norm of approximately 500 - 600 students, as may be inferred from Table 5.8. Although referring to the American setting, Leithwood and Jantzi (2009: 464) argue that secondary schools serving largely diverse and/or disadvantaged students should be limited in size to 600 or fewer. They cite small-school effects as including teachers' and students' sense of community, students' sense of identification with the school, and more personalised relationships providing teachers with opportunities to know their students well (ibid: 485).

Table 5.9: School type

	n	%
All Boys	50	28.7
All Girls	74	42.5
Co-Educational	50	28.7
N	174	100.0

The predominance of single-sex schools in the voluntary secondary sector evident from Table 5.9 is a historical legacy of institutions being operated in provincial towns and urban communities by either nuns or religious brothers while virtually every school in both the VEC and Community/Comprehensive sectors is co-educational.

Table 5.10: Is your school in the DEIS Programme?

	n	%
Yes	25	14.5
No	147	85.5
N	172	100.0

46 voluntary secondary schools (12% of the total) are participants in the DEIS programme, described by the DES as an ‘action plan for social inclusion’. Such schools typically serve communities experiencing severe social-economic disadvantage and are supported with a range of enhancement measures aimed at improving rates of attendance, retention, achievement and progression.

Table 5.11: Is your school fee-paying?

	n	%
Yes	24	14.0
No	148	86.0
N	172	100.0

The Republic’s 54 fee-charging voluntary secondary schools (15% of the total) opted, for a variety of reasons, not to enter the ‘free scheme’ in 1967. Catholic fee-charging schools, for which families generally have a Catholic free-scheme alternative, offer smaller class sizes and enhanced facilities and attract students from financially secure families. Fee-charging schools in the geographically dispersed Protestant tradition are more likely to be

boarding schools and provide grant-aid to many families who wish their children to be educated in that ethos.

The individual interview participants

Criteria for the selection of interview participants were based on demographic balance (gender, age-range, school type and context) and also on a judgement of their leadership style. Sampling was therefore purposive or judgemental, described by Fogelman and Comber (2007: 135) as ‘an improvement on convenience sampling in that the researcher applies his/her experience to select cases which are – in the researcher’s judgement – representative or typical’.

The demographic characteristics of the interviewees are presented in Table 5.12:

Table 5.12: Characteristics of the individual interviewees

Pseudonym	Gender	School Type	Social Context	Age-Range	Experience
Martin	Male	Co-Ed	Middle-Class, Fee-Paying, Provincial Town	36-45	3 years
Christine	Female	All Girls	Mixed Social Intake, Rural	36-45	4 years
Denis	Male	All Girls	Working-Class, City Suburb	56-65	21 years

Identification of principals I considered would reflect a spectrum of leadership styles was made on the basis of information from Whole School Evaluation (WSE) reports generated by the Inspectorate and which were available from the Department’s website. An analysis of WSE Report commentary supported the discovery of a range of styles among the interview subjects but inclusion of relevant extracts in the dissertation would allow for respondent identification and have thus been omitted.

In the event, the conclusions arrived-at by the Inspectorate's external, independent evaluators aligned with significant aspects of the interviewees' responses and this exercise thus provided a diversity of stances and perspectives enriching the overall narrative.

Concluding Comments

In summary,

- Identification of focus group participants was non-random and purposive and prioritised a set of purposes such as surfacing cognition, developing a language around emotionality and improving engagement with participants.
- The census approach to whole-population sampling for the questionnaire survey was undertaken (a) because a nationwide study of principals' emotional competencies had not previously been undertaken and (b) because of the practical features of electronic dissemination, data-collection, storage and initial analysis offered by the *SurveyMonkey* platform.
- Sampling of interview subjects was purposive or judgemental and was based on demographic balance (gender, age-range, school type and social context) and also on a judgement of their leadership style.

While their personal, professional and school profiles present as wide-ranging and diverse, there nonetheless exists a remarkable homogeneity amongst the 182 research participants in this project. They are almost universally white, Irish, lay, Christians while the greatest distinctions, as this study will reveal, lie in their individual personal and professional encounter with principalship.

CHAPTER SIX

THEME DEVELOPMENT AND PRINCIPALS' INTRAPERSONAL EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES

Introduction

This chapter opens with a description of theme-development which provides a framework for subsequent examination of the narrative. This process is given structure under the GT approach to data-integration, axial coding.

A critical, literature-informed interrogation of the first two emergent themes is then presented, with treatment of the narrative responses integrated with the numerical feedback received from Likert-style agreement scales and principals' ranking of emotional competencies.

Theme development

In Chapter 4, the data-reduction processes of open coding and focussed coding elicited a set of twelve sub-themes and set the stage for data integration. To illustrate the coding stages and locate our current phase in the process, Table 6.1 exemplifies the GT coding process beginning with a single narrative extract and culminating in identification of the central phenomenon at work within the data:

Table 6.1: GT Coding in Practice

GT Phase	Purpose	Example
Open Coding (initial data reduction)	To label the narrative (survey and interview) statements as ‘initial codes’	The narrative extract <i>‘You have to be value-driven, I think. You need to be able to return loyalty and be close to people, yet you have to constantly work for the good of the school’</i> was coded as: <i>‘Working for the Good of the School’</i>
Focussed Coding	To identify links between the initial codes and group them into ‘focussed codes’	The codes <i>‘Working for the Good of the School’</i> ; <i>‘People First’</i> and <i>‘Students at the Centre’</i> were grouped into the focussed code: <i>‘Acting out of values’</i>
Focussed Coding (further data reduction)	To identify links between the focussed codes and group them into sub-themes	Focussed codes including <i>‘Acting out of values’</i> ; <i>‘Taking a holistic approach’</i> ; <i>‘Acting out of principle’</i> ; <i>‘Keeping the focus on student learning’</i> and <i>‘Maintaining integrity’</i> were integrated into the sub-theme <i>‘Values as Foundational’</i>
Axial Coding (initial data integration)	To examine the sub-themes for relationship and organise them into ‘overarching themes’	Sub-themes <i>‘Influence of Life-Story’</i> ; <i>‘Values as Foundational’</i> and <i>‘Possessing Emotional Self-Regulation’</i> were incorporated into the theme <i>‘Foundations’</i>
Selective Coding (further data integration)	To identify the central phenomenon at work and generate a unifying graphical representation	The themes <i>‘Foundations’</i> ; <i>‘Agency’</i> ; <i>‘Connection’</i> , and, <i>‘Synergy’</i> were integrated into the central phenomenon <i>‘Affectively-Attuned Change-Management’</i>

Axial Coding

The sub-themes emerging from the process of data-reduction described in Chapter 4 presented as:

1. Influence of Life-Story
2. Values as Foundational
3. Possessing Emotional Self-Regulation
4. Capacity to Build Trust
5. Problem-Solving
6. Developing Resilience
7. Relationship-Building
8. Communicating Effectively
9. Managing Conflict
10. Impact of Leadership Style
11. Contextualising Decision-Making
12. Artful Change-Management

Strauss and Corbin (1998: 127) propose that the task of grounded theory analysis is to uncover relationships among sub-themes by answering the questions of ‘what, when, where, why, how and with what consequences?’, to relate structure with process. These investigative questions were framed in an axial coding matrix (after Scott, 2004: 115) one for each of the 12 sub-themes identified from the focused coding process. The aim of this process was to integrate a reflexive consideration with respondent perspective to discover common conceptual links between the sub-themes and set the stage for their refinement into a smaller number of overarching themes. Axial coding matrices of the 12 sub-themes are presented as Appendix 9. For illustration, the matrix for the sub-theme ‘Influence of Life Story’ is presented in Table 6.2:

Table 6.2: Axial coding matrix for the sub-theme ‘Influence of Life Story’

Sub-Theme	What?	When?	Where?	Why?	How?	Consequence
Influence of Life Story	Linking life experience to the work of principal.	In particular during dealings with adults – teachers and parents. In engaging with faith elements of school life.	In situations demanding personal development and change. In confidential dealings with people in crisis. In comprehending the parent perspective at face-to-face or parent group meetings.	Provides insight into principals’ identities and capacities. To promote a holistic approach to the work of head-teacher. To comprehend others’ social and personal history backgrounds. Allowing oneself to be ‘real’ – avoiding becoming a cardboard cut-out.	Making explicit the personal insider perspective. Intentionally connecting growth-promoting situations (e.g. parenthood) to professional activity. Tapping into emotional memory. Reminding oneself of one’s capacities based on previous successes.	Self-belief

The sub-themes were then examined to discover what association, if any, existed among them. This interrogation centred on the ‘Consequences’ column of each sub-theme’s matrix which provided an affective outcome for each capacity and which could then be related to others.

By examining each matrix and looking for conceptual links, I thus identified the consequences of ‘Influence of Life Story’, ‘Values as Foundational’ and ‘Possessing Emotional Self-Regulation’ as providing fundamental affective outcomes associated with ethical, self-directed living which I grouped together in a theme entitled ‘Foundations’. The term ‘Foundations’ was chosen to reflect a set of competencies acting as a basis for behaviour and action founded on principles, for, as Fullan (2005: 89) points out, ‘you cannot move toward systems thinking and sustainability in the absence of a widely shared moral purpose’.

Next, the consequences of the sub-themes ‘Capacity to Build Trust’, ‘Problem-Solving’ and ‘Developing Resilience’ can be conceived of as presenting a bridge between vision and action and were related together under the theme ‘Agency’. Harris describes ‘agency’ as the innate and natural tendency of people to engage with their environment in personally and socially constructive ways (2007: 4). It is unlikely that the social world of the school community will engage in realising the leader’s moral purpose without, for example, shared trust or the capacity to resolve and sustain through difficulties.

The third theme, ‘Connection’ emphasises the human side of organisational life, the centrality of relationships and the pivotal importance of a sense of community to co-operative, as opposed to competitive, action (West-Burnham, 2011: 168). At the heart of this theme lies the ‘holy grail of change’ which Fullan (2007: 41) identifies as teacher motivation. The three sub-themes ‘Relationship-Building’, ‘Communicating Effectively’

and ‘Managing Conflict’ are thus vital to motivating people for collaborative action within the school.

Ultimately, creation and maintenance of ‘Synergy’, the final theme, at staff level require the deployment of contextualised, artful and appropriate leadership strategies in bringing a particular initiative to completion. Each of the competencies ‘Impact of Leadership Style’, ‘Contextualising Decision-Making’ and ‘Artful Change-Management’ is required for successful, collaborative change management as implied by Hargreaves:

Frustration with unwanted or unclear purposes and poor implementation can quickly spiral into intense emotional responses. If inexperienced or inappropriate school leaders cannot help teachers weave a path through the mosaic of mandated change, it is they who will become the target of teachers’ internalised negative emotions (Hargreaves, 2004b: 296).

A table setting out theme development is presented as Appendix 10 and the four overarching themes are set out in Table 6.3:

Table 6.3: The themes and sub-themes

Themes	Foundations	Agency	Connection	Synergy
Sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence of life-story • Values as Foundational • Possessing Emotional Self-Regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to build trust • Problem solving • Developing Resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship-Building Effectively • Managing Conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of Leadership Style • Contextualising Decision-Making • Artful Change-Management

Domains

The first theme, ‘Foundations’, presented as a set of emotional competencies rooted in identity, values and self-control. The second theme, ‘Agency’, similarly comprised a set of inner personal competencies but focussed on the complex social world of the school. These two themes were thus placed in the ‘intrapersonal domain’.

The third theme, ‘Connection’, comprised a range of outward-reaching emotionally rich competencies which support the construction of social links across the school community.

The final theme, ‘Synergy’, builds on its precursors by employing high-level organisational affective awareness aimed at achieving collaboratively-mediated change.

These third and fourth-theme competencies reside in the ‘interpersonal domain’.

This penultimate stage of abstraction thus provides two domains, presented in Table 6.4, within which the data can now be explored.

Table 6.4: The domains, themes and sub-themes

Domains	Intrapersonal Domain		Interpersonal Domain	
Themes	Foundations	Agency	Connection	Synergy
Sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence of life-story • Values as Foundational • Possessing Emotional Self-Regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to build trust • Problem solving • Developing Resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship-Building Effectively • Managing Conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of Leadership Style • Contextualising Decision-Making • Artful Change-Management

As the Selective Coding phase of GT analysis in fact represents a process of theory development, it becomes necessary in the first instance to engage fully with the participant principals' narrative and numerical responses and Selective Coding will therefore open the discussion presented in Chapter 8, 'Synthesis of Findings and Conclusions'.

With the key themes at work within the data now identified, a systematic and detailed critical exploration of each of the two domains will now be presented, beginning in this chapter with 'Intrapersonal Competencies'.

Intrapersonal emotional competencies

Successful leadership of change requires an acknowledgement that 'people learn not by doing per se but by *thinking* about their new doing' (Fullan, 2007: 41, italics in original).

Understanding educational change thus requires an appreciation of meaning as much as process and in the first section, we examine respondents' insights into their meaning-making in terms of what they value, how they came to have these values and in appreciating the link between values and emotionality. Each sub-theme is critically examined in light of both respondent-voice and the literature and the three sub-themes identified as providing a foundation for subsequent positive transformational activity are:

- Influence of Life Story
- Values as Foundational, and,
- Possessing Emotional Self-Regulation

The second section examines those emotional competencies which act as a bridge between the personal, inner-world of the principal and the social world of the school. The principal's capacity to engender trust, ability to discover solutions to problems and to develop resilience are examined and identified as setting the stage for the interpersonal

affective competencies discussed in Chapter 7. The sub-themes examined in this section are:

- Capacity to Build Trust
- Problem-Solving, and,
- Developing Resilience

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that these themes and sub-themes are important to the research participants and that they relate to an affectively informed approach to the successful leadership and management of collaboratively-mediated change by the principal.

The approach is to integrate both narrative and numerical responses into a coherent account as it emerged from analysis of the data. Assimilating the quantitative and qualitative findings in fact reflects the structure of the chief source of data, the survey, in which participants were asked to provide Likert-type Scale and other ranked responses and then to follow-through immediately with their commentary. Separately treating the numerical and narrative data would thus introduce an artificial distinction which did not exist in the respondents', or indeed the researcher's, engagement with the investigation.

Foundations

The term 'Foundations' is intended to comprehend affectively-embedded competencies which are associated with ethical, self-directed living:

- Influence of Life Story
- Values as Foundational
- Possessing Emotional Self-Regulation

This section first examines the role played by life-history in the establishment of the ethical and moral principles underpinning school leaders' attitudes and behaviours and then focuses, as did Argyris and Schön (1974: 162), on a commitment to values as the basis for effective action. The competency 'emotional self-regulation' also emerges as foundational to the success of subsequent interpersonal competencies such as 'relationship-building', by supporting accurate self-assessment and a more faithful outward presentation of the inner self.

Influence of Life Story

In order to interrogate our beliefs, values and commitments, Sugrue (2005b: 172) argues that it is first necessary that we 'take on the more painful process of interrogating our own substantial self' and, although not sought directly, a surfacing of insights rooted in participants' biographies nonetheless emerged as an element of both face-to-face and survey commentary.

Goodson (2003: 69-75) points out that in very few instances have school reforms or change theories been promulgated which place personal development and change as central building blocks in the process. Sugrue (2005a: 136) argues that this personal insider perspective has been seen as a 'stumbling block' rather than a 'building block' and that a life-history approach has much potential to provide insight into principals' identities, values and capacities.

Interviewees were candid in their sharing of life stories and personal development reflections, frequently linking life experiences to their work as school head-teacher. For example at various points in her interview, Christine connected her family experiences, and particularly motherhood, with her role as principal:

And I had a 'eureka moment' about ten years ago when I had my son and I was off on a long maternity leave and I realised that I was projecting too far forward or back and that I need to be present now. You've only one chance to do this, be it with the conversation I'm having with you now or my engagement with the students and to be present while I'm doing it rather than racing ahead. It challenges me all the time but I do find it makes a difference for me. [Christine]

Such a demonstration of the profound connection between identity and practice (Moller, 2005b p.42) also elicited examples of dissonance between both:

That's the burden between the job as principal and the job of being mother. My husband works abroad and that's why my daughter in Leaving Cert. said to me 'Mammy, give up the job of being principal' because we'd a blow-out one night but when I broke it down, her big problem was she feels I'm there for her friends and not for her. [Christine]

This association between identity and practice was also evidenced by Martin who worked outside Ireland for much of his career and found the transition difficult:

It gets my goat, you know, there's been an enormous personal cost to moving to Ireland. I suppose for the first two years I haven't had a sounding board. There's nobody, or at least I felt there was nobody in my corner – not one person, so I found that incredibly difficult. [Martin]

A focus group member specifically linked her childhood to her management of staff and students:

It's the way I was brought up, I don't allow any shouting in the school, I don't shout myself, so therefore if some member of staff has a row with somebody outside the school or inside the classroom, then I would talk to them about it... I don't believe in it, in running a school. The same with the students – some of them are far taller and far louder than I ever was growing up, so I have difficulties with people standing up to me, invading my personal space when I am talking to them [Martina].

Sugrue (2005a: 19) makes the distinction that ‘life stories are transformed into life histories by adequate and appropriate contextualisation’, and hence we are, strictly speaking, dealing with life story vignettes in these extracts. They nonetheless demonstrate that principals ‘are not cardboard cut-outs but real flesh and blood individuals with motives and emotions that are influenced by the past as well as contemporary events’ (Ball and Goodson, 1985: 13). Such extracts present as emotionally rich life-segments. Crawford (2009: 45) broadens the scope of influence by arguing that ‘life history provides some evidence of the way that headteachers negotiate their identities and make sense of the social context’. This point was illustrated by Denis who spoke about social class:

A lot of teachers themselves mightn't have come out of middle class backgrounds, okay? Including myself, but we might have come out of hungry backgrounds... not so much hungry-hungry but hungry to get on and do well enough like, and that's different.
[Denis]

At several points during his interview, he related his advocacy on behalf of challenged and challenging students to this background:

Okay, there's an old saying in schools; 'schools are middle class institutions, run by the middle classes, for the middle classes' and anybody who doesn't fit that model really... 'she's troublesome or she's up to no good'. If you look at the pupils who cause most trouble here – I figure it's about two and a half percent out of 650, so what's that? About fifteen kids, not even that, it's about eight now this year... what have they all in common? They're all needy. [Denis]

Although no questions directly linked to life history were presented in the survey, the narrative occasionally revealed an association between biography and practice. As with the interviewee Christine, a number of commentaries reflected the tensions between principalship and motherhood:

I was fortunate that my family had moved on from second level. I became deputy principal when my youngest child was in 1st year. I would say that she definitely

suffered as a result. I was approached to apply for the job of Principal when the last religious was retiring but would not consider it at the time due to my family being still young. I feel a lot of women will sacrifice promotion opportunities because of family responsibilities. [F, 46-55, 4-6]²

Men equally reported on the tension between family life and principalship but were more inclined to use humour in articulating this:

I noticed my kids getting older as their vocabulary on the phone to me improved! This is my biggest regret. [M, 46-55, 13-15]

Early on in my first principalship I would mention school a lot in conversation but I stopped because my children told me to shut-up. I'm now principal of my daughters' school so I have not made the same mistake a second time! [M, 56-65, 13-15]

Pays to have a small family! [M, 56-65, >21]

Finally, one participant associated life experience with values, the subject of the next sub-theme;

A lot depends on one's own life experience, outlook and values. Reflection on experience is the greatest teacher. [F, 46-55, 13-15]

In summary, respondents provided evidence of a meaningful connection between identity and practice and of principals' biographies informing ways in which they negotiate the ethical and social landscape of their school.

² Survey respondents are assigned a three-component identifier of gender, age category and years' experience.

Values as Foundational

Values emerge from the commentary as internal moral and ethical referencing. The capacity to translate values into action was repeatedly identified by principals as foundational to their leadership and management of the school as well as connecting to emotionality within themselves and with members of the school community.

Throughout their narrative, principals associated values such as ‘the good of the school’, ‘people first’ and ‘students at the centre’ with their treatment of people and with their own emotionality:

You have to be value-driven, I think. You need to be able to return loyalty and be close to people, yet you have to constantly work for the good of the school. [M, 46-55, 1-3]

In claiming that ‘educational politics, values and emotions are intertwined’, Boler echoes the essentially ethical point being made by respondent principals:

Education aims in part to help us understand our values and priorities, how we come to believe in what we do, and define ethical ways of living with others. Emotions function in part as moral and ethical evaluations: they give us the information about what we care about and why. (Boler, 1999: xvii)

Sergiovanni goes even further in identifying the leader as ‘primarily an expert in the promotion and protection of values’ and asserts that:

When the school places the values domain at the centre as the driving force for what goes on and the technical-instrumental domain at the periphery, it becomes transformed from a run-of-the-mill organisation to a unique, vibrant, and generally more successful institution. (Sergiovanni, 2003: 15)

The penultimate survey question thus asked principals to ‘indicate how important you believe the following emotional competencies are to the practice of principalship’ and, as

demonstrated in Table 6.5, the element ‘Value-driven’ was ranked as ‘Important’ or ‘Very Important’ by 156 out of 162 respondents (96.2%):

Table 6.5: Principals’ ranking of emotional competencies – ‘Value-driven’

Please indicate how important you believe the following emotional competencies are to the practice of principalship:

Answer Options	Unimportant	Of little importance	Moderately important	Important	Very important	N
Value-driven	1	0	5	53	103	162
	0.6%	0%	3.0%	32.7%	63.5%	100%

One comment reflected the essential moral purpose at the heart of school leadership and was also echoed by others:

The great thing about the role is that it is value-driven and has tremendous potential to do some good for young people. This is only possible however if you can manage the other adults in your vicinity, so qualities such as relational management, conflict resolution skills, empathy, emotional self-awareness and resilience are key. [F, 46-55, 4-6]

Interviewees were also asked about the influence of values on the performance of their role and exemplified Beatty’s description of the emotional impact when values are challenged:

The cognitive and emotional dissonance that occurs in situations that clash with our ‘beliefs’ and ‘values’ about our substantial self demands a strongly protective and sometimes far from optimal change of view or action, a fragmentation of the professional self, which would presumably be associated with some manifestation of emotionality. (Beatty, 2000: 338)

Martin, for example, sought to have an allegedly drug-dealing student expelled from the school and his Board refused:

If you take that pupil issue, my own values would be... I would have very high standards for what I do but there comes a point where you have to say ‘I’m sorry, I

believe in this' and with the pupil issue it's because his behaviour, or his alleged behaviour, was so much at loggerheads with what we are trying to achieve here that for me, the only judgement that I could deliver there was 'I'm sorry, you shouldn't be a part of what we are trying to build here'.

