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Teacher perceptions of new principals in Melbourne, Victoria

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the impact of new principals through the eyes and experiences of teachers in three schools in Metropolitan Melbourne, Australia. A multi-perspective case study methodology involving semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations and the study of documents is employed to answer three research questions: (1) how do teachers perceive their new principal, (2) how does this perception impact on teachers' work environment, and (3) how can teachers be supported during a change of principal? The findings suggest that teachers' perceptions of their new principal are a function of the new principal's personal and leadership qualities and practices which, in turn, are informed by three contextual factors: school leadership history, the origin and background of the new principal, and teacher expectations. These factors not only influence teachers' perceptions independently, but they also have the capacity to influence each other. These perceptions appear to impact on a number of domains within teachers' work environment, such as teacher well-being, teacher professional development and, to a lesser extent, teaching practice and professional relationships. Teacher well-being, in particular, revealed itself to be the most diverse among and within schools. An overwhelming positive impact on teacher professional development also emerges yet, paradoxically, it does not result in any perceived changes on their teaching practice. Professional relationships among teachers, and between teachers and students, does not appear to be affected significantly by the arrival of a new principal. Teachers expressed a desire to be included in the pre-appointment consultation process. Finally, new principals who are committed to building relationships with staff and who display an awareness of how the nature, pace and implementation of change initiatives impact on teachers' work environment appear to be pivotal in supporting teachers during principal succession. The findings have enabled the development of a conceptual framework for understanding how teachers' perceptions of a new principal impact on teachers' work environment.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

To the best of my knowledge, this thesis comprises only the author's original work towards the Doctor of Education. This thesis contains no material previously published or written by any other person, except where due reference is stated in the Preface, text and Reference List.

This thesis is fewer than the maximum word limit in length, exclusive of tables, figures and bibliography.

Bernardita Moreno

PREFACE

Sections of this thesis have appeared in the following presentations and publication.

Conference papers were delivered at the following events:

Moreno, B. (2019). *Percepciones del profesorado sobre nuevos directivos escolares: Beneficios y desafíos de nombramientos internos – un estudio de caso*. Congreso Internacional Liderazgo y Mejora Escolar (CILME). Santiago, Chile. June 6-8.

Moreno, B. (2019) *Teacher Perceptions of newly-appointed principals: Advantages and challenges of internal appointments - A case study*. The British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society (BELMAS). Hinckley, UK. July 12-14.

Moreno, B. (2019) *Teacher Perceptions of new principals: Examining and Interpreting the impact of the new leader*. European Educational Research Association (EERA). Hamburg, Germany. September 3-6.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
AITSL	Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership
APAPDC	Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council
ASIC	Australian Securities and Investment Commission
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
CEM	Catholic Education Melbourne
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DEECD	Department of Education and Early Childhood
ELC	Early Learning Centre
IB	International Baccalaureate
ICSEA	Index of Community, Social Educational Advantage
ISSPP	International Successful School Principalship Project
ISV	Independent Schools Victoria
K-12	Kinder to Grade 12 (Early Childhood, Primary and secondary school)
KC	Kingston College (Case Study One)
MCEETYA	The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy
PREP-6	Preparatory to Grade six (Primary school)
SC	Summerhill College (Case Study Two)
SFC	St Frances College (Case Study Three)
STR	Student-Teacher relationships
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VIT	Victorian Institute of Teaching

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Throughout my life as an educator, school leadership has always been a captivating topic for me. My interest in leadership succession, however, was born as a result of a change of leadership in the school in which I was employed as a teacher. As I observed this phenomenon unfold, I became increasingly curious about how my colleagues and I were assimilating the change in leadership and whether this change would have any impact on us, the teachers.

This thesis explores teacher perceptions of new principals and to what extent these perceptions impact on teachers' work environment. In addition, this study also explores how teachers can be supported during a change of principal. This chapter outlines the significance and background to the study, followed by the research questions and the methodology employed, concluding with a clarification and definition of terms and the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Significance of the study

Studies on new principals, whilst significant, are few (García-Garduño, Slater & López-Gorosave, 2011; Kılınç & Gümüş, 2020), and tend to focus on the new principals and the way in which these individuals begin their role, enact their leadership and develop. Even fewer studies focus on how new leadership is perceived and experienced by others, and those that do, have done so in very concise contexts, for example, in schools where high principal turnover is the norm. In addition, if one of the aims of effective leadership is to motivate and influence followers, then the study of followers can only contribute to our understanding of leadership as a process (Lord & Brown, 2001).

This study has scholarly and practical significance and contributes in the following manner:

- This study provides rich first-hand evidence on how teachers live and experience the arrival of a new principal by examining how teachers formulate a perception of their new principal and how this perception impacts different aspects of their work environment.
- A new conceptual model for understanding this impact has been distilled from the data.
- This study offers evidence of how teachers experience the arrival of a new principal within diverse contexts: in schools that have experienced leadership stability, others that have had high principal turnover and in schools from different systems.

- Other contextual variables of this study are also significant as they provide insightful evidence of how this teacher experience is lived, depending on whether the principal is an internal/external appointment and whether the new leader is a novice/experienced principal.
- No other study has reported on the teacher experience of new principals and how this experience has impacted on teachers' professional environment within the Australian context.
- This study suggests that more research is needed in this area, where gaining a further understanding of the effect of principal succession on teachers and other school groups can assist in driving and managing a less disruptive and smoother change in school leadership.
- This study also suggests that new principals benefit from learning about how they are being perceived, as this can enhance their own understanding of their leadership strengths, challenges and influence.
- The findings of this study can assist governance and those involved in succession planning, as well as the preparation and ongoing development of new principals through the recommendation of practices and initiatives that can assist in the principal succession process.

1.3 Background to the study

The investigation for this study took place in Metropolitan Melbourne in the state of Victoria, Australia. Under the political structure of Australia, school education is delegated to each state and territory although increasingly, the federal government is attempting to create more consistencies in education nationally, not only with regard to policy, but also concerning curriculum (Anderson et al., 2008). In the case of Victoria, there are three education sectors: government, Catholic and independent, which all cater for primary and secondary education as well as early learning centres, together with some Special schools. Government schools in Victoria are overseen by the Department of Education and Training (DET) and the majority are divided into primary schools (Prep – Grade 6) and secondary (Years 7 – 12) with some schools catering from Prep to Year 12. The overwhelming majority of these schools are co-educational. All three sectors vary in governance, funding and autonomy as well as in the roles and responsibilities of school leaders (Anderson et al., 2008). All government schools comprise of a school council, board or advisory group, which acts as the overall custodian of the school. In the Catholic sector, however, governance is controlled by the

Diocese or religious order. In the independent sector, the structure of the school board can vary from school to school, although all governance structures must adhere to the requirements outlined by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC) (Anderson et al., 2008), and in many cases these schools borrow governance structures that resemble those found in the business sector in which the principal, for example, is also considered to be the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). In most cases, regardless of sector, the principal is an ex officio member of the council together with other members of the school community including staff, parents, past parents and, in some cases, students.

The selection process and appointment of principals varies depending on the sector. In government schools, the school council selects and recommends candidates to the DEECD (Department of Education and Early Childhood). Once approved by the department, principals are appointed for a fixed term usually comprising five years with the possibility of renewal and, from 2017, following strict guidelines that reflect the Australian Professional Standards for Principals (AITSL, 2011). The Catholic sector works similarly, although the final approval is given by the Diocese or the corresponding religious order. In the independent sector, the school board employs principals directly, and principals, in return, are accountable to the school board. There seems to be very little principal mobility between sectors, particularly from non-government to the government sector (Anderson et al., 2008).

1.4 Research questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do teachers perceive their new principal?
2. How does this perception impact on teachers' work environment?
3. How can teachers be supported during a change of principal?

1.5 Methodology

This study employs a qualitative multi-perspective case study methodology. This type of methodology best suits this research given the nature of qualitative inquiry, where the interest lies in how people construct, understand, experience and give value to the world around them (Merriam, 2014). Three schools were chosen as case studies: two from the independent sector and one Catholic school. Data were collected using three tools: (1) semi-structured interviews, (2) non-

participant observations and (3) documents. The study sample included the three principals and 12 teachers from each school. In schools with two campuses, six teachers per campus were chosen. Teacher sample was representative of age, gender, years of teaching experience, years employed at each school and whether they held a leadership position at the time of the data collection. Both principals and teachers were interviewed. Field notes of the observations were taken in order to strengthen the understandings of each school context. A variety of documents was consulted, both written documents and audio-visual material. The study employed a data analysis method devised by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2020). The data analysis involved a cyclical and organic process where data collection, data condensation and data display informed each other. The analysis was conducted in two stages: (1) within-case analysis followed by (2) cross-case analysis. Stage one analysis included codification, classification and categorisation of emergent themes from each case, which were later compared to each other in search of commonalities and differences as part of stage two. Data analyses were assisted by the computer software, NVivo 12, which also served for managing and displaying the data through the use of matrices and tables. The findings were later validated in relation to the current literature and the nature of the research questions, also taking into consideration the delimitations and limitations of the study.