Now, that was thrown back at me so that's where my values are at odds – not at odds, you know, sit quite easily with the emotion that I was feeling at the time, because I felt 'how dare you make a decision like that knowing the state of the nation, knowing what parents, if they got wind of that would think, 'oh you're soft on that or that's okay' you know' – that's where I was coming from. [Martin]

Values, in the case of some principals, were also related to school ethos – an explicit feature of the voluntary secondary school:

One learns to value a staff and affirmation is very important. People do things because they feel they are contributing, you must acknowledge this and if one takes ethos seriously then it comes naturally. [F, 46-55, 1-3]

Christine similarly rooted her values in faith but avoided overtness:

There is a spiritual dimension because I've a strong faith but I don't think it's unique. I think what I do, you can apply to any situation, you know? I happen to have God at the centre of what I do with the students and our mission statement and core values but you could do it without mentioning God in it at all. [Christine]

Whatever their source, spiritual or secular, values, combined with a personal vision of what makes a good school and clarity about one's own priorities combine to affirm principals in their efforts to enhance the daily work of their schools (Moller, 2005a: 94). An association between values and emotionality is emphasised in the literature (Beatty, 2000, Blackmore, 2004, Johnson et al., 2005, Crawford, 2007) and is repeatedly connected with emotional labour – a requirement to be seen to feel an emotion different to what one is experiencing (Hochschild, 1983, Moller, 2005a) particularly in situations where one's values are challenged. An exploration of findings around emotional self-regulation is therefore

warranted as the inner-self connects with the presented-self and this final dimension of the theme 'Foundations' is discussed next.

Possessing Emotional Self-Regulation

The term 'emotional self-regulation' is employed to comprehend a capacity for emotional self-awareness and the consequent capacity for emotional self-control. These abilities relate to principalship in that self-knowledge is fundamental to developing an effective way of being a leader and for making sense of the interconnected web of activity and relationships that make the policies, procedures and tasks of school life run more smoothly (Harris, 2007: 51).

Harris (ibid: 50) sees emotional self-awareness as essential to school leadership and demanding a coherent and credible 'fit' between the outer presentation of self and the inner world of thoughts and feelings. Awareness of the need to maintain a connection between being and doing was reflected in a number of commentaries:

I'm not afraid to invest my emotions and my personality, but I can't let that determine everything. There are times for stepping back and being a bit more analytical too. [M, 36-45, 4-6]

I have to call upon a deep well alright. I try to keep on top of as much as I can, but I don't pretend I am when I'm not. [M, 36-45, 1-3]

Such leaders, according to Harris (ibid: 50), have an authority that is based on a deep understanding of self, a strong sense of identity and a degree of self-acceptance that enables them to move beyond their ego and take an overview of the school.

Two survey questions offered insights into respondents' levels of emotional awareness:

Table 6.6: Principals' response to: *'I mean there's a parent one minute, a staff member the next, then there's a kid the next - there's just such variety and there's so many emotions you're dealing with every day'*

	n	%
Never like me	5	3
Seldom like me	17	10
About half of the time like me	43	26
Usually like me	83	50
Always like me	19	11
N	167	100.0

Though linked to workload, the focus group participant's statement in Table 6.6 centred on 'people' and the emotional work of the day and, whether respondents indicated agreement or otherwise, the prompt demanded an awareness of emotionality in daily practice. Representative commentaries, contributed via the 'reflection box' attached to each question, included:

There is a need for "on tap" emotional intelligence! [M, 36-45, 1-3]

No day is ever the same. You range from a confidante to a psychoanalyst to a caretaker within a few hours. [F, 46-55, 1-3]

The next question demonstrated the degree to which emotional self-awareness was associated with principals' reflection on critical incidents:

Table 6.7: Principals’ response to: ‘*The outcome of my reflection on that incident was very sobering for me emotionally and, I suppose, again made me look at all my mechanisms, procedures and responses*’

	n	%
Never like me	3	1.8
Seldom like me	36	22.0
About half of the time like me	44	26.8
Usually like me	72	43.9
Always like me	9	5.5
Total	164	100.0

While Table 6.7 demonstrates that a significant majority of respondents agreed that at some point they engaged in reflection on incidents and subsequent change, a polarisation of stance nonetheless emerged within this question’s reflection-box commentaries:

I do really try to reflect on how I do things, and even after many years of experience I still find that I could improve my ways of dealing with situations. [F, 56-65, >21]

Very bad to reflect. Move on to the next problem. [F, 56-65, 13-15]

Emotional self-awareness is, of course, a key component of the emotional intelligence construct as framed by Goleman (1995) and ‘most researchers into EI would agree that the key competence is that of self-awareness’ (Crawford, 2007: 529). Crawford, however, asserts that self-awareness is more than a competence and that the EI/Competence route in educational leadership has been seen as a short-cut to effectiveness rather than part of a developing and complex affective paradigm for leadership (ibid: 529). There may therefore exist a distinct prospect that life experience enriches and informs such awareness and the data were thus examined for association between age and emotional perspective. Almost uniquely amongst the searches for association between personal and attitudinal variables, a distinction emerged between younger and older principals in their stance on emotionality as the key influencing factor in school life. As illustrated in Table 6.8, younger principals

were surer of their responses than the older cohort and also disagreed with this perspective by a ratio of 2.6:1 within their own age-range. Older principals were more equivocal in their responses but nonetheless demonstrated 12% higher levels of agreement with the prompting statement on the centrality of emotions in school life:

Table 6.8: Cross-tabulation: Age Category x *Your emotional response determines everything*

Age Category	25-45		46-65	
	n	%	n	%
Agreement	8	23	46	35
Disagreement	21	60	53	41
Unsure	6	17	32	24
N	35	100	131	100

$\chi^2 = 14.728$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.022$, Cramer's V = 0.205

For each cross-tabulation table the '*p*' value is given an exact figure as the SPSS programme with which the data were statistically analysed offers such specificity. To determine the strength of association in this particular cross-tabulation, Cramér's V coefficient, which indicates an 'effect size', varies from 0, corresponding to no association between the variables, to 1, indicating complete association, was calculated. Cramér's V is a way of calculating correlation and is used as a post-test to determine strengths of association after other tests have determined significance (McHugh, 2013: 143). The Cramér's V value of 0.205, combined with the low *p*-value, point to a moderate association between the variables of age and attitude to the centrality of emotions in school life.

Slater's (2005: 329) exploration of the emotional competencies required for effective principalship also surfaced self-awareness as a key factor and identified two of its dimensions – accurate self-assessment, e.g. knowing one's own strengths and weaknesses

and having a strong sense of self-worth, e.g. having the courage to speak out. One respondent captured both elements:

I've had a few tough weeks with staff recently. I learned a lot from it. Yes, I did get worked up but it caused me to reflect over Christmas and to address the staff when we came back. I consulted books on leadership and reflected on what I might need to do to get people on board without losing my dignity. I can see now that I tend to withhold too much of my personal self and my weaknesses. [F, 46-55, 4-6]

Such a form of experiencing aligns with Harris's (2007: 56) definition of awareness as a learnable state of mind in which the individual is able to genuinely listen to the totality of their experience rather than to focus purely on the rational and intellectual.

Principals also demonstrated that the ability to move beyond awareness and to control their emotional displays was an equally important element of this competency. In particular, the need to suppress the expression of particular emotions in certain social situations was evident from the commentaries:

A principal sometimes needs to hide emotional responses especially in a crisis situation where others are in panic. [F, 46-55, 4-6]

This is where taking time before you react is important. I have a 24 hour rule when it comes to angry people. Leave it sit for 24 hours, unless it's an emergency. It's amazing how it cools down. That's why it's so important for a leader to keep negative emotions in check. [F, 46-55, 7-9]

One survey question, presented in Table 6.9, addressed emotional self-management directly:

Table 6.9: Principals’ response to: ‘Don’t know if I would normally use the verb ‘managing’ with emotions – I do try ‘containing’ emotions, trying to ‘segregate’ emotions, trying to have a cut-off point’

	n	%
Never like me	13	7.9
Seldom like me	36	22.0
About half of the time like me	43	26.2
Usually like me	62	37.8
Always like me	10	6.1
N	164	100.0

Though the focus group member quoted appears to have some distaste for the word ‘manage’, 70% of respondents agree that to some extent they employ strategies such as ‘containing’, ‘segregating’ and having ‘cut-off points’ which fall within Hochschild’s (1983: 7) characterisation of ‘emotional labour’ as a ‘form of emotion regulation that creates a publicly visible facial and bodily display within the workplace’.

Associated commentaries ranged from unqualified acceptance of the term emotional ‘management’ to its underpinnings in self-understanding and authenticity in the first instance:

I would use the word manage [F, 46-55, 1-3]

Managing emotions is exactly what I think I need to be doing [M, 36-45, 1-3]

A bit too black and white Michael, self-understanding is important here, when to wait, when to push. It is important that people see you as real also. [F, 46-55, 1-3]

An examination of the narrative uncovered two facets of emotional self-control as employed by respondents; suppression and expression. Inhibition of emotional displays was most commonly linked to a perceived need to revert to a principled or rational response in the face of a challenge:

While your emotional response is often the first response it's important to revert to 'procedure' mode and analyse the situation according to the facts rather than the person. (Sometimes you can rant when you go home!) [F, 36-45, 4-6]

I have learned that I need to distance myself from an immediate response if possible - to allow the emotions to calm down, and look at the situation logically and with a more 'professional' eye. [F, 56-65, >21]

Allowing emotions to surface, although consciously and in a controlled manner, also emerged:

I think planning and understanding the possible emotional responses of others and myself have a big influence on outcomes. So maybe it is more about being emotionally proactive as opposed to responding that counts. [F, 46-55, 4-6]

Crawford (2007: 527) discovered some differentiation between the most and least experienced headteachers in terms of skill in emotional regulation. A cross-tabulation of principalship experience against a claim to contain or segregate emotions indicated lower levels of self-reported regulation in the most experienced category compared to those with 4-12 years' experience. As can be seen from Table 6.10, 48% of those with over 13 years' experience disagreed that they contained or segregated their emotions, with half that percentage (23.4% and 24.7%) disagreeing amongst the two less experienced categories. Less experienced leaders appear to invest more effort in such self-regulation, particularly in the 4-12 years category where the level of agreement is 49.3% while only 24.7% disagreed.

Caveats here include the relatively low numbers of respondents in the >13 years' experience group and significant levels of uncertainty amongst the two less experienced groups.

Table 6.10: Cross-tabulation: Experience as principal x *I do try ‘containing’ emotions, trying to ‘segregate’ emotions, trying to have a cut-off point*

	< 3 years’ experience		4-12		> 13	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Agreement	18	38.3	40	49.3	13	39.3
Disagreement	11	23.4	20	24.7	16	48.5
Unsure	18	38.3	21	25.9	4	12.1
N	47		81		33	

$\chi^2 = 15.14, df = 4, p = 0.056$

In a comparison with an equivalent age category cross-tabulation, presented in Table 6.11, no significant difference between younger and older principals emerged in terms of their self-reported emotional self-management, perhaps challenging Sugrue’s (2005a: 17) assertion that ‘through a combination of career stage that is also closely aligned with age... [principals’] passionate commitments are less delineated and visible’:

Table 6.11: Cross-tabulation: Age category x *I do try ‘containing’ emotions, trying to ‘segregate’ emotions, trying to have a cut off point*

	25-45		46-65	
	n	%	n	%
Agreement	15	44.1	56	40.8
Disagreement	7	20.5	31	22.6
Unsure	12	35.3	50	36.5
N	34		137	

$\chi^2 = 10.87, df = 2, p = 0.259$

In summary, respondent principals demonstrate an awareness of their own and others’ emotionality, affirm that they employ conscious expression and suppression of their emotional displays but nonetheless evidence a spectrum of stances on the centrality of emotions to school life.

Agency

Fullan (1993: 2) contends that ‘moral purpose and change agency, at first glance, appear to be strange bedfellows. On closer examination they are natural allies’. Thus agency, defined as an ‘action or intervention producing a particular effect’ (Oxford, 2014b), represents the acting out of personally held values to respondent principals and, as will be demonstrated, is identified as being fundamental to their practice. The three sub-themes related to this theme are:

- Capacity to Build Trust
- Problem-Solving, and,
- Resilience

The first sub-theme, ‘Capacity to Build Trust’, emerges from the narrative as an essentially relational phenomenon for principals and is also seen as being associated with an authentic presentation of self, particularly to teachers.

The second sub-theme, ‘Problem-Solving’, demonstrates how participants use their affective acumen to inform their management of both difficulties and dissonance in school leadership. Resolution of ill-structured problems and, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter, the strategic management of conflict situations emerge as amongst the most emotionally challenging aspects of practice.

The final affectively-informed dimension of Agency, ‘Resilience’, confirms that principals place the highest premium on their capacity to endure and to discover sources of sustainability in the face of a role characterised by ‘hard change, low capacity and plenty of distractions’ (Fullan, 2007: 168).

Capacity to Build Trust

Leithwood and Seashore-Lewis (2012: 37) answer with ‘an unqualified *yes*’ the question of whether instructional leadership, shared leadership and trust in the principal have the combined potential to increase student learning. They further assert that:

The emotional side of principal behaviour, which we have assessed by reference to teachers’ trust in the principals as ethical, caring and competent, has on its own been shown to have a strong relationship to student outcomes (ibid: 37).

The characterisation, by an initial focus group member, of trust as an essentially empathic and emotionally-rooted phenomenon is of interest in this respect:

‘I think empathy is an inherent part of my school relationships - it’s an emotional trust that builds-up between individuals and the principal. I think that that is really an essential dimension’. [Martina]

This statement, which appeared as an early prompt in the survey, received 97% agreement amongst respondents as illustrated in Table 6.12, with 61.1% strongly agreeing and 35.9% agreeing. Such a perspective supports an expansion of the Leithwood and Seashore-Lewis trust-components of ‘ethical, caring and competent’ (ibid: 37) into a distinctly relational dimension within respondents’ settings at least:

Table 6.12: Principals’ response to: *I think empathy is an inherent part of my school relationships - it’s an emotional trust that builds-up between individuals and the principal. I think that that is really an essential dimension*

	n	%
Strongly disagree	1	0.6
Disagree	1	0.6
Neither agree nor disagree	3	1.8
Agree	60	35.9
Strongly agree	102	61.1
N	167	100.0

According to Beatty, trust *is* an emotional phenomenon (2004: 329) and Robinson (2010: 1) similarly supports its relational character, pointing-out that effective instructional leadership involves building relational trust with staff, parents, and students. Beatty cites the research on relational trust that had its origins in the evaluation of the reform of four hundred Chicago public schools in the 1990s:

This research provides quantitative and qualitative evidence about the links between teachers' trust of their principal, the leadership practices that build trust, their impact on teacher attitudes and school organization and, finally, the impact of levels of relational trust on student achievement outcomes. In those Chicago schools where trust levels increased over a three-year period, teachers reported a greater willingness to try new things, a greater sense of responsibility for their students, more outreach to parents, and stronger professional community involving more shared work, more conversations about teaching and learning, and a stronger collective focus on student learning. (Bryk and Schneider, 2002)

Principals also affirmed the value of trust in their commentaries:

As principals, we are trusted and our views/opinions/advice are valued. This can be one of the most rewarding parts of the job. [M, 46-55, 7-9]

Delegate, include people in, trust, give responsibility which is huge in staff development; also true for students: try it! What's the worst that can happen - it doesn't work? [F, 36-45, 1-3]

In terms of sequencing, and as if to affirm this last respondent, Beatty (2004: 344) asserted that there was a need for the more powerful person in the hierarchy to 'go first' as the teachers wouldn't share until the leaders shared. Leithwood and Seashore-Louis agreed, seeing trust as a precondition for leadership behaviours that will affect instruction and not a direct cause (2012: 32), an observation concurred-with by a number of survey respondents:

Once the school community gain trust and confidence in one then you can relax a little more and let the real person out within reason. [M, 46-55, 10-12]

Your reaction to any information may determine whether a person will continue to trust you with personal information and work with you or not. [F, 46-55, 1-3]

Trust was also seen by respondents as a two-way phenomenon and there was particular emphasis on having a trusting relationship with the deputy principal:

It is essential to have a good working relationship with your deputy and vital that you have one you can trust. [F, 36-45, 1-3]

You can depend on the Deputy for support when there are tricky issues and also to keep you informed about the general feeling on particular issues – your eyes and ears in the staff room. [F, 56-65, 4-6]

Beatty and Brew (2004: 344) characterise trust as an ‘intra and inter-personal safe space’ and assert that:

If authentic emotional meaning-making builds a foundation for authentic disclosure on sensitive matters that presently remain unaddressed, there may be hope for teachers and leaders to participate together in shaping new directions for the future (Beatty and Brew, 2004: 352)

Respondent principals similarly associated authenticity with the capacity to engender trust, and with teachers in particular:

The things that lead to a breakdown of trust between Principals and staff are emotional dishonesty, pretending that you are interested and then not acting on it – thinking that you are smarter than your colleagues, being manipulative. If you are honest with yourself and with others, admit to your mistakes, learn from them, try to discover your weaknesses and reflect on them, it will go a long way to creating a positive workplace. [M, 56-65, 7-9]

Four key elements of this description are also reflected in the other commentaries and offer a principal’s shared view of authenticity as incorporating emotional honesty; not feigning interest; avoiding manipulation and reflection on limitations.

Principals’ responses to one particular survey question, presented in Table 6.13, offered insights into their reaction to a prompt displaying a subtle element of manipulation:

‘It’s the smaller things that count - the way I deal with the staff on a day to day basis, because every decision I make has some emotive response to it. And it’s only because I facilitated a fundraiser for the gym or a debate and freed them-up - it’s not actually about school improvement - that will follow’

Table 6.13: Principals’ response to: ‘It’s the smaller things that count – School improvement will follow’

	n	%
Strongly disagree	5	3.0
Disagree	10	6.1
Neither agree nor disagree	19	11.5
Agree	82	49.7
Strongly agree	49	29.7
N	165	100.0

While the Likert-type Scale survey responses demonstrated strong agreement with such an approach, the associated commentaries expressed a note of caution recurring within the narrative:

Yes small things count everyday for everyone - but there can be element of manipulation in this which I do not like. [F, 36-45, 1-3]

Staff can be brought around but conceding to their requests does not garner respect. [No identifiers provided]

An expectation that a gender differential may exist in the adoption of such an approach failed to materialise when gender was cross-tabulated against the response, presented in Table 6.14:

Table 6.14: Cross-tabulation: Gender x *It's the smaller things that count – School improvement will follow*

	Male		Female	
	n	%	n	%
Disagreement	6	7	8	10
Agreement	70	82	60	78
Unsure	9	11	9	12
N	85	100	77	100

$\chi^2 = 0.881, df = 2, p = 0.830$

For those participants who referred to it, authenticity was seen as a permanent influencing factor underpinning concern for individuals, groups and the organisation as a whole:

I think authenticity is vital in all our dealings. [F, 36-45, 1-3]

Respecting the concerns of colleagues and attending to them is part of our work, it is not a means to some other end: that would be Machiavellian. [F, 56-65, 19-21]

Genuineness was also seen as important in influencing the trusting relationships which underpin collaborative action:

People are gradually willing to make the significant shift when they feel that you are genuinely on their side and for the good of the pupils. [M, 46-55, 10-12]

EVERYTHING you do as a leader has to be for the better good and deviousness may get the results in the short term but rarely in the long term. [F, 46-55, 7-9]

I always feel that one has to be honest that one is not manipulating human emotions merely for power, but that the common good of the school is the reason. [F, 36-45, 1-3]

The capacity to build trust thus emerges as an example of the profoundly complex affective nature of the principal's practice and is seen as being essentially relational in character, associated with intrapersonal genuineness and with relationship-building.

Problem-Solving

In seeking to explore links between skill in problem-solving and effective leadership, Robinson (2010: 12) points out that ‘it is widely accepted that the worlds of social science and education are characterised by ill-structured problems’ which she defines as problems which lack obvious criteria for solution adequacy, when the means for reaching a solution are unclear, and when there is uncertainty about the nature and availability of the required information.

An acceptance that complex problems are part of school life emerged in the survey commentaries:

Yes, the social problems and difficulties you are faced-with are very sad and complex, and yes it does help in trying to find a positive solution to things, however, it shouldn't always be used as a reason for not adhering to the standards you set and work by. [F, 36-34, 4-6]

Pupils and staff want to know that you care even if you make it clear that you cannot solve their problems all of the time. [M, 46-55, 10-12]

Formulaic solution strategies such as ‘IDEAL’ (Identify, Define, Explore, Act, Look), a problem solving method devised by Bransford and Stein (1993) owe much to a cognitive-rational paradigm. A more affectively-attuned four stage framework is proposed by Kottler and Hecker (2002):

Creative problem solving involves the four critical steps of *preparation* (chance and opportunity perhaps favouring the prepared mind and heart), *incubation* (periods of rest in which no conscious work is done on the problem), *inspiration* (when lightning hits), and *verification* (confirmatory evidence of movement or change) (in Carson and Becker, 2004 : 111).

Such a sequence was illustrated by Christine in her management of an emerging crisis with her staff, summarised here:

Preparation

It's been very difficult around the whole Croke Park Agreement³ so I met with the assistant principals to come up with a proposal and wrote up a big discussion document but the staff erupted. [Christine]

Incubation

And when I got feedback on that, I actually left the school – I went for a walk along the beach to try to see how to handle it. I was just thinking things through. I was considering how to manage finding agreement without things getting much worse. [Christine]

Inspiration

Now, while I was out of the school things did get much worse, because there was a union meeting and they voted 24:8 that they weren't going to come back on one of the [prescribed] days. So I closed the school and we had a well-structured staff meeting with small groups and I put things in a positive light, you know, how at Christmas time you can't remember what it felt like in summertime and all of that. [Christine]

Verification

Then it went to a vote again but it was a secret ballot this time and it totally went the other way – 28:5 in favour. [Christine]

Harris (2007: 64) affirms Christine's approach in incorporating an incubation phase as it links awareness with creativity, placing less value on the cognitive/rational and 'more on waking up to what 'is'', allowing one to recognise that other options are possible.

³ An agreement between the public service unions and the Government which traded changed work practices for a promise of no further pay cuts. For teachers this meant an extra hour a week for 'whole-school activities' such as planning etc. This meant an additional 33 hours per year. Their use was contested between the union (ASTI) and management (JMB).