1.6 Definition of terms

For the purpose of this study, the following description of terms will apply:

New principal, beginning principal and newly-appointed principal are all interchangeable terms referring to a principal who is the leader in a school and who has held the position for less than 24 months (Weindling, 1999), regardless of whether they are a novice or an experienced principal.

Principal succession and principal turnover are interchangeable terms that refer to the process in any school that sees the departure of one principal and the entry of another (Hargreaves, 2005; Hargreaves, Moore, Fink, Brayman & White, 2003; Hart, 1991; White & Cooper, 2011).

Origin of the principal refers to whether the new principal was an internal or an external appointment (Carlson, 1961). Based on this definition, in this study a new principal is also referred to as an insider or outsider.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organised into eight chapters. Chapter One provides an introduction to the problem, the significance and background of the study, as well as presenting the research questions and the chosen methodology. This chapter concludes with a definition of terms and a brief summary of each chapter.

Chapter Two offers a review of the literature, with a brief overview of the importance of school leadership, followed by a focus on principal succession and its impact on student achievement and school culture. This is followed by an exploration on the literature pertaining to new principals leading to the study's central topic: how teachers respond to the arrival of a new principal. It is, particularly, in this section that knowledge gaps in this area are exposed. This chapter ends with an overview of Australian studies within the fields of principal succession and new principals.

Chapter Three provides an explanation and justification of the methodology chosen for this study. It offers an overview on qualitative methodology and its employment in educational leadership research followed by a discussion on case study approach. It continues with an introduction of the research questions and the study sample, descriptions of the research sites and the research participants, and the three tools employed for collecting data: semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations and the study of documents. Data analysis and interpretation are then discussed prior to a final consideration of the ethical implications of this study, the issues of trustworthiness and transferability, ending with an outline of its delimitations and limitations.

Chapters Four, Five and Six report Case Studies One, Two and Three, respectively. Each chapter follows the same structure, beginning with a description of the school sample including a description of the study participants, the nature of the observations conducted and the types of documents examined. This concludes with a profile of the school, a description of the context in which the change of principal took place, and the case study results for each research question.

Chapter Seven reports on the cross-case analysis, looking at the commonalities and differences amongst the three case studies based on the emergent themes.

Chapter Eight provides detailed responses to each research question through a discussion of the findings, examined in relation to the relevant literature. It includes a reflection by each new principal and presents of conceptual model for understanding teacher perceptions of new principals and their impact on teachers' work environment, together with implications for further research and practice.

CHAPTER TWO: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is set out as an exploration of the current state of the research on beginning principals and their impact. Rather than a ordered review of individual studies, this chapter is organised around the key ideas and research questions of the thesis in which the findings of individual contributions are presented as part of an integrated whole. It provides a brief overview of the importance of school leadership, then discussing principal succession and its impact on student achievement and school culture. This following section reviews writings on new principals given this is considered within the principal succession process. This section presents topics such as conceptual and theoretical frameworks, the differences between internal and external appointments and encountered challenges faced by new principals. Subsequent sections explore how teachers respond to the arrival of the new principal, and Australian studies on new principals.

2.2 the Importance of school leadership

Despite contextual variables, there is now considerable evidence and acceptance amongst researchers and educators indicating that successful schools have successful principals (Ärlestig, Day & Johansson, 2016b; Day et al., 2011; Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kington & Gu, 2009; Hallinger & Huber, 2012; Leithwood, 2005; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006b; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, 2005; Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Moos, Johansson & Day, 2011b; Mulford & Silins, 2010; Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008). There is considerable agreement that school leadership is the second most influential school factor on student learning after teachers (Day et al., 2010; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006a; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2004) and a driving force in achieving school effectiveness (Béteille, Kalogrides & Loeb, 2009; Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2003), improving student achievement (Coelli & Green, 2012; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Waters et al., 2003) and school culture (Hallinger & Heck, 1996b). In addition, empirical research suggests that “the overall impact from increasing principal quality exceeds the benefit from a comparable increase in the quality of a single teacher” (Branch, Hanushek, Rivkin & Steven, 2013, p. 64). Thanks to the research undertaken by the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP) in the last 18 years, it has been possible to ascertain what it takes to be a successful school leader over time. This international project with more that

20 participating countries, is dedicated to the research on successful principals. From a methodological perspective, this project broadened the knowledge on successful schools by incorporating other voices to the data, such as school board members, teachers and parents, amongst others. Through multiple-perspective case studies, the ISSPP continues to provide knowledge on how principals contribute to the success of schools in a variety of national and cultural contexts (Gurr, 2015). Through more than 100 case studies, it is now known that successful principals have high expectations of themselves and their school, are context sensitive, and whilst there is no single formula for successful leadership, across participating countries, these leaders share four core leadership practices: setting direction, developing staff, leading change and improving teaching and learning (Gurr, 2015, p. 138). Successful principals lead in school environments where leadership is distributed (Moos, Johansson & Day, 2011a) and where high levels of relational trust are exercised (Pashiardis & Savvides, 2014). Furthermore, “successful leaders empower teachers and re-culture the organisation through negotiation and deliberation” (Moos et al., 2011a, p. 224).

In recent times, the international literature on school leadership has grown not only in volume, but also in concern for the sustainability of the role of the principal due to factors such as an increased focus on standardised testing, the lack of autonomy afforded to principals and the impact of the role on principals’ well-being, amongst others (Bush, 2011, 2015; Fink & Brayman, 2006; Kelly & Saunders, 2010; Read, 2012). Considering it can take between five and seven years for principals to drive school improvement (Fullan, 2001) and for principals to have an effect on student outcomes (Coelli & Green, 2012), this reinforces the importance of appointing principals who are not only effective, but also who also remain in the role despite the many internal and external challenges they face (Coelli & Green, 2012; Hargreaves, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink, 2004, 2006; Hargreaves et al., 2003; Leithwood, Sun & Pollock, 2017; Pollock & Huseman, 2019).

School leadership practices have diversified and this is reflected in the way in which leadership is discussed and conceived (Crawford, 2019), yet whether solo, shared or distributed, the principal continues to be the main source of leadership in schools (Bush, 2015; Day et al., 2010; Ogawa, 1991), and so when a principal is changed in a school, knowledge about the impact of this change is needed so that it can be effective.

2.3 Principal Succession

Principal succession has been defined as the process in any school that experiences the parting of one principal and the arrival of another (Hargreaves, 2005; Hargreaves et al., 2003; Hart, 1991).

Principal succession is also a process characterised by the interactions between the new principal and other members of the school community, which is likely to last two years and at which time he or she is considered to be part of the school culture (Northfield, Macmillan & Meyer, 2011). Hanselman, Grigg, Bruch and Gamoran (2016), also surface in their definition the social implications of the change: “turnover involves replacing one individual staff member with another; however, it also means replacing a series of existing social relationships (those involving the “leaver”) with a set of brand new social relationships (those that involve the replacement)” (Hanselman et al., 2016, p. 8). School leadership succession is about “ensuring that the right person is in the right place at the right time for the right reason” (Fink, 2011, p. 18). Principal succession is also “a human resources issue” that is “not just an individual employee issue; it also focuses on integrating human resources into the organization’s strategy” (Parylo & Zepeda, 2015, p. 942). Consensus surrounding the beginning and end of principal succession acknowledges a number of factors that can impact on these parameters; namely, the internal and external school environment as well as events that precede succession (Hart, 1993; Northfield et al., 2011). A change of principal impacts on social conditions, having the power to destabilise principal-teacher relationships (Hanselman et al., 2016), and prompting new leaders to exercise their leadership in ways that concur with the expectations of those above or below them (Gordon & Rosen, 1981). Principal succession can be a challenging and unpredictable process (Berry & Townsend, 2019). It is also likely to be the most important event in the life of a school (Hargreaves, 2005) and has considerable complexity, as a new principal “changes the line of communication, realigns relationships of power, affects decision making and generally disturbs the equilibrium of normal activities” (Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985, p. 88). Hargreaves (2009a, pp. 2-3) suggests five obstacles that hinder successful principal succession: (1) poor planning, (2) poor management of the transition process, (3) wrong frequency with which succession takes place, (4) lack of consideration for the emotional aspects associated with succession and (5) succession not recognised as a systemic problem.