In summary, cognitive/rational approaches to problem-solving can be complemented by affectively-attuned creativity wherein stages of incubation and inspiration can successfully lead to resolution of the often ill-structured problems of school life.

Developing Resilience

Resilience, the ability to ‘bounce back’ in the face of adversity, was affirmed by principals with comments such as ‘The capacity to renew oneself - resilience I suppose - is vital’ [F, 56-65, 4-6], though some faced far greater challenges than most:

This was very true in my case. My husband had died four weeks before I took up my position. I had two children aged 11 and 13 and I feel very guilty that I spend all my time helping other peoples kids and not my own. My case is probably unusual but I still feel very guilty about that. But life deals us all blows. We have to get on with what we must do. [F, 46-55, 7-9]

In asserting that ‘passion is useless unless principals have the personal characteristics to stay the course’, Davies (2008: 101) claims that resilience, strength of character and determination to achieve successful outcomes, amidst considerable pressures and challenges, seems to be a prerequisite for leading a successful school. Respondent principals agreed, and of eleven emotional competencies to be assigned an importance rating in the survey’s penultimate question, ‘Resilience’ received the highest score with 136 of 164 (82.9%) respondents ranking this competence as ‘Very Important’, as illustrated in Table 6.15:

Table 6.15: Principals’ ranking of emotional competencies – ‘Resilience’

Please indicate how important you believe the following emotional competencies are to the practice of principalship:						
Answer Options	Unimportant	Of little importance	Moderately important	Important	Very important	N
Resilience	0	0	1	27	136	164
	0%	0%	0.6%	16.4%	82.9%	100%

In their commentary on this ranking question, principals explained what resilience meant for them and why it was seen to be so important:

Resilience: The capacity to adapt to a range of emotional demands made in the course of the day. Emotional Olympics!! [M, 46-55, 13-15]

Resilience is high for me. A school Principal can be buffeted from all angles by so many different groupings and agencies... it is really important to pick yourself up, dust yourself down and start all over again. Also mistakes made by a Principal can be quite public, and many are very critical of such mistakes.... It is very important to get over this and be resilient by not letting confidence be knocked. [F, 56-65, >21]

Ability to fight another day; physical wellbeing and mental stability. [F, 56-65, 4-6]

This last reference to physical and mental wellbeing as linked to ones ‘ability to fight another day’ also surfaced in the initial focus group and was specifically related to sleep. Sleep disturbance, and in particular waking in the small hours and failing to return to sleep, emerged as an issue for three of the four focus group members and was also a feature of 55.4% of the survey respondents’ experience who, at least half the time as evidenced in Table 6.16, wake-up at night thinking about school:

Table 6.16: Principals’ response to: *I used to wake up at night-time and I’d spend two hours thinking about this, that and the other. I’m thinking about school...*

	n	%
Never like me	16	9.5
Seldom like me	59	35.1
About half of the time like me	57	33.9
Usually like me	28	16.7
Always like me	8	4.8
N	168	100.0

In challenging the adoption of EI ‘with lack of reservation’ by the school leadership profession, Morrison and Ecclestone (2011: 201) describe the imperceptible conversion of

emotional intelligence into emotional resilience, ‘a kind of ‘X Factor’’, possessed by leaders capable of successfully navigating the demanding landscape of modern principalship and not possessed by those who ‘fall by the wayside’. In particular they warn against the promotion of such learnable competencies increasing our ability to absorb demands and limiting our inclination to question political and structural change. As if to affirm this contention, survey respondents agreed in one survey question that while the administrative demands were all-consuming, their response to a follow-up prompt revealed they equally agreed they had to maintain a public perception that they were coping with everything:

Table 6.17: Principals’ response to: *It’s just constant...the large burden of administration from the Department, from the Board of Management and now the Trustees - it can actually subsume you and become all-consuming on every level*

	n	%
Strongly disagree	6	3.6
Disagree	20	12.0
Neither agree nor disagree	10	6.0
Agree	79	47.6
Strongly agree	51	30.7
N	166	100.0

The noticeably similar rates of agreement and disagreement demonstrated in Tables 6.17 and 6.18 offer evidence of the emotional labour demanded by principalship, wherein 78.3% of school leaders feel ‘subsumed’ by their workload and 83.8% of the same cohort feel they must act as if they are not.

Table 6.18: Principals' response to: *You've to call upon a deep well from within and try to appear to have this public persona that's dealing with everything – that's perhaps one of the greatest demands emotionally*

	n	%
Strongly disagree	4	2.4
Disagree	15	9.0
Neither agree nor disagree	8	4.8
Agree	83	49.7
Strongly agree	57	34.1
N	167	100.0

In a return to governing values and perhaps linking 'Foundations' with 'Agency' however, one respondent described why she prioritised resilience:

Resilience, because empathy and conflict resolution, control and management of emotional displays are very draining, and you will need to call on these skills in very different ways on different levels every day. It's a job about people. The administration and management of the structure of the building are distractions from the essence of the job, which is to form the next generation of citizens and Christians and to provide a happy and healthy workplace. [F, 46-55, 10-12]

The concept of resilience also incorporates a dimension of support-seeking as 'we are so often reminded that principals need to create an environment of emotional support for staff and yet the emotional support is missing for themselves' (Piggot-Irvine, 2004: 26). School leaders identify this key aspect of resilience as discovering their own support network to acquire appropriate knowledge, understanding and emotional support which will sustain them over time (Crawford, 2009: 132).

Identifying sources of support as an adjunct to resilience was deemed an important task by all three interviewees.

Denis prioritised peer support within a close-knit group:

The really important thing for me is that I have three or four people who are very good supports. What I'm saying is I would try to look after myself but what I have here as well is three very good principal colleagues... and we would be on the phone a couple of times a day. [Denis]

Christine referred to support-seeking in terms of remediation:

I do think principals need the safety net there of somebody to support them when things go wrong. And it's only when you've been badly burned maybe once, you realise how much you need it. [Christine]

Martin was somewhat more strategic in his sourcing of support:

In recent months, there are people in my corner – people that I've put in my corner myself because I've appointed them so they're reporting to me but they're supportive of me. They can see what I want for the school and they're working towards that. [Martin]

Survey respondents similarly affirmed a need for support, some in strong terms:

The Irish education system is killing its Principals. I know that word is a bit dramatic, but I think the demands of the role, with no resourcing, have become inhuman. The sad part is that I have seen the same issues, problems, pressures and stresses come up almost since the year I was appointed as Principal - except they have worsened. Trustees, JMB, Boards of Management do not take seriously their responsibility for duty of care towards Principals. [F, 56-65, >21]

The survey was conducted in 2011 and the impact of resource and staffing cutbacks, which began in 2009, challenged even the most resilient:

I am a very experienced Principal but I think the stresses and pressures over the last couple of years are intolerable. [F, 56-65, >21]

I think I am emotionally balanced and healthy but I am still emotionally drained. The pressures from all sides are phenomenal. I think I have been and still am a good Principal but the personal cost and isolation make it unsustainable. I am going to retire. [M, 46-55, 7-9]

Analysis of the survey narrative identified six sources of support employed by respondents, ranked by the number of commentaries in each category:

1. Self-support:

One needs to be very careful in managing the emotional roller-coaster of Principalship. Do it yourself – nobody else will! A principal needs to self-care!!! [M, 46-55, 13-15]

2. Peer principals:

The only one who really understands the demands, the toll, (and also the positive challenge and "buzz" and feeling of achievement) is another Principal. [F, 56-65, >21]

3. Others, e.g. deputy principal, supportive teachers:

Support is needed and gotten from your own team you have built up around you who have a similar love for the school and its wellbeing. [no identifiers provided]

4. Spouses and partners:

My husband understands me better than anyone and I can be brutally honest without fear of it being repeated. He is also a rock of sense and can look at things from a different perspective. [F, 56-65, 4-6]

5. Family:

I'm afraid I still burden the home-front as well...with no real expectation of assistance...just sharing! [M, 36-45, 13-15]

6. Spirituality and ethos:

One's own inner spiritual journey can be of great help but also needs time to be nurtured which is lacking most of the time. [F, 46-55, 4-6]

The predominance of reference to self-support surfaces the question of whether school leaders are emotionally self-reliant because they *can* do so or because they *must* do so.

This issue requires further consideration and the question of how to broaden the principal's support-base will be examined in the Chapter 8 section, Implications for Practice.

Having identified sources, characterising the nature of the support required by survey respondents was illuminated by their overwhelming agreement with the prompt: 'Principals need support with the emotional side of their work from the very beginning', presented in Table 6.19:

Table 6.19: Principals' response to: '*Principals need support with the emotional side of their work from the very beginning*'

	n	%
Strongly disagree	1	0.6
Disagree	5	3.0
Neither agree nor disagree	8	4.8
Agree	73	43.7
Strongly agree	80	47.9
N	167	100.0

Such a statement of need cannot be dismissed as an artefact of the impact of the recession or other temporary stressors as evidenced in the commentaries:

One is catapulted into an extremely stressful and demanding job, with great mental and emotional pressures. Support for the emotional toll is essential. [F, 56-65, >21]

Without this support either the school or the Principal will suffer greatly. [M, 56-65, experience not indicated]

That's why we all get burnt out. [M, 46-55, 13-15]

Headteachers as a group tend to put others first and themselves last when it comes to extra support and resources and Southworth (2008: 169) claims there is a convincing case for

them now needing to have their fair share of the resources if they are to continue to meet societal, community and school challenges. One such resource, professional de-briefing, emerged as a potential model of support for principals in both survey and interview:

It is worth noting that Guidance Counsellors in schools have recourse to a number of personal counselling sessions due to the nature of their work. Principals are just expected to get on with it. [M, 46-55, 13-15]

All principals should have ongoing access to de-briefers (if such a word exists). I pay for this myself and it is worth every penny. [F, 46-55, 7-9]

In summary, resilience was prioritised as the foremost affective competence by respondents and the perceived requirement to appear to be coping with high levels of demand was deemed to require attention to physical and mental wellbeing. Principals also affirm a need for support for sustainability and adopt a range of strategies in sourcing emotional and practical help. There is evidence that a broadening of the support base and additional investment in resources are required.

Concluding comments

The claims supported by evidence in this chapter offer principals' perspectives on the intrapersonal affective factors fundamental to their leadership and management of collaborative change efforts at their schools.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that:

- Principals provide evidence of a meaningful connection between identity and practice and of their biographies informing ways in which they negotiate the ethical and social landscape of their school.
- The capacity to translate values into action was repeatedly identified by principals as foundational to their leadership and management of the school as well as

connecting to emotionality, especially when their values are threatened.

- Emotional self-regulation is perceived as comprehending a capacity for emotional self-awareness and the consequent capacity for emotional self-control, and principals indicate they employ conscious expression and suppression of their emotional displays.
- The capacity to build trust emerges from the narrative as an essentially relational phenomenon for principals and is underpinned by personal authenticity.
- Cognitive/rational approaches to problem-solving can be complemented by affectively-attuned creativity wherein stages of incubation and inspiration can successfully lead to resolution of the often ill-structured problems of school life.
- Resilience was prioritised as the foremost affective competence by respondents and principals also affirmed a need for support for sustainability, adopting a range of strategies to source emotional and practical help.

Such claims are supported by Day et al (2000) who examined the roles of leaders in twelve 'improving schools' in England:

Within the study, there was ample evidence that people were trusted to work as powerful professionals within clear collegial value frameworks, which were common to all. Goals were clear and agreed, communications were good and everyone had high expectations of themselves and others. (Day et al., 2000: 162)

The sequencing of sub-themes in this account presents as a linear set of interdependent elements. Its linearity will be challenged in Chapters 8 and 9 when factors such as feedback and learning are discussed in framing applicability of the findings. It is meanwhile intuitively reasonable to claim that without a workable set of intrapersonal affective competencies as explored in this chapter, it is unlikely that the subsequent interpersonal competencies – an effectual connection between the personal and the social – could be fully realised.

Contemporary school leadership is delineated as a mix of clear core values, enduring commitment and contingent and strategic attention to accountability (Biott and Spindler, 2005 : 29). An examination of principals' intrapersonal competencies revealed their emphasis on ethical foundations and personal agency in the service of the school. In the next chapter, such beliefs and enduring commitment are mobilised as the personal and professional worlds collide (Moller, 2005a: 91).

CHAPTER SEVEN

PRINCIPALS' INTERPERSONAL EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES

Introduction

This chapter critically examines the affective factors identified as bridging vision and transformative action. Analysis of this domain of interpersonal emotional competencies elicited a set of sub-themes rooted in the leader's values and intrapersonal emotional competencies but focussed on 'other' in what Harris (2007: 22) explores as the 'I-Thou' relational dynamic, as opposed to the 'I-It' approach of mechanical systematisation. Following O'Connor (2004: 48), who asserts that affectively aware leadership demands a 'commitment to connectedness ... which requires emotional connectedness with oneself', this chapter traces the forces that shape and sustain opportunities for connection and synergy emerging from the principals' narrative.

'Connection', the first interpersonal theme, reveals that respectful and empathic understanding of people's situations as well as strategies to energise and empower both self and others are identified as being central to the change-management work of the principal. Such aspirations are primarily founded, according to participants, on the principal's ability to sustain relationships across the school, to communicate successfully and to deal with dissonance, and the sub-themes discussed are:

- Relationship-Building
- Communicating Effectively, and,
- Managing Conflict

The second theme, 'Synergy', critically examines the affective dimensions identified as ultimately supporting the realisation by principals of collaboratively-mediated change and the sub-themes are:

- Impact of Leadership Style
- Contextualising Decision-Making, and,
- Artful Change-Management

The sub-theme ‘Impact of Leadership Style’ demonstrates that principals employ a range of leadership approaches in the development of hitherto untapped teacher collaborativity. The culminating sub-themes of ‘Contextualising Decision-Making’ and ‘Artful Change-Management’ indicate that respondent principals possess high levels of awareness of their schools’ internal and external environments and that such perspectives support an ‘artful’ approach to change-management with school leaders providing evidence of their incorporation of emotion as well as rationality in the implementation of positive change.

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that these themes and sub-themes are important to the research participants and that they relate to an emotionally integrated approach to the successful leadership and management of collaboratively-mediated change by the principal.

Relationship-Building

In looking to the forces shaping the evolution of future schools, Leithwood et al (2003: 25) refer to ‘caring and respect for others’ as a key factor and cite Starratt’s characterisation of caring as requiring:

... fidelity to persons, a willingness to acknowledge their right to be who they are, an openness to encountering them in their authentic individuality, a loyalty to the relationship. This value is grounded in the belief that the integrity of human relationships is sacred. (Starratt, 1991: 195)

In Table 7.1, principals almost unanimously affirmed the importance of relationship:

Table 7.1: Principals' response to: *I think relationships are at the heart of what we're doing in life*

	n	%
Strongly disagree	2	1.2
Disagree	0	0.0
Neither agree nor disagree	7	4.2
Agree	46	27.7
Strongly agree	111	66.9
N	166	100.0

The associated commentary was similarly unequivocal:

Good relationships are what everything is based on [M, 56-65, 1-3]

Relationships are everything. Without good functioning relationships schools are doomed. [F, 46-55, 7-9]

My mantra! [M, 46-55, 13-15]

In proposing a model of the leadership capabilities required to engage in effective instructional leadership, Robinson (2010: 2) claims that ‘the more leaders focus their relationships, their work, and their learning on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater their influence on student outcomes’. Robinson’s model identifies such capabilities as (a) using deep leadership content knowledge to (b) solve complex school-based problems, while (c) building relational trust with staff, parents, and students (ibid: 1) and argues that these factors are considerably interdependent. This integration of relationship with knowledge and skill, while affirmed by more than one respondent, was also seen as a long-term endeavour:

You have to understand and know the people you are working with. It takes time to develop relationships. Fairness, understanding and empathy will get you lots of places. Others may criticise you as not being tough enough or too soft. Know

yourself and why you make the decisions you do and this will empower you. It has taken me five years as deputy and six as principal to formulate this! [F, 46-55, 4-6]

Such deep investment of time and self into the endeavour of relationship-building re-surfaces the earlier concern raised by respondents around authenticity. Akerjordet's (2010: 370) unease that emotional intelligence 'prioritises technique (manipulation) over relationships in order to realize personal and organizational goals' is echoed in the participants' narrative:

Care for a person and for their wellbeing is important. But do remember that teachers are very clever people not like Pavlov and his dogs! People will soon distinguish between real interest and play-stuff. [F, 46-55, 1-3]

In contrast to Beatty's (2007: 330) assertion that 'professional relationships in schools have been of dubious quality anyway, due to norms of contrived collegiality', respondent principals frequently used the word 'personal' to characterise their relationships:

The personal relationship with staff and parents as a principal is key. Respect, understanding, empathy and fairness form a good foundation. Being understanding with staff on a personal basis definitely is the way to go (after all my years I see that). They never forget kindness and understanding on a matter of importance to them. [F, 56-65, >21]

In terms of relationship-building practice, some principals emphasised the power of 'the little things':

People need to get attention and affirmation for even little things. It's what makes life worthwhile. [F, 46-55, 1-3]

Acknowledgement of a person's birthday/success etc. is vitally important in relationship building. [M, 56-65, 10-12]

In contrast, others adopted a more robust perspective. O'Connor (2004: 51) refers to the 'parent-adolescent' relationship between principal and staff in Irish voluntary secondary

schools - a legacy of the leadership style under religious management, and to some a continuing factor:

Staff members expect the principal to be 'always able to listen patiently and with sympathy'. I believe there is a culture in secondary schools of teachers needing sympathy, understanding and support. I do try to take this approach with the staff, however sometimes I just want to say 'You are paid to do it, so do it!!!' [F, 56-65, >21]

Whatever their perspective or style, a key focus of the relationship-building endeavour for principals is the development of a collaborative professional community, which Fullan (2006: 3) defines as 'the quality of ongoing relationships among teachers and between teachers and the principal'. One interviewee however both broadened and deepened this perspective by citing extracts from a recent whole school evaluation which affirmed relationship in terms of family spirit and collaboration as a school-wide phenomenon:

And in our WSE , one very strong statement talked about the school as a family: 'The image of the school as a large family in which the individual is valued and whose needs are appropriately addressed was articulated by a number of students and parents in the course of the evaluation'. And this one: 'Teachers, school management, administrative staff, special needs assistants, cleaning and caretaking staff share a common purpose of care and support for students and work together for the benefit of all students within the school community'. I loved those sentences. To me they were the nubs of it really. [Christine]

Day (2008: 81) argues that caring relationships are fundamental to good leadership and affirms that 'it is difficult to envisage a passionate leader whose first priority is not connectedness with pupils, colleagues and self'. The importance of establishing caring relationships as a key element of the principal's role is similarly reflected across the participants' narrative. Day's (ibid: 81) distinction between 'caring for' and a deeper and more influential 'caring about' was reflected in Christine's wider approach to relationship-building:

I have a passion about being inclusive of everyone and what's really important to me is that open door where people feel they can say something, they're listened-to and that they're seen as real people. It's about identifying people and their needs and maybe directing them on two levels, on a personal level; 'Where are they going?' and perhaps on a career path as well. [Christine]

Thus principals invested their relationship-building with teachers with both personal and professional dimensions. Davies (2008: 202) distinguishes between 'soft care' and 'real care', which he describes as looking after the person as an individual but also challenging their performance, attitude and commitment in a move away from the status quo. Christine gave one example:

I've a staff member who is at that stage of life now, isn't performing in the classroom, and I struggle big-time knowing how to support that person. It's taking my head space – you know? I'm putting a lot of thought into it but there's different ways to skin a cat. She was a fantastic teacher but what's going on has affected her teaching. I suggested the VHI Assist⁴, but she thinks she's fine. But I've thought of a new idea now. A new guy is coming in to do his teaching practice and I said 'Would you take him on?' Now she's like a two-year old skipping around the place at the idea of doing that. So that might be the thing that motivates her. [Christine]

In summary, an orientation toward relationship-building for collaborative action is at once a 'doing' and a 'being' for both leader and school, something the organisation 'is' and not just something the organisation 'has' (Stoll, 2003: 105). School leaders care *for* and care *about* their students and teachers and they illustrate a distinction between 'soft care' and 'real care' which is seen as more challenging and developmental.

A key factor in the relationship-building endeavour also lies in the principal's capacity to communicate effectively and this sub-theme is discussed next.

⁴ A confidential counselling service for teachers

Communicating Effectively

Communication plays an important role in the development of trust within an organisation (Thomas et al., 2009: 287). In their engagement around communication as the purposeful and appropriate conveyance of meaning, principals offered a nuanced perspective:

A large percentage of all communication is subjective and in how, not what, you communicate [F, 36-45, 7-9]

a stance resonating with a quote from a voluntary secondary principal almost two decades earlier: ‘On a day to day basis, the most important thing I do is smile!’ (Leader and Boldt, 1994: 26).

Respondents also placed a clear emphasis on the role of listening:

You have to look at where people are coming from and put what they are saying into perspective. Listening is very important - people want to feel you are taking them seriously. [F, 46-55, 4-6]

Positive listening in a supportive role is very important. Human interactions and personalities decree that unfortunately a small number get this positive listening and I am always conscious that there are others there who possibly need it more but are reluctant to seek this positive listening. [M, 46-55, 7-9]

As with Ginsberg and Davies’ (2003: 275) principal interviewees who held a common belief that shared information benefited the entire organisation and was crucial to everyone’s understanding what the decisions were and why they were being made, respondents saw the value of open dialogue where appropriate:

You have to work with them. You can’t shoot them! Hence the need for discussion. However don’t expect miracles - it’s a slow movement of views and be prepared to be amazed at how unreasonable people can be! [F, 46-55, 1-3]

Thus, at the heart of the challenge to communicate effectively lies a concern for authentic

collaboration – a bidirectional dimension of leadership articulated by Akerjordet and Severinsson in their examination of EI in nursing leadership:

Today, the role of a leader is evolving from a top-down to a more collaborative humanistic approach, challenging the employees' ability to facilitate constructive work relationships and positive teamwork, which require open communication and mutual understanding. (Akerjordet and Severinsson, 2010: 364)

The case was put somewhat more bluntly by a survey respondent:

You can get firmly rapped over the knuckles for not consulting. [F, 46-55, 4-6]

Akerjordet and Severinsson also captured the twin emotive challenges faced by listening-leaders:

EI leaders behave in ways that stimulate the creativity of their team such as using self-control to cope with criticism and feeling less threatened by changes inspired by creative ideas on the part of team members. (ibid: 364)

The art of effective communication thus presents as a competency, more difficult to acquire for some than others. Martin, for example, explicitly referred to his prioritising of communication as a school-enhancing condition but also evidenced real difficulty developing this competency in practice:

Communication is the key... I would always have considered myself a good communicator – maybe at the times that I wanted to communicate, if that makes sense. [Martin]

And later in the same interview...

...and here's this git coming in, thinks he knows it all. So yes, I've taken a step back and the sense of communication is still something that I'm working on and building on and I'm being far more communicative than I've ever been and it irritates me when I hear 'well communication's still so poor' you know? But that's what I have to do. [Martin]

The earlier survey respondent's emphasis on 'how, not what, you communicate', perhaps

points to a mismatch between Martin's espoused theory in terms of communication and his theory-in-use (Smith, 1983: 51) as evidenced in this scenario from his interview:

I made a conscious decision that at the staff meeting what I'm going to do here is give them a little bit of a position statement. So I wrote it. And it was around talking about common purpose, talking about the need for collaboration and to understand the challenging context that we find ourselves in, you know? And they probably were all slitting their wrists at that point but I felt if you're bitching to me about the kid who's missed his homework... lads get sight of the bigger picture here, will you?

So, I did it. And if they're always complaining about communication well they now know exactly what the playing-field is and you're either with us on the seat on the bus or you're not, but this is the way we're going'. [Martin]

The risks associated with this 'position statement' approach to communication were framed in Slater's examination of principal behaviours that support collaboration:

... although principals may often ask for input, they sometimes spend a greater amount of time giving advice and directives. One teacher shared her personal experience: 'My principal never listens. If you tell her something, she'll interrupt you to tell her own story... and not listening and not letting you share. I'm sorry – that's not collaborative'. As evidenced in this story, the futility of a telling, rather than a listening, approach becomes clear when people do not heed directives and the school culture does not move toward embracing collaboration and sharing leadership responsibilities. (Slater, 2005: 327)

In summary, the challenge to communicate effectively underpins a concern for appropriate exchange of information and mutual understanding in supporting authentic collaboration for change. Principals demonstrated an awareness of the affective dimensions of communication in assigning particular weight to listening and to 'how, not what, you communicate'.

Managing Conflict

Two distinct approaches to the management of conflict emerged from the narrative. Some principals were prepared to ‘draw-in’ teachers who were seen as negative or antagonistic to developments:

You have to work hard with the negative people, affirm them, no matter how hard that is. Usually they are negative because they have had bad experiences in the past. By isolating them and ignoring them you are adding to their sense of justification and reinforcing their negative behaviour. They take up inordinate amounts of time but this time is well spent. [F, 46-55, 7-9]

Such an approach is affirmed by DiPaola (2003: 147) who described this conflict resolution strategy as ‘problem-solving’ aimed at developing a constructive context which integrates the interests of disputants to achieve mutually satisfying outcomes.

Others, however, adopted what could be called a ‘holding-out’ strategy:

I take perverse pleasure in smiling at negative people and pointing out the positive. The fact of dealing with many different emotionally charged conflicts doesn't necessarily mean you have to be "drawn into" them, but you do have to engage with them. [M, 46-55, 7-9]

DiPaola’s distinction between cognitive conflict which is task-focussed and affective conflict which is social-emotional (ibid: 146) may offer an explanation for the respondents’ differing approaches. Dissonance around a task-focussed issue may be seen to be more amenable to a ‘drawing-in’, constructive approach whereas conflict impacting on relationships and affective states appears more difficult to assuage.

The extent to which the respondent cohort of principals employed ‘drawing-in’ or ‘holding-out’ strategies was uncovered in a survey question and appears to reflect a bell-curve distribution, as illustrated in Table 7.2:

Table 7.2: Principals’ response to: *You can isolate the negative people, you know, where they realise that no matter what they say to you, it doesn’t really affect you*

	n	%
Never like me	13	7.7
Seldom like me	44	26.2
About half of the time like me	48	28.6
Usually like me	53	31.5
Always like me	10	6.0
N	168	100.0

Contrasting approaches to ‘negative people’ surface the notion of self-protection as narratives from leaders who have experienced a serious conflict, dilemma, or critical incident in their leadership practice reveal that it can have a profound way of affecting or wounding them (Maslin-Ostrowski and Ackerman, 1999: 216). Principals who held their challengers ‘out there’ may leave themselves less open to wounding than those who ‘draw-in’. Such a self-protective approach is referred-to by Johnson et al (2005: 241) who found that many of their participants crossed over emotional boundaries in ways that contradict how leaders have been taught to act and perform in a certain way—that is, to be devoid of emotion and to approach matters in a clinical manner.

A participant in Johnson’s study (ibid: 241) described how, in a conflict situation, s/he found s/he was ‘removing myself, removing my emotions, stepping back and responding to it as from my position’. This ability to emotionally detach from negativity and conflict situations similarly emerged in the narrative:

Experience has taught me not to allow people's negativity to really get to me. If I am convinced of my own integrity and if my motives are objective, for the good of the students, and within good professional practice I can usually get over negativity quite quickly. [F, 56-65, >21]

One respondent shared her strategic approach to detachment:

A few things help for me:

1. *Don't take it personally*
2. *When it's over, it's over*
3. *Make a point of trying to do something positive towards a person with whom you've had a negative interaction.* [F, 56-65, 16-18]

Denis, the interviewee with most principalship experience, described a tactical approach to conflict which worked for him:

Yeah sometimes the first thing you've to do is grin and bear it and keep your mouth shut – and you'd be better off. You just nod away like I did at guidance counselling... nod away.. 'Yeah, yeah, isn't it terrible?' You know and they know you can do nothing about it. [Denis]

Later in the interview, he gave an example of this self-protective strategy in action:

I think the most difficult thing I went through was the first week of the supervision and substitution⁵ ... we brought in the supervisors and they didn't go well at all.. [laughs].. and ten past nine on the first Monday of supervision, one of the Home Ec. teachers came up to me and she was... [bangs on the table].. 'They're inside there supervising a class and there's cooking going on'. And I just said to her, 'Mary, sure it's desperate like – if they think they can come in off the road like that and cook and teach others how to cook – we have to stop it immediately'. [Denis]

Nonetheless, and in spite of the 'rules of leadership demeanour' (ibid: 248), the surfacing of emotions and of crossing emotional boundaries in conflict situations emerged and was not always seen as unconstructive:

It may affect you but try very hard not to show it. Sometimes it's good to be emotional - but not to be downtrodden. [F, 56-65, 4-6]

And while principals use their emotional acumen to manage conflict situations they don't

⁵ Teachers in Ireland traditionally replaced absent colleagues and supervised breaks on a voluntary basis. In 2003 following a period of industrial action, Government conceded a paid scheme which also provided for the employment, where necessary, of non-teacher supervisors and substitutes – an unwelcome development in the view of some union members.

see this task as theirs alone:

If the principal ceases to care about those who are 'harder to love' on the staff and this is observed, how can there be a collegial team? Colleagues will make up their own minds and deal with negativity. It is not the principal's problem alone. [F, 56-65, 19-21]

Commentary on the survey question above revealed the emotional impact of negativity and conflict on some respondents:

Maybe I'm not thick-skinned enough but the negativity and readiness to believe the worst motives of me slowly breaks my heart. [M, 46-55, 7-9]

Sometimes they get to me...especially when I am exhausted and feel pulled in a hundred different directions. [F, 36-45, 1-3]

This reference to the influence fatigue on emotional self-management during conflict emerged as a significant theme:

I am not good at hiding my emotions when I am tired and sometimes this can be cause me problems when staff see negative responses which they might not see if I am not tired. [F, 56-65, 13-15]

It is conflicting emotions and shredded emotions which can cause the most problems. The effect of tiredness on emotions is a very significant factor. [M, 46-55, 7-9]

In summary, principals employ 'drawing-in' and 'holding-out' strategies in the management of negativity and use their emotional acumen to manage conflict situations, to avoid wounding and for the greater good of the school.

Synergy

The production of a 'combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects' (Oxford, 2014e) lies at the heart of 'Synergy' and is centred on what policy-makers call

‘whole school approaches’ to transformation. Such collaboratively mediated change-management requires being artful in that, while it may be scaffolded by process, it nonetheless requires contextually-conscious leadership and deft decision-making as articulated throughout the narrative by respondents. Grint (2003: 105) suggests that leadership might better be considered as an art rather than a science, or, more specifically, as ‘an ensemble of arts’. He considers four such arts as the invention of an identity; the design of a strategic vision; the deployment of persuasive communication and the construction of organisational tactics. Such an ensemble is reflected in the sub-themes emerging from our principals’ discourse and presently under discussion such as personal story and values, communication and connection. This section now concentrates on Grint’s final ‘art’, organisational tactics, in this case the emotionally-informed dimensions of strategies aimed at generating synergy; impact of leadership style, contextualising decision-making and artful change-management.

Impact of Leadership Style

When presented with the National College for School Leadership (NCSL, 2001) leadership style typology, self-identification proved problematic for some interviewees:

I thought you’d ask that question and I find that very, very difficult to do. I’m definitely not coercive. Of the two I’m very much torn between, and I think which more includes me, is democratic, and the firm-but-fair – the authoritative, but I think more the democratic one would be where I would be. Or mmm, no – Oh!, it’s so difficult! [Christine]

I’d say the middle two, democratic and affiliative Michael ... but you see it isn’t black or white, there’s a lot of grey there. And even during a single school day; I did that already... we did that at eleven o’clock and here we are at half eleven like... [Denis]

Such resistance to identifying with a single leadership style does not mean the interviewees did not present with a predominant disposition – they both settled on democratic, combined with either authoritative or affiliative. Denis’s pointing to his ability to migrate between styles indicates a degree of eclecticism in terms of leadership approach and perhaps reflects his longer experience in which he has developed the facility to match demand with technique on a moment-by-moment basis.

Survey respondents were asked to make a forced-choice (no multiples allowed) selection of their leadership style as framed by the Learning Programme for Serving Headteachers (NCSL, 2001) . Cross-tabulating gender, age and experience against the responses elicited the following tables [the single ‘coercive’ respondent [F, 46-55, 7-9] was excluded as it presented with the only cell frequency less than 5 and would, if retained, have required a ‘continuity correction’ in calculating the chi-square (Hinton et al., 2004: 275)].

Table 7.3 presents a cross-tabulation of gender with leadership style:

Table 7.3: Cross-tabulation: Gender x leadership style

	Male		Female	
	n	%	n	%
Democratic	32	37%	29	38%
Affiliative	25	29%	13	17%
Authoritative	15	17%	10	13%
Coaching	7	8%	18	23%
Pacesetting	7	8%	7	9%
N	86		77	

$$\chi^2 = 9.308, df = 4, p = 0.054$$

The probability value of $p = 0.054$ indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in self-identified leadership style between males and females. This apparent lack of correlation between style and gender was not absolute however. The highest proportion for both genders was for Democratic but the second highest ranking elicited the perhaps

counterintuitive finding that males selected Affiliative at 29% and females self-identified in the Coaching category at 23%. This finding perhaps resonates with a conclusion from a study on leadership style and gender by Coleman (2003: 106) in which her survey results ‘tempered the picture of a pure feminine paradigm of management style amongst the female headteachers of England and Wales and indicates a more androgynous style of management’.

In examining the relationship between leadership style and age, the 25 – 35 category contained a single entry and to preserve the age gap between intervals, the categories were collapsed into two: 25 – 45 and 46 – 65 years of age.

As with gender, there existed no statistically significant overall variation between the younger and older age groups, as presented in Table 7.4. While the predominance of the democratic model of school leadership was maintained in this cross-tabulation, there nonetheless emerged an interesting distinction in that younger principals demonstrated a greater tendency toward the affiliative and democratic while, in percentage terms, older school leaders were twice as likely to self-identify as being authoritative.

Table 7.4: Cross-tabulation: Age category x leadership style

	25-45		46-65	
	n	%	n	%
Democratic	15	42	46	36
Affiliative	10	29	28	22
Coaching	5	14	20	15
Authoritative	3	9	23	18
Pacesetting	2	6	12	9
N	35		129	

$\chi^2 = 6.128, df = 4, p = 0.633$

Of particular interest in the experience continuum is a move away from the democratic style as tenure in principalship increases, as shown in Table 7.5. Parallel to this is a trend, in percentage terms at least, towards the authoritative and affiliative, though the case numbers are small. The emerging picture from the survey is one of a cohort of school leaders inhabiting the complete spectrum of styles with, as we have seen, interview evidence demonstrating a facility to migrate among them as their experience dictates:

Table 7.5: Cross-tabulation: Experience x leadership style

	< 3 years' experience		4-12		> 13	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Democratic	25	51	29	36	7	21
Affiliative	9	18	20	25	8	24
Authoritative	7	14	10	12	9	27
Pacesetting	4	8	6	7	4	12
Coaching	4	8	16	20	5	15
N	49		81		33	

$\chi^2 = 12.070$, $df = 8$, $p = 0.148$

The preponderance of 'affiliative' and 'democratic' styles was also evident when change-management was discussed by respondents:

You have to be 'tuned-in' to what is going on in the school. Change is such an emotional and emotive issue that processing my own and others' emotions is central to that. [M, 36-45, 13-15]

It is all about changing the culture here and many colleagues are more than ready to step up to the plate and get involved in decision making and policy. [F, 46-55, 4-6].

This call for teachers to 'step up to the plate' [or, as Beatty puts it 'to come out of the

stands and on to the court' (2007: 328)] is driven by a concurrence of three government policies; a moratorium on promotion appointments, an early retirement scheme removing senior (promotion post-holding) staff and a raft of compliance-driven initiatives demanding 'whole school approaches'. Principals were aware of the affectively complex nature of this context:

But this is a culture and it will take time to change. Think most understand this. There has been a very clear division between staff and management and each have become isolated in their own areas. [F, 36-45, 4-6]

Thus, whatever its style, respondents were acutely conscious of the need for the principal to show leadership at this time:

This is what leaders must do. That's why we need leaders. They lead for the good. [F, 46-55, 7-9]

One has to try to lead rather than manage. Managing can be seductive - all those lovely ticked boxes! [F, 46-55, 1-3]

Such leadership, according to Linsky and Lawrence (2011: 3-4) will require different behaviours than those we have practised and perfected as 'we are in a period that feels unique' and the reality is that none of us have been here before.

Change is linked to emotionality and 'to put the emotions on the table within schools is to enact a powerful transformational potential' (Beatty, 2007: 334). One particularly emotive challenge linked to the principal's leadership style related to their stance on teacher performance management. Although rarely-used procedures for dealing with underperforming teachers are in place, performance management and accountability measures remain an unstructured facet of teacher professionalism in Ireland and evaluation by principals is largely tacit and informal. Discussion of performance management of teachers emerged largely in the interview settings. Participants were at ease in discussing

their own performance standards but found delegating challenging and expressed a preference for modelling:

I wouldn't be a great delegator you know? I delegate to people who I know will do it and in that regard I will do it. I would expect a certain standard because that's the standard that I set and often people don't necessarily measure up to that – now I know I should be supportive and encouraging empowering them to be able to do that better but I mean we're all professionals here, we're all doing the job. [Martin]

I would avoid performance-related confrontation... I don't like that, you know? I have high standards and I model the work but I don't knock people for not reaching the same high standards ... and I do find it difficult. I am apprehensive about delegating. [Christine]

Martin, who was the only participant with experience of normed performance management from his experience abroad, found its translation to the Irish context problematic:

It took me so long to park all the other stuff that I had been used to and almost reinvent my brain to 'this is how it works here'. Do I set standards and monitor performance in relation to the larger vision? Yes, but monitoring of performance is a challenge because, you know, I'm monitoring my own performance, I'm monitoring the performance of the school but I'm not necessarily monitoring the performance of my teachers down the corridor. I don't consider myself a pushover, but I do consider how my leadership style has evolved to become more accommodating for the job that I currently do. It wasn't like that four years ago, because I was able to say to Joe Smith and Annie Smith, 'That's performance management my friend, there are your targets and you're not living up to them'. [Martin]

Blackmore (2004: 440) describes the linking of school performance indicators to those of individual staff as 'disciplinary technologies of accountability', more related to managerialism than professionalism. Martin's experience of the language of accountability being 'more fluid and more open [in Ireland] than elsewhere' (Sugrue, 2011: 59) may explain why, at national policy level, the emphasis on 'self-evaluation has been

promulgated as an antidote to creeping performativity' (ibid: 59). The hesitation expressed by participants around formalising performance management may point to teachers' perception of such technologies as indicative of a loss of trust and 'being seen to do good' as opposed to 'doing good' (Blackmore, 2004: 439). The tension between reluctance and inclination in terms of monitoring teacher performance also emerged in the survey:

It is very difficult to find yourself attempting to defend the indefensible. This often happens because teachers are not really accountable in any meaningful way. This is very hard especially when it's out of step with practices in most other work environments. [F, 46-55, 7-9]

Both Martin and this last survey respondent characterised the impact of Ireland's 'fluid and open' teacher performance management regime as 'very hard' or 'a challenge' and points to staff accountability as a particularly problematic demand in term of management style.

In summary, respondent principals display a preponderance of 'democratic' and 'affiliative' leadership styles and are learning to adapt their leadership approaches to develop hitherto untapped teacher collegiality and to cope with mitigating the impact of policy and recession-linked change on their schools. Performance management remains an unstructured facet of teacher professionalism in Ireland and voluntary secondary principals' caution on performance management therefore sends simultaneous messages of high trust but low accountability to their teachers.

Contextualising Decision-Making

The term 'contextualising decision-making' here refers to the principal's capacity to incorporate an awareness of background factors, empirical and affective, into their choices for action at the level of the school.

The task of realigning school culture with a set of new social realities and with significant policy change begins with contextual awareness:

There was a time when educational institutions were almost like ‘islands’, relatively separate from their communities and able to manage their day-to-day work without interference from outside influences. This situation no longer exists. (Anderson et al., 2003: 67)

While just one principal specifically referred to context (*‘context is so important’*), school leaders nonetheless demonstrated an acute awareness of the porous nature of the boundary between the school and its environment. National contextual factors concentrated on the country’s economy:

Current financial happenings, both on a personal and national level, together with the political occurrences have had a very negative impact on some people in the staff room. Their reaction to this has created a lot of tension in the staff room particularly for those who accept the current situation but want to get on and do the best possible job without listening to negativity. [M, 46-55, 7-9]

Commentary on local-community environmental factors also largely centred on the socio-economic context of the school:

Schools are increasingly dealing with issues related to general lifestyles and are expected to search for the resources to do the work of other agencies such as HSE⁶ etc. Doing nothing is not an option. [M, 46-55, 10-12]

The school’s internal context largely focussed on staff:

Teachers feel ‘unloved’ by the outside world and tend to look inward. Not helped by salary cuts and job insecurity for young, enthusiastic teachers. [M, 46-55, 10-12]

Many respondents thus see their national, local and internal school contexts as being both interconnected and challenging at this time and this has had an impact on their sense of control around decision-making:

⁶ The Health Service Executive

Making decisions that affect a person's livelihood can be stressful e.g. letting staff go. Dealing with issues that occur outside of school but yet impact on your school is difficult as you have very little power to change these issues. [F, 46-55, 1-3]

O'Connor's (2004: 53) finding that principals referred to the importance of 'gut reaction', 'what feels right' and 'values' in making situationally aware decisions similarly emerged in this study:

My gut feeling does influence a lot of things. [F, 46-55, 1-3]

Over the past six years, I've come to the conclusion that most people live in the immediate present of their own issues. Sometimes you just have to make decisions for the greater good of all. [F, 46-55, 4-6]

Such subjectivities or 'arts' particularly surface when, as one survey respondent put it, '*big decisions must be made; when there is new ground, new directives, new demands etc.*'. For example, the demand for inclusivity in decision-making was articulated by Martin:

I'm very conscious that I always have to go one step further ... that I almost have to – not apologise for my actions, that's the wrong word – ehm, to just as best I can to involve everybody in the decision making process, and not justify the decisions I make, but rather to explain the decisions that I have made or make sure that people understand this is decision that we have come to. The simplest of things, you know? It's around putting a notice on the staffroom board – stuff that I would never have thought of three years ago, but making sure 'Have you put up a notice about that? Have you informed people of that? And so now, I'm trying to think one step ahead in dealing with people. [Martin]

Alignment with the in-school context therefore emerges as the principal consideration in decision-making and its attendant imperatives. The imperative to change the internal context, where it was negative, also surfaced:

We all started out as idealists. Let's put that to the top of our agenda and try to get away from the culture of negativity that is so destructive. [F, 46-55, 7-9]

In summary, principals demonstrate an acute awareness of the porous nature of the boundary between the school and its environment. Participants thus agree that ‘people technology is just as necessary as thing technology’ (Stoll, 2003: 106) in the change-management process and demonstrate an ability to use contextually informed approaches in their decision-making.

Artful Change-Management

The term ‘artful change-management’ describes the principal’s capacity to move beyond the technical or structural and towards a reflective integration of the social and emotional nuances at play in the lifeworld of the school as they lead and manage transformational activity.

Fullan (1998: 9) contrasts re-structuring (changes in the formal structure of schooling) with re-culturing (changing the norms, values, incentives, skills and relationships) and asserts that while re-culturing makes a difference in teaching and learning, it nonetheless requires strong emotional involvement from principals and others. Reculturing a school, according to Stoll (2003: 105), ‘is not for the faint-hearted’ as it amounts to inventing what amounts to a new way of life.