Principal succession can have a lasting impact on individuals and schools alike (Fauske & Ogawa, 1987; Hart, 1993; Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985; Ogawa, 1991) and whilst the impact of the new leader may be constrained by school imperatives, his or her behaviour can make the change more or less difficult (Gordon & Rosen, 1981). According to Hargreaves (2005), in most cases, principal succession turns out to be a mix of unplanned discontinuity and unplanned continuity: “discontinuity with the achievements of a leader’s immediate predecessor, and continuity with (or regression to) the mediocre state of affairs preceding that predecessor” (Hargreaves, 2005, p. 167). In recent times, principal succession has become a major topic of discussion in schools and the scholarly realm as a result of demographic changes (e.g., high principal-retirement rates, shortage

of principals) and a dissuasion for the role as a consequence of the ever-growing demands of the role (Bauer & Silver, 2018; Bottery, 2016; Bush, 2011, 2013, 2015; Fullan, 2001, 2011; Kelly & Saunders, 2010; Moos et al., 2011b; Myung, Loeb & Horng, 2011; OECD, 2019; Pollock & Hauseman, 2019; Shoho & Barnett, 2010; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018; Wang, Pollock & Hauseman, 2018). The vast majority of studies on principal succession focus on its causes and very few examine the consequences and impact of this phenomenon (Snodgrass Rangel, 2018). Successful principal succession is characterised by “careful planning, adequate preparation and decent, humane management of all aspects of the succession process” (Hargreaves et al., 2003, p. 80). Factors that contribute to the realisation of this model include clearly defined goals and expectations for the school going forward, which can assist in deciding if the succession process will ensure a continuity or discontinuity of the current leadership. Equally important, is the connection between the different types of knowledge that need to be considered in ensuring effective succession: Inbound knowledge (knowledge of the school, its context and the leadership role), Outbound knowledge (knowledge of the outgoing leader and the successful achievement that will need to be sustained) and Insider knowledge (knowledge that is gained once the principal has become and insider and is trusted and accepted within the school community) (Hargreaves et al., 2003, p. 35). The literature on principal succession highlights two major areas of impact: student achievement and school culture. The following sections explore these areas.

2.3.1 Impact on student achievement

Principals impact indirectly on student achievement via hiring and retaining quality teachers and through promoting instructional leadership practices that improve teaching and learning environments (Grissom & Loeb, 2009; Hallinger & Heck, 1996b; Leithwood et al., 2007; Robinson et al., 2008). Effective principals have the capacity to increase student learning by two to seven months of learning in one year, whilst ineffective principals can have the opposite effect by a similar amount (Branch et al., 2013). Studies on principal succession suggest that a change of principal can have a negative impact on student achievement (Bartanen, Grissom & Rogers, 2019; Bêteille, Kalogrides & Loeb, 2012; Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton & Ikemoto, 2012; Daresh & Male, 2000; Hargreaves, 2005, 2009b; Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006; Hargreaves et al., 2003; Kearney, Valadez & Garcia, 2012; Mascal & Leithwood, 2010; Miller, 2013), yet it is difficult to isolate principal effectiveness from other factors that may be impacting on their success or perceived success. Branch, Hanushek and Rivkin (2009) conducted a study on principal succession in Texas, which found that a change of principal was associated with a small, yet significant decline in student learning. The data also suggested that as principals gain experience, they become more effective,

but also tend to “gravitate toward schools that are easier to run – schools serving higher income populations, more white students, and higher achieving students. This implies also that schools serving more disadvantaged populations tend to have first-year principals (a generally negative factor for achievement)” (Branch et al., 2009, p. 15). Concurring with these findings and by using longitudinal data from the fourth largest public school district in USA, Béteille et al. (2012) suggested that principal turnover had “on average” a negative association as shown with a decrease in school achievement, as well as higher rates of teacher turnover (Béteille et al., 2012, p. 905). The results were particularly alarming for high-poverty and low-performing schools, where principal turnover is high together with a high presence of inexperienced teachers. The researchers recommend that principal appointments in these contexts should be filled by candidates with prior experience in school leadership. The mixed-methods study led by Mascall and Leithwood (2010) mentioned earlier, also looked at the effects of high principal turnover on student achievement. Using student achievement data from 80 schools, the authors concluded that principal turnover resulted a negative relationship with student achievement, however, mediated school-level factors such as school culture and distributed leadership practices could potentially suppress this negative impact.