Empirical-rational change strategies externally imposed by policy-makers are based on the fundamental assumption that schools are rational places (Stoll, 2003: 102):

What is going on below the surface, however, is the real essence of school culture – people’s beliefs, values ... as well as micropolitical issues and the emotions people bring to their work (ibid: 103)

Principals demonstrate a high degree of affective awareness in relation to change-management in their schools:

This is a time of great change in my school. Therefore emotions are somewhat fragile. People are grieving for a way of life that is gone and have not fully dealt with the emotions of change. [F, 46-55, 1-3]

Incorporating such awareness into change management and renewal is challenging but essential as ‘change and emotion are inseparable’ (Hargreaves, 2004b: 287). Hargreaves (ibid: 291) discovered that the majority of his respondent teachers associated educational change with external, government-imposed policies and referred to such in disapproving terms, contrasting with self-initiated change. Respondent principals in the present study similarly expressed frustrations with externally-mandated change and distinguished between ‘the national and the local’:

These are situations outside my control, and yet situations that I am expected to manage within DES procedures - without the resources from the same DES!! Aagh.... even thinking about it annoys me!!! [F, 56-65, >21]

I put a great deal of emphasis on the local (positives in our school) rather than the national. [M, 46-55, 7-9]

The effects of repetitive change also surfaced in the survey:

DES expectations - usually at short notice with ‘goalposts changed’ constantly is very frustrating. [F, 56-65, >21]

The constancy of change and demands on time never ends for all staff. This creates tensions and people need time out to allow themselves to regenerate. [M, 56-65, 10-12]

Thus, with both principal and teachers adopting a deficit perspective on externally mandated change, the stage is set for what Beatty (2007: 328) calls holistic school renewal, and characterises as a ‘shift from political structures of traditional hegemonic bureaucratic hierarchy to something far more egalitarian, democratic and openly discursive’. Beatty (ibid: 333) asserts that leaders who seek to lead change and renew their schools, wisely

begin with their own personal and professional renewal or, as one survey participant put it: *‘the Principal must be willing to learn and to ‘get out of his head’*’. Such inner work demands reflection and a survey question exploring reflection on critical incidents indicated that while principals agree in the narrative that they reflect on outcomes, it remains an unstructured facet of their practice, with just 12% of principals indicating they engage in written reflection ‘always’ or ‘usually’ as can be seen from Table 7.6:

Table 7.6: Principals’ response to: *On a bad day I have written it down, when I’ve had a really bad day I would write it down, because it helps me to reflect on it and see how could I do better? ... what was it here that made me feel so terrible? ... and how I can look at it in a different perspective?*

	n	%
Never like me	57	34.1
Seldom like me	66	39.5
About half of the time like me	24	14.4
Usually like me	17	10.2
Always like me	3	1.8
N	167	100.0

Harrison (2003: 34), discussing Schön’s (1987) representation of the ‘reflective practitioner’, argues that such an approach is suited to the complexities and ambiguities of the practice setting and describes professional action as being characterised by ‘artistry’ rather than ‘technical rationality’. Such artistry demands reflection on the complexities of collegiality, on for example the practice of management through teams. O’Neill (2003: 222) argues that while teams are seen as a ready solution to the intensification of teachers’ and managers’ work in schools, ‘the practice of teaching and the process of teamwork may simply be incompatible bedfellows’. Thus, while one survey respondent described the ideal as *‘The principal develops the staff team which will be capable of bringing about change and improvement’*, an interviewee described his reality:

When I arrived here first, I thought I'd be clever and create an extended leadership team. And I created a team of people who were principal, deputy principal and all the year heads and we started having meetings. Jesus! Did that backfire? All the other post-holders thought 'Who's this? What are they talking about? Why are we not involved in this?' etc. etc. etc. [Martin]

Affective awareness and reflection on experience are therefore key components of team-led change-management as the intention to increase staff commitment via greater involvement in decision-making 'is laudable but remains a double-edged sword in practice' (ibid: 216).

Leading teacher-practice change at classroom level is seen by participants as equally challenging:

I suppose teachers are a bit solitary in some senses, they don't like to be told and can get a bit of a siege mentality! [F, 46-55, 1-3]

Part of the reason for this is a policy context in Ireland in which 'staffing, teacher supply, the timely delivery of reports, training days delivered, management structure and the pace of implementation of syllabi changes are all monitored but not the work or practices of teachers in classrooms' (Lynch et al., 2012: 14).

One respondent nonetheless saw the current context as an opportunity:

In the current climate it's a good opportunity however to move in on classroom practices and do some work on standards of teaching and learning. [F, 46-55, 13-15]

Thus, whether at individual or whole-school level, awareness at least, and deftness at best, in the emotional dynamics of change-management are seen by participants as being at least as important as rationality. 'Emotions are embedded in ethics' (ibid: 126) and, as one

respondent put it, *'people can change and can be led to believe that the common good is also important.'* [F, 46-55, 1-3]

In summary, principals demonstrate a high degree of affective awareness in relation to change-management in their schools and evidence unstructured but nonetheless real reflective practice in 'artfully' managing change as a shared enterprise.

Concluding comments

The claims supported by evidence in this chapter offer respondent principals' perspectives on the interpersonal affective factors involved in the collaborative realisation of positive transformational change in their schools. The findings may be summarised thus:

- Participants care *for* and care *about* their teachers and see relationship-building as a key task in the establishment of a collegial culture driving school transformation activity.
- Leaders demonstrated an awareness of the affective dimensions of communication in assigning particular weight to listening and to 'how, not what, you communicate'.
- Respondents employ 'drawing-in' and 'holding-out' strategies in the management of negativity and use their emotional acumen to manage conflict situations.
- Respondent principals display a preponderance of 'democratic' and 'affiliative' leadership styles and can migrate among a range of approaches as the situation demands but they exhibit caution around teacher performance management.
- School leaders in this study demonstrate an acute awareness of the porous nature of the boundary between the school and its environment.
- Respondents demonstrate a high degree of affective awareness in relation to artful or nuanced change-management strategies but their approach to reflective practice remains unstructured.

This examination of the final dimension of interpersonal emotional competencies presents as a culmination. Recurring intersections between elements of each sub-theme nonetheless point to a profound level of complexity at the lived-experience level of headship. Chapter 8 next, thus opens with the development of an overarching synthesis and considers applicability of these understandings with the aim of linking emotional competencies with behaviours and actions in the quest for school enhancement.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

In this chapter, a synthesis of the findings is first established and the central phenomenon at work within the data identified.

The account then returns to the research questions and draws on the findings to discern how participants provided answers to the central research problem, *'How are Irish secondary school principals' self-reported emotional competencies associated with collaboratively-mediated change-management within their schools?'*

This chapter also relates key findings to the work of other researchers and the emerging body of research exploring, in particular, relationship between the affective ecology of the school and student outcomes.

Finally, implications of this study for school leadership development and support are investigated and the tensions between the modalities of formal training and social learning critically discussed in terms of appropriateness and impact.

Synthesis

Having examined in detail each of the overarching themes and their sub-themes in the preceding two chapters, selective coding, the final phase in which theory is synthesised, can now be undertaken. In contrast to positivist theory which seeks causes and favours deterministic explanations, interpretive theory calls for the imaginative understanding of the studied phenomenon (Charmaz, 2006: 126). Such an abstract and interpretive understanding of the nature of theory gives priority to showing patterns and connections

rather than to linear reasoning (ibid: 126) and, in this study, is given structure by means of a ‘selective coding matrix’, (after Scott’s ‘Reflective Coding Matrix’ (Scott, 2004: 119)). The selective coding matrix is designed to ultimately identify the central phenomenon about which all the themes and sub-themes relate (Scott, 2004: 120).

The themes and sub-themes emerging from the first three phases of GT coding were presented thus:

Table 8.1: The domains, themes and sub-themes

Domains	Intrapersonal Domain		Interpersonal Domain	
Themes	Foundations	Agency	Connection	Synergy
Sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence of life-story • Values as Foundational • Possessing Emotional Self-Regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to build trust • Problem solving • Developing Resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship-Building • Communicating Effectively • Managing Conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of Leadership Style • Contextualising Decision-Making • Artful Change-Management

Having now critically examined each of the four themes, a consequence, or affectively-underpinned outcome, can be identified for each which further clarifies the pattern of connection between them. The theme ‘Foundations’ comprised a set of three affectively-embedded competencies which were associated with ethical, self-directed living.

Principals provided evidence of:

- A meaningful connection between identity and practice and of their life stories informing ways in which they negotiate the ethical and social landscape of their school;
- A capacity to translate foundational values into action which connected strongly

with their emotionality, especially when their values were threatened, and,

- A capacity for emotional self-regulation, beginning with self-awareness and underpinning a consequent capacity for emotional self-control.

Respondents thus identified self as the ultimate locus for control and values as fundamental to their motivation and the competencies of the ‘Foundations’ theme consequentially provide principals with a *personal impetus*, a stimulus for energising their subsequent behaviour and action.

The theme ‘Agency’ presented a set of competencies which act as a link between the principal’s foundational vision and values and the social world of the school. Respondents provided evidence of:

- A capacity to build trust as an essentially relational phenomenon, underpinned by personal authenticity;
- A capacity to incorporate inspiration and creativity in their approaches to problem-solving, and,
- The prioritisation of resilience, sustained by a range of strategies to source emotional and practical help.

Principals in this way activate their foundational qualities, bridging the personal and social dimensions of their work, and the competencies of ‘Agency’ consequentially provide for *personal mobilisation*, defined as ‘bringing resources into use for a particular purpose’ (Oxford, 2014d), which in this context relates to their advocating for subsequent collective action.

The theme ‘Connection’ described three competencies in which principals develop an understanding of people’s situations as well as strategies to energise and empower others and participants provided evidence of:

- The centrality of relationship-building in their practice, manifested in care *for* and care *about* their teachers;
- An awareness of the affective dimensions of effective communication in assigning particular weight to listening and to ‘how, not what, you communicate’, and,
- The use of their emotional intelligence, in the broader sense, to manage conflict situations by employing ‘drawing-in’ and ‘holding-out’ strategies.

Respondents thus reveal that they first establish a relational culture upon which subsequent collaborative activity is founded and consequentially provide for a *collective impetus* for ‘whole school’ transformational efforts.

Finally, the culminating theme ‘Synergy’ identified three competencies which underpin the principal’s artful achievement of collaboratively-mediated transformational activity and principals provided evidence of:

- A preponderance of ‘democratic’ and ‘affiliative’ leadership styles but also a facility to migrate among a range of approaches as the situation demands;
- An acute contextual awareness of the porous nature of the boundary between the school and its environment in their decision-making, and,
- A capacity to endow their change-management activity with ‘artful’, contextually and affectively nuanced strategies.

Principals, in this way, use their emotional adeptness even at the highest levels of transformational endeavour, bringing the human resources of at least a critical mass of their teaching staff into use and providing for a *collective mobilisation* for change.

These consequences can now be incorporated into the emerging selective coding matrix, presented in Table 8.2:

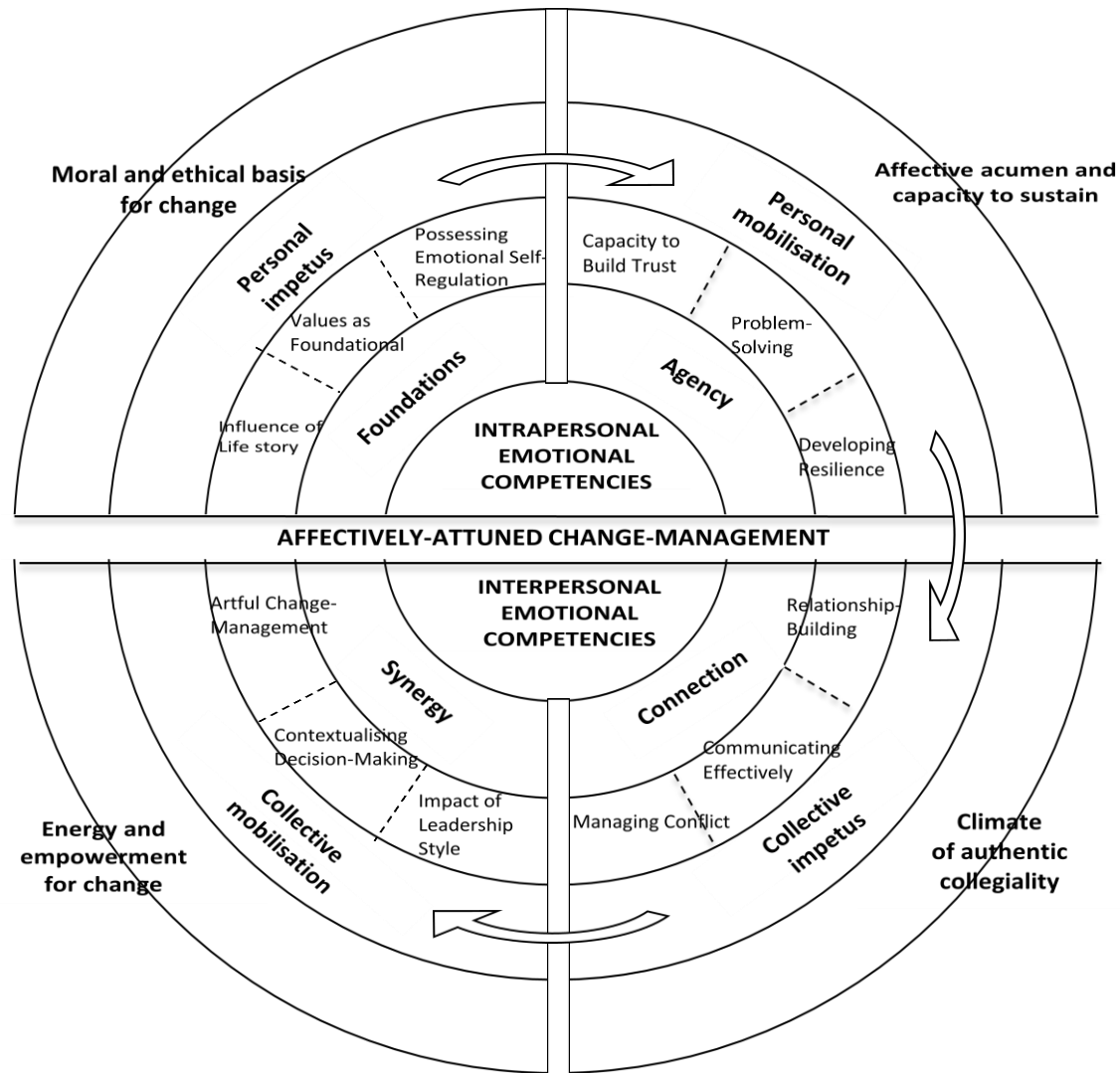
Table 8.2: The domains, themes and sub-themes with their consequences

Domains	Intrapersonal Domain		Interpersonal Domain	
Themes	Foundations	Agency	Connection	Synergy
Sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence of life-story • Values as Foundational • Possessing Emotional Self-Regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to build trust • Problem solving • Developing Resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship-Building • Communicating Effectively • Managing Conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of Leadership Style • Contextualising Decision-Making • Artful Change-Management
Consequences	Personal Impetus	Personal Mobilisation	Collective Impetus	Collective Mobilisation

The final stage of establishing a synthesis is the crystallisation of the processes at work within the data into a single graphical representation – a concept to make sense of the findings presented within a comprehensive selective coding matrix. Scott (2004: 123) describes this ultimate phase of analysis as weaving a version of the story at a higher level of abstraction, integrating structure with process in a single representation ‘and thus the theory emerges’. In terms of an overarching phenomenon, I generated the expression ‘Affectively-Attuned Change-Management’ to capture the central process at work within the narrative, employing the notion of attunement to imply that emotional awareness is not the only determining factor in leadership and management but nonetheless requiring of the principal’s serious consideration as repeatedly emphasised by the research participants.

A theoretical model summarising this synthesis is presented in Figure 8.1:

Figure 8.1: A theoretical model of Affectively-Attuned Change-Management



Dimensions of the Model

In this model, 'Affectively-Attuned Change Management' presents as a conceptualisation in which principals' intrapersonal and interpersonal emotional competencies are brought to bear on collectively-mediated transformational activity. Intrapersonal emotional competencies are assigned into two themes; 'Foundations' and 'Agency'. The competencies within 'Foundations' generate the personal impetus providing for the moral and ethical basis for change and comprise three affective capacities; 'Influence of Life-story', 'Values as Foundational' and 'Possessing Emotional Self-Regulation'. The competencies within 'Agency' in which principals' affective acumen and capacity to sustain provide for their personal mobilisation for change, comprise the three affective capacities; 'Capacity to Build Trust', 'Problem Solving' and 'Developing Resilience'.

Interpersonal emotional competencies are similarly assigned into two themes; 'Connections' and 'Synergy'. The competencies within 'Connections' generate the collective impetus which provides the basis of a climate of authentic collegiality and comprise the three affective capacities; 'Relationship-Building', 'Communicating Effectively' and 'Managing Conflict'. Finally, the competencies within 'Synergy' in which principals' capacity to energise and empower others, providing for collective mobilisation for change, comprise three affective capacities; 'Impact of Leadership Style', 'Contextualising Decision-Making' and 'Artful Change-Management'.

Though not completely cyclical, interconnectedness within the model is demonstrated both by the series of arrows beginning with 'Foundations' and culminating in 'Synergy' as well as presenting related features as standing on the same disc. These features will be further developed in employing the model to answer the research questions, next.

Answering the research questions

Sub-question 1: The emotional practice

How do principals characterise the emotional dimensions of their school leadership work?

Characterisation

The model presented in Figure 8.1 represents a synopsis of the findings presented as a graphical conceptualisation. Behind this synthesis lies the shared experience of 182 respondent principals and in terms of characterisation, their narrative demonstrated a range of features relevant to answering the central line of enquiry. Firstly, though interviewees were understandably apt to lose focus on a particular question and speak to their enthusiasms, respondents in general fully comprehended the issues and remained on theme. The principals' narrative was also characterised by a distinct association with their 'lifeworld' and though many were at ease in responding in the abstract, a significant number of survey commentaries and many more elements of interviewee commentary were exemplified by reference to personal and professional life.

There was also evidence of fluency and a willingness to engage. Each interview and focus group exceeded its allotted recording time by around 20 minutes, not including preliminary conversations and *post hoc* discussions, equally rich in dialogue around the topic. In all forums, principals' repeated articulation of emotionality as rooted in their moral agency emerged as a significant theme with the 'good of the students', 'taking care of people' and 'improving the school' cited frequently. Such a recurrence supports employing the theme 'Foundations' as a starting point for an interpretation of the model presented in Figure 8.1.

Glimpses of spirituality also emerged, though it was usually given as underpinning a set of personal values and not as an overt practice or in any way evangelical. The level of candour and evidence of considered perspective on this deeply subjective and personal

topic was also particularly evident. Principals shared some highly personal insights and features of their lives which enriched the commentary but also pointed to a need for a 'safe space' for such narratives, as expressed by some.

The commentary demonstrated school leaders' use of humour, with self-deprecation and irony appearing at many elements of the narrative. Respondents also expressed gratitude for the opportunity to reflect-upon and respond to the issues raised in the survey and there was evidence that even completing the questionnaire proved cathartic for some.

Thus, while it may be concluded that respondent principals are eager and proficient in articulating the complexities and subtleties of their work-related emotionality, it is equally the case that they rarely get the opportunity. Participants thus used this study to share comprehensive, detailed and personal insights, analysis of which offer an enhanced, qualitative understanding of this under-researched aspect of their practice.

The Emotional Dimensions of Principalship

The structured and honest approach to uncovering the themes and sub-themes embedded within the data support a contention that the dimensions of the emotional practice identified within the affectively-attuned change-management synthesis are both real and important to the respondent school leaders. It is equally the case, however, that the focus on collaboratively-mediated change-management adopted for this study necessarily limited the range of affective dimensions presented in Figure 8.1.

Principals do not speak in themes or sub-themes. These dimensions were elicited from what emerged as a comprehensive, complex and rich narrative generously shared by busy school leaders. The emotional dimensions presented in Figure 8.1 are not experienced as distinct from each other and a profound degree of interconnectedness exists, not alone

among the dimensions themselves, but also with contextual factors such as the relentless waves of policy demands, significant social change and the impact of successive cuts to resources in Irish schools.

Sub-question 1 sought to discover how principals characterise the emotional dimensions of their work and analysis of their narrative and numerical feedback therefore demonstrates that they:

- Fully comprehended the issues and remained on theme
- Exemplified their narrative by reference to personal and professional life
- Provided evidence of fluency and a willingness to engage
- Repeatedly articulated emotionality as rooted in their moral agency
- Provided limited evidence of the influence of spirituality
- Responded with candour and considered perspective
- Employed humour in their responses
- Expressed gratitude for the opportunity to reflect-upon and respond to the issues raised
- Provided a set of data from which dimensions of the emotional practice could be identified within the affectively-attuned change-management synthesis, and,
- Demonstrated that a profound degree of interconnectedness exists, not alone among the dimensions of the model themselves, but also with the range of contextual factors impacting on their schools

The emotional landscape of contemporary school leadership, while presenting as a compartmentalised framework of competencies and domains in the conceptual model of affectively-attuned change-management, manifests as intensely complex and challenging in the lifeworld of the principal. It may also be the case as argued by Harris (2007: 34), that

such ‘dynamic disequilibrium’ equally sets the stage for the promotion of learning and change – that being disturbed acts as a catalyst for new learning to occur and this perspective has important implications for the leadership of change, discussed next.

Sub-question 2: Association with change-management

How do principals’ emotional competencies emerge as being associated with their management of collaboratively-mediated change in their schools?

The uncovering of the twelve sub-themes identified within the model presented in Figure 8.1 presents the challenge of identifying association between these factors and collaboratively-mediated change-management. While such linkage has been affirmed in the literature and in particular in the collaborative work of Leithwood with others (Leithwood and Beatty, 2008, Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006, Leithwood and Seashore-Louis, 2012), evidence is also found from within the data and 90.25% of principals agreed or strongly agreed with the survey statement ‘I have to use my emotional intelligence because if I don’t use it, I’ll get nowhere with school improvement’.

This study set out to discover association, not to *prove* the existence of direct linkage between the emotional competencies of the principal and the development of effective action for school improvement. The emergence of a coherent conceptual model from within the data nonetheless demonstrates, I submit, the existence of a plausible chain of association linking emotional dimensions of the school leader’s foundational motivating forces, the mobilisation of capacities for personal sustainability and interpersonal connection and, ultimately, the generation of synergies for collective action across the school.

Association between principals' emotional competencies and shared school enhancement efforts is dealt-with from a variety of perspectives in the literature. For example, Leithwood and Seashore-Lewis (2012: 37) assert that instructional leadership, shared leadership and trust in the principal have the combined potential to increase student learning. Participant principals' characterisation of trust as an essentially affective phenomenon points to an expansion of the Leithwood and Seashore-Lewis trust-components into a distinctly relational dimension within respondents' settings at least. Such an affectively nuanced characterisation of trust from a respondent perspective resonates with the 'human capital' foundations of educational leadership and is revealed in the tensions emerging in the neo-liberalised policy context wherein:

Individuals struggle with identities in a new managerial context – seeking to retain personal meaning and connectedness in the face of colonisation of the life-world while simultaneously surviving in an increasingly competitive work environment (Lynch et al., 2012: 110)

Harris (2007: 20), while declaring that 'there is no desire to make spurious links between the focus on emotions and pupil outcomes', nonetheless makes a case for the acknowledgement of emotional literacy as an essential ingredient in what she calls 'third wave' school improvement efforts. If the first wave comprised 'one size fits all' organisational change efforts and the second coupled such organisational change with classroom level change, then the third wave represented tailor-made school development focussed on:

...building capacity, developing collaborative school cultures and improving teaching, learning, enquiry and pupil outcomes (ibid: 20).

Contrasting with Leithwood and Seashore-Lewis, Harris (ibid: 20) sees no hard evidence of a direct correlation between emotional factors and pupil outcomes but is, like many survey and interview respondents, convinced that school emotional resources and

conditions are likely to have played their own part in helping schools to improve their examination results. Specifically, she cites two British ‘third wave’ projects, [‘Improving the Quality of Education for All’ and the ‘OCTET Project’], which introduced an emotional component into the ‘mix’ of interventions and concluded that:

Teachers found this component particularly helpful in thinking through how to creatively mobilise and engage colleagues and pupils in change efforts (ibid: 20).

Locating affective factors as a ‘component of the mix’ and ‘playing a part’ resonates with the perspective of many respondent principals in acknowledging a place for emotionality in whole-school change efforts but frequently arguing against its centrality, particularly when set in opposition to, or superseding, cognitive/rational considerations.

Sub-question 2 sought to discover how principals’ emotional competencies are associated with collaboratively mediated change and analysis of their narrative and numerical feedback demonstrates that:

- Principals overwhelmingly agree that they have to use their emotional intelligence, in the broadest sense, to achieve ‘whole school’ mediated change
- The emergence of a coherent conceptual model from within the data demonstrates the existence of a plausible chain of association linking emotional dimensions of the school leader’s foundational motivating forces, the mobilisation of capacities for personal sustainability and interpersonal connection and, ultimately, the generation of synergies for collective action across the school
- While no direct correlation between emotional factors and examination results is claimed, respondents affirm that positive emotional resources create the conditions for collaboration and are thus likely to have helped improve the educational experience and outcomes for students

- Principals acknowledge a role for emotionality in whole-school change efforts but arguments against its centrality are also presented

Sub-question 3: The professional practice

How can attunement to emotion be integrated with rationality into principals' leadership of whole-school transformation efforts?

The pragmatic underpinnings of this study set out to 'enable us to make appropriate decisions, take effective action and successfully get things done' (Plowright, 2011: 184). In service to these aims, this project was primarily designed at enhancing our understanding of the affective factors at work in the change-management process and to seek to apply these insights to practice. The notion that 'understanding precedes action – and geography maps the course' (Wurman, 2014) sets the stage for a mapping of our insights into affectively-attuned change-management as framed in Figure 8.1 onto the life-world of the principal and such applicability will be presented in two distinct formats. Firstly, as one of my tasks in the JMB is to present key elements of a training programme for newly appointed principals, a set of semi-structured reflections based on the sub-theme findings of this study will be presented below. Secondly, an actionable heuristic device based on a theory-of-action (Argyris and Schon, 1974) and which will support the integration of rational and emotional elements of problem-solving will be presented in the concluding chapter, next.

The summarised findings of the chapters on intra and inter-personal emotional competencies can support the presentation of a set of twelve insights related to the model outlined in Figure 8.1, in the form of recommendations which could prove of significant value to early-stage, or indeed any-stage, principals. I envisage a presentation of this

study's outcomes supporting a focussed discussion on their wider implications and such a framework of understandings is presented as Figure 8.2:

Figure 8.2: A framework of reflections emerging from the study

<p>1. Influence of Life Story</p> <p>Your life story informs ways in which you negotiate the ethical and social landscape of your school and will act as an important resource in your leadership.</p>	<p>2. Values as Foundational</p> <p>Your capacity to translate values into action is foundational to your leadership and will connect to your emotionality, especially when your values are threatened.</p>
<p>3. Possessing Emotional Self-Regulation</p> <p>Emotional self-regulation begins with self-awareness and only then your capacity for self-control in which you will develop a capacity to express and suppress your emotional displays as needed.</p>	<p>4. Capacity to Build Trust</p> <p>Your capacity to build trust with people is essentially relational and will be underpinned by your own personal authenticity.</p>
<p>5. Problem-Solving</p> <p>Your approaches to problem-solving can be enhanced by pausing to creatively use 'incubation' and 'inspiration' to resolve the often ill-structured problems of school life.</p>	<p>6. Developing Resilience</p> <p>Resilience is given top priority by your fellow principals and you will therefore need to find sources of emotional and practical support for sustainability.</p>
<p>7. Relationship-Building</p> <p>Relationship-building is a key task in establishing collegiality in your school and you will need to both care <i>for</i> and care <i>about</i> your teachers.</p>	<p>8. Communicating Effectively</p> <p>Your ability to communicate effectively will demand that you focus first on listening and that you think carefully about how, not what, you communicate.</p>

<p>9. Managing Conflict</p> <p>In conflict situations you should distinguish between task challenges and relational challenges and use your affective awareness to draw-in people or hold-out people as appropriate.</p>	<p>10. Impact of Leadership Style</p> <p>You will have a dominant leadership style ('democratic' ranked highest among your peers) but you will also need to be able to migrate among a range of approaches as the situation demands.</p>
<p>11. Contextualising Decision-Making</p> <p>You will need to become aware of your school's national, local and in-school environments and make decisions informed by this knowledge.</p>	<p>12. Artful Change-Management</p> <p>Successful change-management is an ensemble of arts and will demand a highly reflective approach to your practice as well as attunement to your school's emotional ecology.</p>

Although presenting as a set of normative statements, such reflections are nonetheless grounded in the perspective of peer professionals and may, at least, support a helpful degree of reflection and focussed conversation in support of affective capacity-building for new and, indeed, experienced school leaders.

Sub-question 3 sought to discover how attunement to emotion can be integrated with rationality into principal's leadership and the following conclusions were arrived-at:

- The aim of this project was to enhance our understanding of the affective factors at work in the change-management process in schools and to seek to apply these insights to practice

- The notion that ‘understanding precedes action’ demands that emerging insights into affectively-attuned change-management are to be shared and comprehended in the first instance, before considering their direct applicability
- The summarised findings on intra and inter-personal emotional competencies can support the presentation of a set of twelve insights related to the conceptual model and supporting a focussed, reflective discussion for school leaders on their wider implications
- An actionable heuristic, based on integrating emotion with cognition into principals’ behaviour will be presented in the final chapter

Answering the central research question

‘How are Irish secondary school principals’ self-reported emotional competencies associated with collaboratively-mediated change-management within their schools?’

Social processes are rarely linear and the theoretical model presented in Figure 8.1 is framed as a set of five interconnected progressions focussed on the central phenomenon of affectively-attuned change-management. Each quadrant originates in a theme elicited from the data and culminates in a consequence essential to collaboratively-mediated change. Linkage between each aspect of the construct is emphasised by their standing on the same disc and reflects the real-time life-world of the school in that principals will remain generally unaware of which quadrant they are operating within when advocating for and working towards positive transformation.

The interdependency of each theme in achieving the goal of collaboratively-mediated change-management can be demonstrated by considering the consequences of its absence. The term ‘Foundations’ was chosen to reflect a set of dimensions establishing ‘self’ as the locus of control and if such underpinnings as values and emotional self-control rooted in

reflection on personal history are weak or absent, it is reasonable to predict that the outcome could present as ‘outward compliance only’ or unsustainable reform.

It is equally unlikely that the social world of the school community will engage in realising the leader’s moral purpose without, for example, shared trust or the capacity to resolve and sustain through difficulties. It is the personal agency of the leader which bridges vision and human connection and, in its absence, others with perhaps quite different motivations are likely to fill the agency or power vacuum.

‘Connection’ emphasises the human side of organisational life, the centrality of relationships and the pivotal importance of a sense of community to co-operative action. It is unlikely that motivation for collaborative action would emerge in the absence of relationship or effective communication and that unresolved conflict would lead to stagnation at best.

Creation and maintenance of synergies at staff level require, as revealed in the data, the deployment of contextualised, artful and appropriate leadership strategies in bringing a particular initiative to completion. Their absence will not alone lead to implementation failure but also to the principal becoming the target of teachers’ internalised negative emotions as earlier asserted by Hargreaves (2004b: 296).

The central research question may now be addressed by arriving at a set of five conclusions emerging from analysis of the data, subsequent theoretical development and consideration of the research sub-questions:

1. Irish voluntary secondary school principals demonstrate an acute awareness of the role played by emotions in their leadership practice and are eager and proficient in articulating the complexities and subtleties of the affective dimensions of their work.

2. Respondent principals unequivocally agree that there exists an association between their emotional competencies and their successful management of collaboratively-mediated change. Analysis of their numerical and narrative feedback identifies these competencies which emerge as a coherent framework of four distinct but interconnected dimensions.
3. A distinction may be drawn between those emotional competencies revealed in the data which are related to the intrapersonal and the interpersonal domains. The intrapersonal competencies are associated with ethical, self-directed living and act as a bridge between the principal's foundational values and the social world of the school. The interpersonal competencies support the establishment of a relational culture upon which authentic collegiality is founded and underpin the principal's artful achievement of subsequent collaboratively-mediated transformational activity.
4. In terms of consequences, this conceptualisation reveals that principals' intrapersonal emotional competencies are associated with the emergence of a *personal impetus* for action and subsequent *personal mobilisation* of inner resources, and that their interpersonal emotional competencies are associated with a *collective impetus* for action and subsequent *collective mobilisation* of resources for transformational activity.
5. Understanding precedes action and the insights emerging from this conceptualisation support an enhanced understanding of the role of affective attunement in collaboratively-mediated change-management upon which subsequent reflection and application may be based.

Implications for practice

While there was overwhelming agreement amongst survey respondents that 'principals need support with the emotional side of their work from the very beginning', no consensus emerged around which features of the 'emotional side' in particular were required.

Principals nonetheless affirmed a need for awareness-raising relating to the role of emotionality in leadership but were divided on whether any intervention could go further

and ‘teach’ emotional competencies such as self-awareness, resilience or empathy. This lack of clarity and consensus around the question of emotional ‘teachability’ carries implications for the design of interventions and, indeed, whether to intervene in the first instance.

Implications for Interventions

As discussed earlier, one of the key annual tasks of the JMB is to provide induction training for school leaders, not alone principals but also deputies, chairpersons and members of boards of management in the sector. It is perhaps reasonable that expanding hitherto transactional tuition interventions to include presentations on affective awareness might be considered a key implication for practice emerging from the present study.

Spindler and Biott, however, counsel the adoption of a wider perspective:

Training is likely to have positive outcomes where it is seen as only a small part of a broader framework of support that takes into account the different perspectives of school leaders at different career stages. (Spindler and Biott, 2005: 134)

If the present project emphasises one particular developmental need however, it is for career-long, safe and affectively-articulate peer-delivered dialogic support, a model supported by Spindler and Biott in the same piece:

Reformers must acknowledge that it is the resilience and emotional engagement of principals and teachers rather than training programmes, which helps them to go beyond the call of duty when they are being subjected to relentless imposed change and to the ratcheting-up of targets. Instead of emphasising accountability measures and common sets of technical competencies for all principals, the focus should be on how to engender and support inter-generational learning in local districts. (Spindler and Biott, 2005: 134)

Survey, and particularly interview, commentaries strongly affirmed the supportive character of principal-gatherings, even though more than one survey respondent

characterised such encounters as ‘moan-fests’. Principals in the Irish voluntary secondary school setting have access to a range of opportunities for meeting one another and a frequently-cited by-product of these, usually agenda-driven, events is the opportunity to engage with one’s peers in a collegial and ‘safe’ environment. That such encounters fulfil the requirements for ‘inter-generational learning’ is, however, doubtful. I cannot improve on Spindler and Biott’s identification of principals’ developmental needs within groupings constituted with this work in mind:

1. Allowing veterans to connect with the concerns of new principals, not in order to tell them how to do things, but to help bring perspective to current issues;
2. Embracing emotional dimensions of starting out and keeping going in demanding circumstances, and,
3. Making connections between repertoires of accumulated capital as part of the reservoir from which all principals can derive sustenance (ibid: 134)

Thus, while doubtless some pairings and small groups of principals have conspired to construct *ad hoc* relationships achieving these aims, the majority of school leaders in the Irish voluntary secondary school setting have no access to such a resource. JMB and other engagements are either too agenda-heavy, mixed-participation (e.g. including deputies or board chairpersons), instructional, transactional, faith-centered, or short-lived to provide for the deeper, trusting and long-term relationships required of effective and transformational mutual support for principals. The challenge therefore, lies in clarifying our thinking around such developmental needs, researching practice in other countries and seeking to build a fit-for-purpose model of appropriate, workable and acceptable professional networks supporting the long-term sustainability of individuals and, indeed, of voluntary secondary school headship in general into the future.

That said, there nonetheless remains a distinct role for awareness-raising, training, workshop discussion and targeted interventions around the affective landscape of

principalship. I have, over the course of this research, built a series of such interventions around ‘principal voice’ as emerging from the various data-gathering exercises of this project. That these presentations and semi-structured discussions receive much more positive evaluations than my earlier models founded solely on literature extracts, points yet again to the validation of principal-voice by principals and reinforces the premise on which both the sub-theme framework of reflections (Figure 8.2) and the professional network ideas are founded.

The dearth of expertise, relevant literature and support materials around emotionality in school leadership in Ireland, if not also elsewhere, presents as a challenge to continually develop and refine awareness-raising and other interventions catalysing conversation and reflection on this foundational yet neglected aspect of the role. Dissemination of the outcomes of the present research is intended to become a focus for the next phase of JMB activity in this respect and will hopefully continue to impact on practice into the future.

CHAPTER NINE

REFLECTIVE ACCOUNT

Introduction

This final chapter examines the successes and limitations of the project, recommendations for future research and plans for dissemination.

Successes and limitations

Positive achievements

Generating a new conversation within the sector

While the emotional intelligence construct has increased wide-ranging awareness of the role of emotional competencies and opened-up a debate around ‘soft skills’ achieving ‘hard targets’, (McWilliam and Hatcher, 2007: 236), such a conversation within the Irish setting has so far been limited to the informal sharing of craft knowledge, occasional conference presentations and unpublished research activity, largely focussed on the primary school sector.

While not in any way evangelical about the topic or blind to the need for professional balance, I have nonetheless been actively seeking-out opportunities to begin a conversation with our principals around emotionality, its linkage with school culture and development, support-seeking and affective sustainability in challenging times. In particular, I have been feeding-back to our members their generous survey and face-to-face narrative on the subject and have sought-out speaking and writing opportunities at Annual Conference and workshops, the JMB Education Conference, training events, AMCSS/JMB publications and school in-service opportunities with teachers. While, inevitably, such a theme has become known as ‘Michael’s *thing*’, the subject is now no longer ‘new’ in our field and I am looking forward to continuing to support and promote such conversations as well as publishing in both academic and professional literature.

Deployment of an iterative data-gathering approach

Though in no way unique, (Moreland (2007: 146) refers to it as ‘an evolutionary approach to interview schedules’), the sequential nature of the data-gathering and analysis strategies has successfully stood-up to the vagaries of the subject matter throughout the project. The open-minded foundations of the Grounded Theory approach to analysis have served the research well as initial focus group findings gave principal-voice to support the survey commentary which in turn informed the direction for much of the interview narrative. Similarly, the dialogue between gathered-data and literature-as-data was maintained and enriched the progression of both analysis and synthesis as the research story unfolded.

Formulating applicability

The framework of reflections emerging from the data and presented in Figure 8.2 represents a normative set of separate and distinct recommendations for consideration and action. In order to better draw together emotionality with rationality in day-to-day practice, the following integrative approach may also prove helpful.

The overarching conceptualisation of affectively-attuned change-management is a suspiciously hierarchical, linear and causal model. In real life however, the twin processes of feedback and learning add complexity and are required for effective action in bringing about school enhancement.

Argyris and Schön (1974) developed a series of abstract representations about how people produce the consequences they intend. The theorists used the term ‘theory-of-action’ to replace the terms ‘skills and strategy’ and identified that people have an ‘espoused theory’ and also a ‘theory-in-use’:

People have a 'theory-in-use', a kind of executive program that actually directs their actions; but, they also have an 'espoused theory', a theory-of-action that they talk about or write down if asked to explain their actions (Smith, 1983: 51).

It is unreasonable to expect that overburdened principals will retreat from their roles to comprehend and discover how to implement models of effective change-management across their practice. What is feasible however is that practitioners begin to develop their own continuing theory-of-action under real-time conditions. It means that the professional must learn to develop micro-theories of action that, when organised into a pattern, represent an effective theory of practice (Argyris and Schon, 1974: 157). The aim is not to set out yet another effectiveness-enhancing formula but to identify emotionally-attuned cognitive learning strategies which can set a pattern of successful behaviours.

Heller (1982: 86) identifies that bridging the gap between insight and action and interrupting automatic behaviour patterns are two of the hardest tasks in creating effective learning. He proposes a three-component heuristic, or 'mini-program' which can be used to replace a current behaviour pattern:

1. A 'flag' which alerts us to when the heuristic should be used
2. A 'recognition' of what is really happening in the situation, and,
3. A 'prescription' of how to act in the situation

The heuristic can be very powerful because the individual can go beyond the recognition of ineffective or counter-productive behaviour to follow through with more effective action (Smith, 1983: 58).

I am proposing that a heuristic such as Heller's which involves assigning meaning, planning and only then enacting may be rendered significantly more effective if it also incorporates the affective at the levels of situation recognition, meaning-making and

planned action. If this study demonstrates anything, it is the pervasive nature and need for a recognition of the important role played by emotion in decision-making and action at every level of the real-time lifeworld of the school. Incorporating an intelligence around feelings, one's own and others', into micro-theories of action thus has the potential to enrich and add power to the mental models principals might use to support effective decision-making. Such a heuristic is presented as '*Situation – Sense – Say*':

Situation:

Not all scenarios demand deeply insightful responses and, with practice, school leaders will develop discernment skills allowing for an awareness of when to interrupt their automatic behaviour patterns and slow-down to deploy a more situationally appropriate response.

Sense:

Moving beyond the cognitive to incorporate emotional understandings of a situation is at the heart of the affective-attunement construct, though this is not to polarise either dimension as both are essential. At the early stages of practice however, using two sentences, one of 'thinking' and a second of 'feeling', will support the emergence of a more holistic and appropriate response at the action stage.

Say:

Principals, though always active, will sometimes declare 'I don't do things, I get things done'. They achieve results, immediate and longer-term, largely by effective advocacy. In situations such as staff meetings demanding intensively reflective and collaborative processes, what the principal says and how he or she says it, is assigned great significance by staff and impacts on eventual outcomes. For principals, therefore, saying *is* acting.

To demonstrate, a principal with a teaching staff sensitised to externally-mandated curricular change imposed at a time of pay-cuts might begin with the following heuristic at a meeting:

When Demands and Capacity Conflict

Situation: When imposed compliance with policy threatens staff cohesion

Sense: *Think:* My teachers agree cognitively with the need for curricular change but there exist significant barriers to implementation

Feel: Threatened and angry people entrench – imposing change now will lead to cycles of resistance

Say: ‘Let’s use this entire term simply to have conversations. I will ensure we get the facts we need and we’ll worry more about getting this change right rather than on time’.

Such contextualisation is essential as individuals within the school are best placed to make judgements about how to resolve its problems. Incorporating an awareness of emotionality adds to the power of such analysis and is more likely to avert ineffective behaviours such as direct, unconsidered policy compliance or complete opposition.

Exploring contexts but keeping the recession from dominating the discourse

Though the impacts of the economic recession in Ireland have necessarily been given attention in this research, I was constantly aware of its potential to submerge the more fundamental and perennial factors influencing the emotional landscape of principalship across both time and jurisdiction. The extent of Ireland’s financial collapse became apparent in 2008 and we have had seven ‘austerity budgets’ across the timeframe of this research project. My strategy was to allow for ‘venting’ of the recession story at each contact point but within a broader conversation, to give the narrative due attention during analysis and to identify specific responses emerging as illustrative of more universal factors such as core values, personal resilience and empathic understanding.

Enhanced Practice

Three key outcomes of this work have positively influenced my professional life:

Firstly, as the JMB's Research & Development Officer, I needed to build on the experience and skill-set of the educational researcher begun at Masters level and, in both the qualitative and quantitative domains, such skill development has represented a highly positive outcome for me.

Secondly, my in-practice activities of advising, speaking, writing and representing have all been brought to a new level with the increased confidence, expanded vocabulary and broader perspective gained from undertaking this research.

Finally, my interactions with school leaders have been enriched by a greater comprehension of the spectrum of principals' outlooks on their role, better targeting of their developmental needs in terms of support and training in this domain and, as already discussed, by the surfacing of a feature of principalship not yet fully acknowledged as fully legitimate within the professional discourse in Ireland at this time.

Limitations

Personal perspectives and the potential for bias

The task of revealing the potential for bias demands an uncovering of the personal context, one's own role, preoccupations, assumptions and values, as articulated by Wright in an extract from her journal as she carried out Masters research on reflective practice in principalship in Alberta:

'I am no longer a detached observer. First-hand interactions with these principals have naturally become more involved and emotional, making it challenging to reflect on the process that I actively participate in. Ongoing tension exists as I negotiate being a principal and researcher, and being an insider and outsider'.
(Wright, 2009: 263)

In terms of my personal conviction, as a principal I maintained a belief in the centrality of emotional adeptness in the exercise of effective school leadership. My assumption that this belief would be shared across the spectrum of practitioners was quickly challenged by contrasting perspectives emerging from the principals' narrative. One outcome of undertaking this research has therefore been a realisation of the wider than anticipated spectrum of stance on both emotion and leadership style among this cohort of principals.

While my actions as a researcher have been strongly underpinned by the ethical provisions outlined in Chapter 4, I have been conscious of my own emotionality at each stage of the process and can point to a range of particular feelings experienced at different points:

Gratitude – at the high level of engagement by my peers at the various data-gathering phases

Relief – that principals were providing well-articulated and relevant commentary

Surprise – at some of the stances taken by school leaders and surprised at my own surprise that this should be the case

Anxiety – that a coherent presentation of the research-story might not emerge

Empathy – even sympathy for the plight of overwhelmed principals at this time, and,

Hope – for a useful outcome to the investment made by subjects and researcher alike

In terms of my approach to interpretation, this project essentially became an attempt at meaning-making of others' meaning-making. Such a layering of interpretation was unlikely to present in highly replicable form and its correspondence with the phenomena under scrutiny must therefore stand or fall on the integrity of the research process. The likelihood of bias was nonetheless very real and can be uncovered at a range of points, including:

Case selection for the focus group – a ‘judgement sample’ (Deming, 1990: 31) specifically selecting for factors such as gender, age, experience and school-type but nonetheless not including anyone likely to be critical of the focus of the research.

Questionnaire design – selective focus group transcript elements were used to frame the survey which addressed the research questions but which also betrayed a partiality in favour of ‘softer’ approaches to school management.

Homosociability (Grummell et al., 2009: 333) – aligning with personally held dispositions in which I affirmed (with words such as ‘yes’, ‘right’ and ‘of course’) more affectively rich interview feedback than the transactional.

Interviewee selection – another judgement sample and controlling for demographic, school type and leadership style factors, but I deliberately opted for ‘talkers’ and avoided the taciturn or ‘quiet’.

Value judgements during interviews – beyond the affirmation of emotionally attuned approaches to principalship, I also (inadvertently) led people toward conclusions I wanted, for example:

MR: *‘And so it’s fair to say that you’re aware of the so-called softer side of your work?’*

and

MR: *‘Right. I’ve heard you use the word ‘people’ about five or six times in that little element of our conversation, so would you describe yourself as a ‘people-person’?’*

Power relationships in interviews – while my role in JMB is largely one of service to members, I nonetheless have, within the profession, a level of national recognition and status within the organisation. Both the reasonably high return-rate of completed questionnaires and the absence of outright refusals to participate in face-to-face engagements pointed to a need to be aware of the power dynamic and the potential for reactivity in conversation settings in particular.

This awareness of threats to trustworthiness within the process has been present throughout the project and, given that ‘bias is likely to be endemic’ in interview settings particularly (Bush, 2007: 98), the existence and naming of such threats does not necessarily detract from an underlying integrity but may, in fact, support a more authentic standard of reflexivity, particularly given the essentially subjective nature of the research focus itself.

Non-use of inventories and limited triangulation

Literature-as-data aside, this project relied on principal voice as its primary source of information and, while it reflects a stance developed in a range of books on the topic (Crawford, 2009, Harris, 2007), it differs from a number of dissertations (e.g. Reed, 2005) or journal articles (e.g. Hackett and Hortman, 2008) in being largely qualitative in approach. This exploration may nonetheless have been supported or challenged by the employment of emotional intelligence and leadership inventories and also by incorporating the perspective of teachers or other stakeholders in triangulating against the self-reflective commentary or claims of the principal. As discussed in Chapter 4, I avoided using inventories on the basis of experience, their trustworthiness and alignment with the qualitative paradigm of the project, while triangulating the claims of a principal interviewee against, for example, his or her staff or board chairperson, would have presented serious challenges to my ethical framework and the avoidance of harm to subjects.

Not opening-up the gender debate

The noticeable homogeneity of Irish voluntary secondary principals in terms of social class and race leaves age, experience and gender as the key remaining differentiating personal factors self-identified within both survey and interview. Whatever about the influence of longevity of professional experience, there exists a definite discourse around leadership

emotionality and gender (Cliffe, 2011, Blackmore, 2004) and this remains to be comprehended by subsequent research in the Irish setting.

Substantive theory?

The generation of substantive theory has remained a goal of this research which, as a concept, presents as far from uncomplicated (Charmaz (2006: 123) calls it ‘slippery’). My background in the natural sciences has left an ‘if – then’ legacy of conceptualising theory which was never destined to characterise a synthesis of emotionality in principalship. That said, the construct of affectively-attuned change-management presents a coherent framework for conceptualising emotionality in school leadership and its greatest strength – that of being grounded in the data – offers plausibility to the model and potential for further exploration, enrichment and applicability.

In addition, certain process elements have been well supported by the adoption of a GT approach to analysis and I believe the study demonstrates a number of characteristics of pragmatic and interpretivist theorising such as significant degrees of reflexivity, the imaginative framing of emerging concepts and an attempt at meaning-making as revealed in the relationship between researcher and respondent.

Future research

The data collected within this research project alone could support the development of at least two other, quite different, dissertations and researchers are just beginning to mine the narrative that emerges when school leaders reflect-upon and share their emotional selves. Linking principals’ emotional competencies to the work of collaborative change-management represents but a single aspect of the affective landscape of headship. If I were to expand on this foundation, I would be drawn less to the school perspective and more towards the personhood of the leader. Specifically, our understanding of the alignment

between leader as person and leadership as process could be enriched by deeper explorations of meaning-making and motivation through a wider range of lenses:

Life History

Though not unique to school principals, a person's location on the multiple simultaneous trajectories of, among other factors, age, family history, career path, life story, financial status, personal relationships and health profile all conspire to create the personhood of the principal, from which he or she is enhanced or diminished in their multiple simultaneous roles as school leader.

Siting this story amongst the dozens of equivalent life histories in the staffroom alone opens up a treasury of potential insight into the dynamics of leadership and followership, identity and motivation in the theatre of the school.

Gender

That the experience and expression of emotion is gendered has been axiomatic for far too long. There exists real scope for an exploration of masculinities-and-caring as well as femininities-and-leading and the school is a perfect crucible for such a study. In affective terms at least, the barriers between men and women's emotional lives have moved beyond porous to a far more meshed and mirrored commonality – a phenomenon in need of deeper investigation and, indeed, celebration.

Spirituality

An axiom suggests that 'fish don't feel wet in the water' and the relative silence surrounding principals' articulation of their spirituality may be due to life-long immersion factors rather than an absence of its impact on their lives and roles.

The opposite may also be the case – many leaders in denominational schools may be experiencing significant dissonance between their inner, private religious conviction where it exists and the pronouncements on ethos they must make as part of their job.

Whatever the truth behind the faith-story in school leadership, it merits serious attention if only to uncover the harmonies and conflicts with school ethos, the foundational origins of value-sets and the impact of such factors on the emotional health of school leaders, whatever their state of spiritual development.

Storytelling

Exploring accounts of critical incidents in this study has, for me, opened-up a new understanding and respect for the school leader's story, an almost daily feature of my advisory work with principals. Though reasonably well developed in the international literature, no significant exploration of principals' stories has emerged in the Irish context – a source of insight rich in potential as there may well be cultural factors at play which add layers to narratives not found universally.

Dissemination and personal outcomes

Dissemination

During his welcoming address at the All Ireland Conference for Doctoral Researchers in Education in May 2012, Dr. Paddy Walsh of Queens University Belfast said that there was a wealth of top quality research 'going to waste' every year and urged participants to have their work published once, or even before, the dissertation function of their theses had been achieved.

My chapter in the AMCSS edited book '*Catholic Schools – Faith in Our Future*' (Redmond, 2012) represented an exploratory foray into publishing some of my initial research findings to a wider audience. The piece was well received and, along with

Conference reports and workshops developed from the data, represents an attempt to share both narrative and implications with the professional audience who contributed to them.

The leadership of JMB has already committed to publishing a book on this study.

AMCSS/JMB publishes books on an *ad hoc* basis, producing an average of one per year, along with other booklets on specific themes relevant to school leadership and management. Doctoral theses do not necessarily migrate smoothly into literature for a broader readership and I anticipate taking at least a year to re-write and nuance a final outcome.

I undertook this doctoral programme to enhance my professional practice and not to become an academic. That said, I feel it would represent a good intermediate step if I were to submit a paper on some key aspect(s) of the study to an academic journal in Ireland or, more likely, in the UK. This attempt at academic publication will be challenging but if accepted, may support subsequent development of the more substantial project of producing a book.

Personal outcomes

I can still remember where I was when my prescribed reading for the OU Master's Programme provided this key '*Aha!*' moment:

‘... schools are emotional theatres par excellence. The headship in those institutions is therefore an emotional practice. The role of the teacher is grounded in emotion, shaped by emotion and acted out in an emotional context. Addressing these issues is essential if the development of leadership capability of head-teachers is to be effective’ (James and Vince, 2001 p.316).

Here was a ‘warrant’ for leading my schools in the manner I had been for the previous fourteen years! As I continued my reading around the topic, writing some assignments and

a literature review, I became much more reflective in my thinking and practice, saw some potential within both the subject and myself and eventually discussed the possibility of undertaking the Ed.D with my then OU Tutor.

Undertaking this project has therefore been a 'labour of love' and I have enjoyed both my engagement with the people who have supported this research as well as the academic challenges of comprehending the literature, analysing the data and the process of academic writing.

It is no exaggeration to expect that undertaking this doctoral study will extend my work-life. Few active principals can find the time or other resources to successfully complete a demanding research project at this level and I have been extraordinarily fortunate to have been seconded to the JMB from my school at a time when such a possibility became realistic. I see the doctoral qualification as a 'licence' to carry-out professional standard educational research in the future and expect that this aspect of my current role within the Secretariat may extend, both in terms of scope of activity and in its longevity.

Meanwhile the school leaders who comprise the membership of the JMB require multi-factored support, week-in, week-out and year on year. I hope and intend that the insights I have gained as a result of their sharing and my emerging understandings will produce a ripple effect, stimulating reflection and creating new conversations among school leaders in Ireland and elsewhere.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Letter to Focus Group Participants

15 Bellevue Lawn,
Delgany, Co. Wicklow
4th October 2010

Dear XXX,

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in the Focus Group meeting on Wednesday 20th October next. I really appreciate your taking the time to participate. This is part of my research for a Doctoral Thesis currently being undertaken with the Open University. The meeting will take place at Emmet House from 2.00pm for an hour or so. We'll have a light lunch available from 1.30pm.

The purpose of the focus group is to discuss your views and experience of the emotional landscape of principalship in schools. I hope it will also prove useful to you in sharing and perhaps clarifying issues around the affective elements of school leadership practice. I am particularly interested in the impact of 'critical incidents', whereby the emotional element of the principal's experience of an event (once-off or ongoing) led to subsequent reflection on, and change in, practice – you might like to think in advance about such an instance in your experience.

With your permission, the session will be audio-recorded which will enable me to represent more accurately the outcomes of the discussion. As this is a focus group meeting, information will be shared within the group. However, the outcomes of the discussion will be presented anonymously in the thesis; neither your school nor any individuals will be named. Only the group, the researcher and the thesis supervisor will be privy to the specific data that is collected.

The raw data will be stored on my computer, as an audio and/or text file. These will be held for 3 years to allow for the writing of a thesis and then destroyed. You may, at any time, withdraw from the study by simply indicating your intention to withdraw and without giving reason.

The research findings may be used in presentations and publications. If you require any further information or explanation, please contact me at michaelredmond@secretariat.ie

Once again, thank you for participating in what I'm sure will be a lively and interesting discussion.

Michael

Research Consent

I have read and understood the conditions under which I will participate in this focus group meeting and give my consent to be a participant and to have the discussion audio-recorded. I agree that any data contributed by me may be published.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 2: Focus Group Question Plan

A. Reconnaissance

General reflections on principalship as an emotional practice

1. Is there an emotional dimension to school principalship and, if so, how conscious are you of this on a day to day basis?
2. To what extent do you 'manage' your own emotions at work?
3. To what extent do you 'manage' others' emotions at work?
4. Can you recall and share an incident in which there was a clear link between your emotional experience and your management of a particular situation at school?
5. Was there subsequent reflection and any change in the way you operate as a principal?

Ireland's Recession

1. To what extent are the recession and cutbacks impacting on the emotional life of the principal?

Linkage with school improvement

1. Is there a place for the emotions in bringing about positive change in your school?
Please expand on this.
2. What, in your view, are the key emotional competencies principals need to lead their schools effectively?

Leadership Development

1. Should prospective and current school principals be given training around these emotional capacities? Please say why or why not.

Informing Methodologies

1. I intend sending a questionnaire to members in March and carrying-out interviews this time next year. Are there any key questions or topics you think I should explore in these investigations?
2. For triangulation, I'm not fully decided on my methods and I'd like your advice. I'm considering trying an Event Log, whereby a principal would record their emotional state over, say, two days. Might this have any value?
3. I'm also looking at interviewing only principals who have had a WSE so I can find supporting evidence of aspects of their leadership in the report. Is this realistic?

APPENDIX 3: Questionnaire Design Matrix

Line of Enquiry	Specific Topics	Question Number	Survey Question Wording
Levels of awareness and understanding among principals	The emotional practice	Section 6 Qs 1 - 4	<p>1. I mean there's a parent one minute, a staff member the next, then there's a kid the next - there's just such variety and there's so many emotions you're dealing with every day</p> <p>2. It's very demanding of principals - you're drawn into life stories which are intimately personal, very traumatic.. and positive listening is absolutely vital</p> <p>3. Well, you can only do so much and you try to step in while you can but I think it's the adults who take up most of my time</p> <p>4. Principal: I think your emotional response determines everything Interviewer: Everything? Principal: Everything</p>
	The personal challenge	Section 7 Qs 1 - 4	<p>1. I used to wake up at night-time and I'd spend two hours thinking about this, that and the other. I'm thinking about school...</p> <p>2. It's just constant...the large burden of administration from the Department, from the Board of Management and now the Trustees - it can actually subsume you and become all-consuming on every level Landscape of Secondary School Principalship</p> <p>3. You've to call upon a deep well from within and try to appear to have this public persona that's dealing with everything – that's perhaps one of the greatest demands emotionally</p> <p>4. When I became a principal, my family were at crucial stages and they have suffered because of it</p>
	Supports and survival	Section 8 Qs 1 – 4	<p>1. I'm learning to prioritise mentally so that my emotions survive the demands of the job</p> <p>2. Now I don't talk at home about school anymore, I tend just to talk to principals on the phone or whatever. I think even another principal is more valuable sometimes than your spouse because they understand what you're talking about</p> <p>3. The relationship with my deputy is vital because you've two people then looking out for the school and each other</p> <p>4. I need to have a regime – a physical regime in my day and I started that, I started to walk and that really helped me because I slept better</p>

Reflection on critical incidents	Maintaining objectivity	Section 10	1. ..so I heard it second-hand, which was the first mistake I made, and reacted emotionally rather than asking the people who reported it for written reports
	Getting 'worked-up' Reflection on outcomes	Qs 1 - 4	2. I suppose what did annoy me is that I got too worked-up over it and from my own experience I shouldn't 3. The outcome of my reflection on that incident was very sobering for me emotionally and, I suppose, again made me look at all my mechanisms, procedures and responses 4. On a bad day I have written it down, when I've had a really bad day I would write it down, because it helps me to reflect on it and see how could I do better? ... what was it here that made me feel so terrible? ... and how I can look at it in a different perspective?
Perceived linkage between emotional competencies and organisational development	Using EI-type strategies	Section 9	1. I have to use my emotional intelligence because if I don't use it, I'll get nowhere with school improvement
	Purposeful 'caring'	Qs 1 - 4	2. You've to be extremely positive towards the most minor thing that is being told to you, in the corridor, in the staffroom, in your office, and you have to give it your whole attention for that one person.. because they will come on board with whatever element of school improvement you want to pursue if you show respect for them 3. It's the smaller things that count - the way I deal with the staff on a day to day basis, 'cause every decision I make has some emotive response to it. And it's only because I facilitated a fundraiser for the gym or a debate and freed them-up - it's not actually about school improvement; that will follow
	Managing dissent		4. You can isolate the negative people, you know, where they realise that no matter what they say to you, it doesn't really affect you
	Impact of the Recession	Section 11	1. I just feel there's a lot more tension in school over the last couple of years and it's growing.. it's just constant..
		Qs 1 - 4	2. I think it's incumbent upon me now to try and generate a level of buoyancy and good morale in a way I've never had to before, so I can't appear in any way to be brought down by the current climate 3. For me, the lack of devolved responsibility in voluntary secondary schools is probably the biggest difficulty 4. ..and if a teachers spouse or partner has lost their job, I have to be aware of these things and how I can help, if I can give extra after school study or other additional work I do that..

‘Managing’ emotionality within self and others	Empathic understanding and trust Managing emotions	Section 12 Qs 1 - 4	1. I think empathy is an inherent part of my school relationships - it’s an emotional trust that builds-up between individuals and the principal. I think that that is really an essential dimension 2. Don’t know if I would normally use the verb ‘managing’ with emotions – I do try ‘containing’ emotions, trying to ‘segregate’ emotions, trying to have a cut off point 3. If someone had a problem with me about something I’d invite them into the office and we’d discuss it out and I’d feel worse after it usually! 4. I think relationships are at the heart of what we’re doing in life
Enhancing emotional self- awareness	Self- identification with a leadership style	Section 4 Q 1	1. Every principal utilises a range of styles and strategies. If, however, you were forced to choose, which category best reflects your overall leadership style? [category descriptors provided] 1. Coercive 2. Authoritative 3. Affiliative 4. Democratic 5. Pacesetting 6. Coaching
	Ranking emotional competencies	Section 14	Please indicate how important you believe the following emotional competencies are to the practice of principalship: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional self awareness • Internal emotional management • Control of emotional displays • Emotional authenticity • Capacity for reflection • Empathy • Social awareness • Relationship management • Conflict resolution abilities • Resilience • Value-driven
Training, recruitment and retention challenges	Selection Ongoing development Empathy: nature v nurture	Section 13 Qs 1 - 4	1. I would feel that part of the interview for principal should be probing their emotional intelligence 2. Principals need support with the emotional side of their work from the very beginning 3. I think training days can highlight the need for emotional competencies but that's all. You can't teach a principal to be empathetic, self aware, trusting.. 4. Interviewer: Can you teach people competencies such as empathy and self-awareness? Principal: Yes, absolutely

APPENDIX 4: The Online Survey

The Emotional Landscape of Secondary School Principals

1. Introduction

Dear Principal,

This electronic survey is part of a major research project designed to explore the emotional landscape of principalship and discover what implications this may have for school improvement, leadership development and the supports needed by principals.

The outcomes of the survey will be strictly confidential - neither you nor your school will be named and no effort will be made to identify respondents in the returned surveys though generalised research findings may be used in subsequent presentations and publications.

You may, of course, decline to participate or you may withdraw from the survey by not clicking on the 'Submit' button at the end of the questionnaire. A single reminder will be sent to all principals one week before the closing date of Friday 17th February 2012. Outcomes will be presented in an anonymous format and analysed for a range of variables.

The survey has four sections and should take about 20 minutes to complete.

Section 1 is about you and your school

Section 2 consists of a set of interview extracts from a number of our principals speaking on this topic. The aim is to seek your view on how 'like you' these principal voices are or to determine your level of agreement with certain statements made during the course of the conversations.

Section 3 asks you to prioritise a set of emotional competencies in terms of their linkage to school improvement, and,

Section 4 gives you an opportunity to submit comments or reflections

If you require any further information or explanation, please contact me at michaelredmond@secretariat.ie
The academic supervisor for this research is Prof. David Hellowell who may be contacted at dhdavidhell728@gmail.com

You are under no obligation to participate in this survey. By continuing with the questionnaire and clicking on 'Submit' at the end, you are consenting to take part.

Once again, thank you for participating in what I hope will be a worthwhile and productive exercise.

Michael Redmond

The Emotional Landscape of Secondary School Principals

2. About you...

1. Gender

- Male
 Female

2. What is Your Age Category?

- 25 - 35
 36 - 45
 46 - 55
 56 - 65

3. How many years have you been principal? (Total years if more than one school)

- 1 - 3
 4 - 6
 7 - 9
 10 - 12
 13 - 15
 16 - 18
 19 - 21
 Over 21

4. I was appointed from:

- Within the school staff
 From outside the school

5. Please indicate the sector from which you came:

- Voluntary Secondary
 VEC
 Community/Comprehensive
 Other (e.g. from abroad)

3. About your school...

1. Size of school

- Less than 200
- 200 - 350
- 351 - 499
- 500 - 699
- 700 - 850
- 851 - 999
- Over 1000

2. Student Cohort

- All Boys
- All Girls
- Co-Educational

3. Is your school in the DEIS Programme?

- Yes
- No

4. Is your school Fee-Paying?

- Yes
- No

The Emotional Landscape of Secondary School Principals

4. Your Leadership Style...

Please read the following Leadership Styles, adapted from the Learning Programme for Serving Headteachers [National College for School Leadership, (2001), Nottingham].

Coercive: The 'do it the way I tell you' style

- Gives lots of directives
- Expects immediate employee compliance
- Motivates by stating the negative consequences

Authoritative: The firm but fair style

- Develops and articulates a clear vision
- Sees selling the vision as key
- Sets standards and monitors performance in relation to the larger vision

Affiliative: The people first, task second style

- Is most concerned with promoting friendly interactions
- Pays attention to and cares for 'the whole person', stresses things that keep people 'happy'
- Avoids performance related confrontations

Democratic: The participative style

- Invites employees to participate in the development of decisions
- Holds many meetings and listens to employees' concerns
- Rewards adequate performance; rarely gives negative feedback

Pacesetter: The do it myself style

- Leads by example
- Has high standards, and expects others to know the rationale behind what is being modelled
- Is apprehensive about delegating

Coaching: The developmental style

- Helps employees identify their unique strengths and weaknesses
- Encourages employees to establish long range development goals
- May trade off immediate standards of performance for long term development

1. Every principal utilises a range of styles and strategies. If, however, you were forced to choose, which category best reflects your overall leadership style?

- Coercive
- Authoritative
- Affiliative
- Democratic
- Pacesetter
- Coaching

The Emotional Landscape of Secondary School Principalship

5. The Emotional Landscape of Voluntary Secondary Principalship

What follows is a series of extracts from interviews with voluntary secondary school principals carried out in 2010.

My research questions seek to discover:

1. How principals perceive an emotional dimension to their work - if at all
2. Whether a link exists between emotional practice and school improvement, and,
3. Any implications for leadership development and the support of principals

The survey now asks you to indicate how 'Like You' the statements are by checking a single button in each case or by asking if you agree/disagree.

An optional commentary box is available at each point for you to add your own reflections on the issue. Please don't feel you have to comment on everything, however sharing ideas on elements you feel strongly about will be most welcome.

Thank you for continuing this far!

The Emotional Landscape of Secondary School Principals

6. Interview Extracts

The Emotional Practice

1. I mean there's a parent one minute, a staff member the next, then there's a kid the next - there's just such variety and there's so many emotions you're dealing with every day

- Never like me
- Seldom like me
- About half of the time like me
- Usually like me
- Always like me

Comment

2. It's very demanding of principals - you're drawn into life stories which are intimately personal, very traumatic.. and positive listening is absolutely vital

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

The Emotional Landscape of Secondary School Principals

3. Well, you can only do so much and you try to step in while you can but I think it's the adults who take up most of my time

- Strongly disagree
 Disagree
 Neither agree nor disagree
 Agree
 Strongly agree

Comment

4. Principal: I think your emotional response determines everything

Interviewer: Everything?

Principal: Everything

- Strongly disagree
 Disagree
 Neither agree nor disagree
 Agree
 Strongly agree

Comment

7. The Personal Challenge

1. I used to wake up at night-time and I'd spend two hours thinking about this, that and the other. I'm thinking about school...

- Never like me
- Seldom like me
- About half of the time like me
- Usually like me
- Always like me

Comment

2. It's just constant...the large burden of administration from the Department, from the Board of Management and now the Trustees - it can actually subsume you and become all consuming on every level

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

The Emotional Landscape of Secondary School Principals

3. You've to call upon a deep well from within and try to appear to have this public persona that's dealing with everything – that's perhaps one of the greatest demands emotionally

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

4. When I became a principal, my family were at crucial stages and they have suffered because of it

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

8. Supports & Survival

1. I'm learning to prioritise mentally so that my emotions survive the demands of the job

- Never like me
- Seldom like me
- About half of the time like me
- Usually like me
- Always like me

Comment

2. Now I don't talk at home about school anymore, I tend just to talk to principals on the phone or whatever. I think even another principal is more valuable sometimes than your spouse because they understand what you're talking about

- Never like me
- Seldom like me
- About half of the time like me
- Usually like me
- Always like me

Comment

The Emotional Landscape of Secondary School Principals

3. The relationship with my deputy is vital because you've two people then looking out for the school and each other

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

4. I need to have a regime – a physical regime in my day and I started that, I started to walk and that really helped me because I slept better

- Never like me
- Seldom like me
- About half of the time like me
- Usually like me
- Always like me

Comment

The Emotional Landscape of Secondary School Principals

9. School Improvement

Notes:

A good working definition of School Improvement might be: 'A strategy for educational change that enhances student outcomes as well as strengthening the school's capacity for handling change' [Hopkins, D. (1994) 'Towards a theory for school improvement']

Similarly, Emotional Intelligence can be described as: 'a set of abilities that involve the adaptive processing of emotions and the relevant information that one can apply towards solving personal and organisational problems' [Johnson, R.G. et al (2005) 'Emotions and educational leadership: narratives from the inside']

1. I have to use my emotional intelligence because if I don't use it, I'll get nowhere with school improvement

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

2. You've to be extremely positive towards the most minor thing that is being told to you, in the corridor, in the staffroom, in your office, and you have to give it your whole attention for that one person.. because they will come on board with whatever element of school improvement you want to pursue if you show respect for them

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

The Emotional Landscape of Secondary School Principalship

3. It's the smaller things that count - the way I deal with the staff on a day to day basis, 'cause every decision I make has some emotive response to it. And it's only because I facilitated a fundraiser for the gym or a debate and freed them-up - it's not actually about school improvement; that will follow

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

4. You can isolate the negative people, you know, where they realise that no matter what they say to you, it doesn't really affect you

- Never like me
- Seldom like me
- About half of the time like me
- Usually like me
- Always like me

Comment

10. Critical Incidents & Reflection

1. ..so I heard it second-hand, which was the first mistake I made, and reacted emotionally rather than asking the people who reported it for written reports

- Never like me
- Seldom like me
- About half of the time like me
- Usually like me
- Always like me

Comment

2. I suppose what did annoy me is that I got too worked-up over it and from my own experience I shouldn't

- Never like me
- Seldom like me
- About half of the time like me
- Usually like me
- Always like me

Comment

The Emotional Landscape of Secondary School Principals

3. The outcome of my reflection on that incident was very sobering for me emotionally and, I suppose, again made me look at all my mechanisms, procedures and responses

- Never like me
- Seldom like me
- About half of the time like me
- Usually like me
- Always like me

Comment

4. On a bad day I have written it down, when I've had a really bad day I would write it down, because it helps me to reflect on it and see how could I do better? ... what was it here that made me feel so terrible? ... and how I can look at it in a different perspective?

- Never like me
- Seldom like me
- About half of the time like me
- Usually like me
- Always like me

Comment

The Emotional Landscape of Secondary School Principalship

11. The Recession & Cutbacks

1. I just feel there's a lot more tension in school over the last couple of years and it's growing.. it's just constant..

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

2. I think it's incumbent upon me now to try and generate a level of buoyancy and good morale in a way I've never had to before, so I can't appear in any way to be brought down by the current climate

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

The Emotional Landscape of Secondary School Principals

3. For me, the lack of devolved responsibility in voluntary secondary schools is probably the biggest difficulty

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

4. ...and if a teachers spouse or partner has lost their job, I have to be aware of these things and how I can help, if I can give extra after school study or other additional work I do that..

- Never like me
- Seldom like me
- About half of the time like me
- Usually like me
- Always like me

Comment

12. Specific Emotional Capacities in Principals

1. I think empathy is an inherent part of my school relationships - it's an emotional trust that builds-up between individuals and the principal. I think that that is really an essential dimension

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

2. Don't know if I would normally use the verb 'managing' with emotions – I do try 'containing' emotions, trying to 'segregate' emotions, trying to have a cut off point

- Never like me
- Seldom like me
- About half of the time like me
- Usually like me
- Always like me

Comment

The Emotional Landscape of Secondary School Principals

3. If someone had a problem with me about something I'd invite them into the office and we'd discuss it out and I'd feel worse after it usually!

- Never like me
- Seldom like me
- About half of the time like me
- Usually like me
- Always like me

Comment

4. I think relationships are at the heart of what we're doing in life

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

13. Leadership Development

Nearly there!

1. I would feel that part of the interview for principal should be probing their emotional intelligence

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

2. Principals need support with the emotional side of their work from the very beginning

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

The Emotional Landscape of Secondary School Principals

3. I think training days can highlight the need for emotional competencies but that's all. You can't teach a principal to be empathetic, self aware, trusting..

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

4. Interviewer: Can you teach people competencies such as empathy and self-awareness?

Principal: Yes, absolutely

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

The Emotional Landscape of Secondary School Principals

14. Specific Emotional Competencies

1. Please indicate how important you believe the following emotional competencies are to the practice of principalship:

	Unimportant	Of little importance	Moderately important	Important	Very important
Emotional self awareness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Internal emotional management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Control of emotional displays	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emotional authenticity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Capacity for reflection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empathy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social awareness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflict resolution abilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resilience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Value-driven	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please state which of these competencies is, in your view, the most important and perhaps add other emotional competencies impacting on your role as principal:

15. Finally!

Thank you so much for getting this far! One final item:

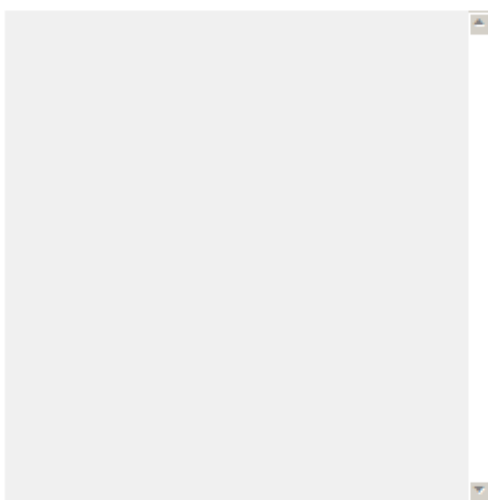
The interviews didn't touch on every aspect of the emotional landscape of a principal's practice and the space below is to give you an opportunity to share your thinking, identify gaps or introduce new elements not discussed already.

I really appreciate the time and consideration you have invested in this survey and wish to thank you sincerely for helping me. If you have any observations on this Questionnaire, (flaws, amendments, content issues, technical difficulties etc.) please also comment below.

Please click on 'Submit' when you're finished.

Michael.

1. Reflection Box



APPENDIX 5: Letter to Interviewees

15 Bellevue Lawn,
Delgany, Co. Wicklow

October 2011

Dear XX,

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in the interview on xx-day xxth November next. I really appreciate your taking the time to participate. This is part of my research for a Doctoral Thesis currently being undertaken with the Open University. The conversation will take place at your office from 2.00pm for an hour or so.

The purpose of the interview is to discuss your views and experience of the emotional landscape of principalship in schools. I hope it may also prove useful to you in reflecting-upon and perhaps sharing your thinking around the wider range of affective elements influencing school leadership practice. I am particularly interested in the impact of ‘critical incidents’, whereby the emotional element of the principal’s experience of an event (once-off or ongoing) led to subsequent reflection on, and change in, practice – you might like to think in advance about such an instance in your experience.

With your permission, the session will be audio-recorded which will enable me to represent more accurately the outcomes of the conversation. The outcomes of the interview will be presented anonymously in the thesis; neither you, your school nor any individuals will be named. Only you, I as the researcher and the thesis supervisor will be privy to the specific data that is collected. My supervisor is Prof. David Hellowell and he can be contacted at dhdavidhell728@gmail.com

The raw data will be stored on my computer, as an audio and/or text file. These will be held for 3 years to allow for the completion of the degree and then destroyed. You may, at any time, withdraw from the study by simply indicating your intention to withdraw and without giving reason. The files will be stored securely on central servers at Emmet House with limited access.

The research findings may be used in presentations and publications. If you require any further information or explanation, please contact me at michaelredmond@secretariat.ie

Once again, thank you for participating in what I’m sure will be a lively and interesting interview.

Michael

Research Consent

I have read and understood the conditions under which I will participate in this interview and give my consent to be a participant and to have the discussion audio-recorded. I agree that any data contributed by me may be published.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 6: The Interview Questions

Interview:

Date:

A. Introduction:

- Background to the research
- Thank you for participating
- Reminder of confidentiality, anonymity and opt-out ethical issues

B. About you:

1. Age category: 25 – 35 36 – 45 46 – 55 56 – 65
2. For how many years have you been principal?
3. Were you an inside or outside appointment?
4. From what sector?
5. Leadership style: Why did you choose this one?

C. Lines of Enquiry

(a) General reflections on principalship as an emotional practice

1. Is there an emotional dimension to school principalship and, if so, how conscious are you of this on a day to day basis?
2. To what extent do you ‘manage’ your own emotions at work?
3. To what extent do you ‘manage’ others’ emotions at work?
4. Can you recall and share an incident in which there was a clear link between your emotional experience and your management of a particular situation at school?
5. Was there subsequent reflection and any change in the way you operate as a principal?
6. To what extent is the recession impacting on the affective element of school life?

(b) Linkage with school enhancement

1. Is there a place for the emotions in bringing about positive change in your school? Please expand on this.
2. What, in your view, are the key emotional competencies principals need to lead their schools effectively?
3. What, if any, are the key emotional conditions that principals need to create in their schools?
4. Do you see your school as having a distinct ‘personality’ of its own?

(c) Leadership Development

1. Should prospective and current school principals be given training around these emotional capacities? Please say why or why not.

D. Conclusion

1. Before we conclude, is there anything that came to you during this conversation that you think I should incorporate into this research?

2. *I'd like to remind you of what will happen next:*

I will transcribe this interview, send it to you for verification and carry-out a theme analysis using computer software. Everything will go to my supervisor to be checked and again, I'd like to assure you of both confidentiality and anonymity. The recording and transcripts will be kept on a secure server in Emmet House and destroyed in 3 years.

3. *Once again, thank you so much for helping me with this – I really appreciate your sharing of experience and your frankness during the discussion.*

Field Notes:

APPENDIX 7: Confirmation of Ethical Approval



From Dr Duncan Banks
Chair, The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee
Email d.banks@open.ac.uk
Extension 59198

To Michael Redmond, CREET
Subject *'Linkage between Irish Secondary Principals' Emotional Competencies and School Enhancement'.*
Ref HREC/2011/#1067/1
Red form
Submitted 07 October 2011
Date 17 October 2011

Memorandum

This memorandum is to confirm that the research protocol for the above-named research project, as submitted for ethics review, **is approved** by the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee. The reviewers considered this to be a well constructed and thought through piece of research, recognising that a lot rests on the initial focus group. Issues of consent and potential risk as well as data protection are well covered.

Please make sure that any questions relating to your application and approval are sent to Research-REC-Review@open.ac.uk quoting the above reference number. We will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible so that your research is not delayed in any way.

At the conclusion of your project, by the date that you stated in your application, the Committee would like to receive a summary report on the progress of this project, any ethical issues that have arisen and how they have been dealt with.

Regards,

Dr Duncan Banks, Chair OU HREC

APPENDIX 8: Development of Sub-Themes from the Survey Narrative

Open Codes	Focused Codes	Sub-Themes
		Values as Foundational
15	Acting out of values	
1	Education work suffering	
1	Taking a holistic approach	
4	Acting out of principle	
13	It's the job	
10	Keeping the focus on student learning	
6	Leading is key	
11	Loving the job	
1	Maintaining integrity	
1	Sacrificing	
63		
		Possessing Emotional Self-Regulation
1	Emotionally managing others	
6	Having to hide true feelings	
13	Having a need to vent	
11	Being authentic	
2	Maintaining a front	
5	Empathising with staff	
1	Meeting the emotional demands	
28	Seeing my emotions as core	
4	Seeing reason as insufficient	
3	The importance of empathising	
16	Using emotional self-management	
44	Keeping emotions in their place	
26	Nature not nurture	
160		
		Capacity to Build Trust
2	Awareness of trust	
5	Understanding motivations	
11	Locating support in others	
5	The value of instinct	
1	Developing trust	
2	Developing talent in others	
5	Influencing and being influenced	
31		
		Problem Solving
5	Coping with multiple demands	
4	DEIS school - managing more difficult	
2	Finding planning time difficult	

11	Having to meet expectations	
4	Resolving day-to-day issues	
12	Avoiding Reflection	
10	Being pragmatic - Time management	
1	Multi-tasking	
1	Thinking first	

50

		Developing Resilience
3	Being in the front line	
6	Being pragmatic	
21	Acting strategically to survive	
3	Being persistent	
18	Having a pragmatic attitude	
35	Benefitting from experience	
10	Giving back the monkey	
1	Developing resilience	
3	Maintaining optimism	
8	Developing coping strategies	
2	Not reacting	
16	Being inexperienced	
23	Experiencing low levels of support	
7	Finding sources of wellbeing	
31	Locating support	
13	Needing emotional support	
6	Affirming self	
22	Protecting self and family	
5	Switching off	
5	Taking wellbeing seriously	
5	Toughening-up	

243

		Relationship Building
18	Seeing relationships as central	
6	Caring as key	
1	Meeting social need	
11	Maintaining staff morale	
7	Supporting staff	
6	Realistic expectations of people	
24	Stroking the staff	

73

		Communicating Effectively
1	Caring for the silent ones	
15	Offering face-to-face support	
1	The value of talking things out	
5	Being available	
5	Communicating as key	
8	Using the channels	

9	Listening as essential	
44		
		Managing Conflict
20	Being challenged by staff negativity	
5	Keeping calm under challenge	
9	Maintaining distance	
10	Rejecting negativity	
3	Managing power dynamics	
4	Experiencing wounding	
1	Listening to the negatives	
52		
		Contextualising Decision-Making
3	Contextualising the school	
16	Mitigating the recession	
2	Gatekeeping	
18	Cutbacks affecting morale	
4	Being lucky with staff	
2	Contingency	
45		
		Artful Change-Management
6	Changing the school culture	
5	Discovering positive change	
1	Mediating change	
5	Being aware of complexity	
22	Valuing reflective practice	
3	Being flexible and adaptable	
8	Being pragmatic - Organising	
4	Changing the in-school context	
2	Knowing the others' limits	
14	Prioritising	
70		
Totals:	831	97
		10

APPENDIX 9: Axial Coding Matrices for the 12 Sub-Themes

Sub-Theme	What?	When?	Where?	Why?	How?	Consequence
Influence of Life Story	Linking life experience to the work of principal	In particular during dealings with adults – teachers and parents In engaging with faith elements of school life	In situations demanding personal development and change In confidential dealings with people in crisis In comprehending the parent perspective at face-to-face or parent group meetings	Provides insight into principals' identities and capacities To promote a holistic approach to the work of head-teacher To comprehend others' social and personal history backgrounds Allowing oneself to be 'real' – avoiding becoming a cardboard cut-out	Making explicit the personal insider perspective Intentionally connecting growth-promoting situations (e.g. parenthood) to professional activity Tapping into emotional memory Reminding oneself of one's capacities based on previous successes	Self-belief
Values as Foundational	Using a set of principles for ethical action in school life	During dilemmas During critical incidents When making decisions In day-to-day encounters	In Board meetings In mediation situations, e.g. teacher-teacher, teacher-parent In situations of financial decision-making In the principal's habitus	To generate trust To support ethical decision-making To allow for peace-of-mind To support right-relationships and for valuing people To counteract fallibility	By reference to fundamental ethical principles By developing ethos-awareness By taking the long view By internalising faith-centred approaches	Internal Moral Compass
Possessing Emotional Self-Regulation	Creating distance between incident and reaction Not getting hurt	In day-to-day interactions When challenged or confronted When making significant decisions In critical incidents	Intra-personally using self-talk Inter-personally in individual and group settings Crisis settings	Keeping emotions in their place Maintaining a place for logical thinking Professionalism demands rationality too Self-protection	Don't overanalyse Create time-gap before reacting or responding Consciously remaining calm Be aware of others' pressures	Self Control

				Remembering the bigger picture		
Capacity to Build Trust	Intentionally engendering a shared belief in one's honesty and abilities	On first contact with a person or organisation During subsequent transactions When engaging in re-culturation	One-to-one and whole group settings When 'selling' the school, a value or an idea In discipline situations	To establish a framework for safe operating To allow for risk-taking by others To deepen and grow relationships	By being self and other aware in terms of emotional signals By being alert for signs of dissonance By adopting a people-first organisation -second orientation	Coherence between rhetoric and action
Problem Solving	Broadly structured solution-seeking	During daily dealings - resolving challenges In critical incidents In leading development projects	Everywhere	To liberate the core enterprise from stumbling blocks To meet stakeholder expectations To manage resources – particularly time	Aim for win-win Deal with issues early Source advice and support Push back responsibility to its owner Act methodically Review outcomes and move on	Removing barriers to growth
Developing Resilience	The capacity to protect and renew oneself with 'mental strength'	In challenging situations as they arise during every day When the principal initiates change When values are challenged When overwhelmed	In the principal's habitus – wherever required	Self-protection Professional sustainability To continue to be of use To cope with being overburdened	Cultivate acceptance Emotional balance Use of humour By being grounded in self 'This too shall pass' By being value driven Down-time	Bouncing Back
Relationship-Building	The principal's ability to create positive association with individuals or groups	During all human interactions throughout the day – in the background or displayed	In face-to-face individual meetings, casual and formal In group settings such as staff meetings	To build cohesion around a vision or practice To manage dissent and confrontation To influence	By employing 'respect, understanding, empathy and fairness' Using humour	Human Connection

	within the school		Offices, corridors, staffroom, schoolyard Via technology such as telephone or email	For building harmony and community To make the day go better	By forgiving By listening and appreciating	
Communicating Effectively	The purposeful and nuanced exchanging of information	Constantly – a persistent background activity During informal and formal settings	In all day-to-day settings – the principal’s habitus In settings arranged for the purpose In offices and ICT modalities	To manage the overwhelming flow of information To be selective around what is communicated – filtering To dilute power-brokering To connect community with vision To restore relationships To resolve conflict	By preparing for dialogue and face-to-face exchanges By arranging specific group settings By appropriate use of electronic means and writing By being aware of the impact of non-verbal By humanising daily contact By active listening	Appropriate Conveyance of Meaning
Managing Conflict	Management of micro-politics Coping with staff Resolution focus	‘Conflict is part of my day’ – a day-to-day phenomenon Set pieces – especially staff and board meetings ‘Pick your moments’	‘Difficult in any setting’ Staff meetings Principal’s office	Restoring the balance of power Aiming for ‘win-win’ Building personal conflict management capacity Protecting dignity of all Challenging teachers’ <i>bunkerisation</i> with a whole-school focus	Talking things over Occasional assertiveness Not taking things personally Professional approach to challenging interactions Bringing outsiders back in	Mutualising Respect
Impact of Leadership Style	Effects of the principal’s distinctive mode of influencing people	In subconscious dealings with people In conscious and selective strategies	In the principal’s habitus	To align personality with task To present a contrived self To protect self To give predictability	By selecting appropriate strategies By being self-aware and remediating personality gaps	Operational Consistency

				To remediate natural deficiencies To function effectively	By learning from other principals By reading appropriate leadership literature By trying and evaluating different approaches	
Contextualising Decision-Making	Situation-consciousness in choosing options	When making decisions, e.g. resourcing When planning for change When reacting to situations	In reflection on plans and actions In communicating news – especially bad In preparing for and delivering information meetings	To elicit a more appropriate outcome To be aware of the impact of the recession To make more grounded decisions	By explicitly seeking out wider sources of information By taking into account the capacities and limitations of staff By allowing for contingencies By seeking out the local perspective By asking questions and seeking feedback By structuring approaches to planning	Situationally Aware Decision-Making
Artful Change-Management	The arts of bringing people from an acceptable present to a better future	When transforming school policy and/or practices During team-meetings During staff meetings	In meeting-settings In individual settings In publications, speeches and writings In assemblies At governance meetings	To re-culture the school to a more appropriate professional orientation To act as a buffer in overwhelming change situations To embed sustainable change iteratively To take accountability	By understanding teacher motivation By understanding attachment to the past By buffering overload – saying ‘no’ or ‘not yet’ By giving voice to young teachers By de-bunkerising teachers	Skilful Re-Culturation

APPENDIX 10: Developing Themes by Identifying Relationship between the Consequences of the 12 Sub-Themes

Sub-Themes <i>(Derived from Focussed Coding)</i>	Consequences <i>(Derived from each Axial Coding Matrix)</i>	Theme
Influence of Life Story	Self-belief	Ethical Self-Directed Living: 'FOUNDATIONS'
Values as Foundational	Internal Moral Compass	
Possessing Emotional Self-Regulation	Self-Control	
Capacity to Build Trust	Coherence between Rhetoric and Action	Bridging vision and action: 'AGENCY'
Problem-Solving	Removing Barriers to Growth	
Developing Resilience	Bouncing Back	
Relationship-Building	Human Connection	Motivating for collaborative action: 'CONNECTION'
Communicating Effectively	Appropriate Conveyance of Meaning	
Managing Conflict	Mutualising Respect	
Impact of Leadership Style	Operational Consistency	Deploying appropriate leadership strategies: 'SYNERGY'
Contextualising Decision-Making	Situationally Aware Decision-Making	
Artful Change-Management	Skilful Re-Culturation	