Miller’s (2013) study of the relationship between principal turnover and student achievement offers similar findings to those of Béteille et al. (2012). Using 12 years of school data from North Carolina, Miller (2013) found that a change of principal is followed by a decline in student outcomes during the first two years of a new principalship and then rises again over the next three years. Whilst this may be considered a negative impact of principal succession, academic performance was already low at the time of the change of principal in each sample group. Accordingly, the rise of academic achievement after the instatement of the new principal could be a positive outcome for that school as the inherited context may well explain the schools’ state of academic achievement. As Miller (2013, p. 71) states:

Since the typical school is doing badly relative to its usual performance before a new principal starts, it is entirely possible that the school would have experienced a recovery to its usual performance regardless of whether the principal was replaced. It is difficult to disentangle the positive effects of having a new principal from what is merely a return to the permanent state of the school.

Given Miller’s (2013) findings, two subsequent studies sought to isolate principal turnover from other factors in order to gain a more precise measure of its impact. Both these studies (Bartanen et al., 2019; Walsh & Dotter, 2020) employed a difference-in-differences model by comparing schools which had experienced a change of principal with another school which had not. Walsh and Dotter

(2020) found that after the third year with a new principal, student achievement results in District of Columbia increased by $0.9SD$, whilst Bartanen et al. (2019) used data from two states and found that principal turnover was responsible for lowering student achievement by $0.3SD$ after one year of the principal's appointment, with the effects varying depending on the type of principal transition (promotion, transfer, etc.).

Along these same lines, another study examining the impact of socio-economic status on student achievement (percentage of teachers' experience, attendance and principal longevity) showed that for every year that a principal remained in the role, there was a 0.227 standard deviation rise in student achievement for primary schools and even higher for secondary schools (0.375) (Kearney et al., 2012). Although this is only one measure of student success, it remains a significant one with implications for principal stability, particularly relevant given the current rise in principal turnover (Burkhauser et al., 2012; Fuller, Orr & Young, 2008; Norton, 2003). Burkhauser et al.'s (2012) mixed-methods study on first-year principals in six USA urban districts, also confirmed that of the 40 schools that had lost a principal after one year and then appointed another immediately after, more than half recorded a clear decline in student achievement. Similar results also emerged from a study of principals and school effectiveness in four large Latin-American cities where, after taking into consideration ability, SES, gender and country, student achievement showed an association with the principal's longevity at the school compared to the achievement level in schools where the principal was new to the school (Anderson, 2008).

Whilst the knowledge base on the relationship between principal turnover and school culture and student achievement is not insignificant, literature on the connection between principal turnover and teacher instruction does not enjoy such attention (Pietsch, Tulowitzki & Hartig, 2019). To date, only two studies have explored this relationship. As part of the same study discussed earlier, Mascall and Leithwood (2010) found a negative, albeit weak, relationship between principal turnover and teaching practice based on teacher's own perceptions. Mascall and Leithwood (2010, pp. 375-376) explain:

The weaker impact of principal turnover on classroom variables might suggest that teacher classroom practice is in some way buffered from direct effects of changes in principal leadership. We speculate that teachers may continue to feel secure in their classrooms, regardless of the school culture around them.

Pietsch, Tulowitzki and Hartig (2019) explored further this link in 101 German schools from which 36 had experienced a change of principal in the previous two-and-a-half years. The particularity of this study, however, lies on their use of classroom observations together with teacher and student

surveys to measure teacher quality rather than teacher self-reports. Despite this methodological difference, the study also concluded no relationship between principal turnover and teacher quality. The study, however, did reveal that this may not necessarily be the case in socio-economically disadvantaged schools.

2.3.2 Impact on school culture

School culture has been identified as the shared beliefs, values and norms of a school (Mascall & Leithwood, 2010; Willower, 1984). Establishing a positive school culture is one of the many objectives of principals (Hallinger & Heck, 1996b). School leaders have a significant impact on school culture, in turn, influencing student achievement (Waters et al., 2003). Fullan (2001) states that there is no prescribed prescription for changing the culture of an organisation as this can take a number of years to achieve with numerous hurdles to overcome. Mascall and Leithwood (2010) also examined the relationship between principal succession and school culture, based on a sample of 80 Canadian schools, finding a direct and negative impact of principal turnover on school culture, and that this relationship could act as a mediating factor for student outcomes and classroom practice (Mascall & Leithwood, 2010). From this data, the researchers also concluded, in schools with a high principal turnover, that adopting a distributed leadership approach lessened some of the negative consequences of principal succession (Mascall & Leithwood, 2010). In their longitudinal study of novice principals in 17 public schools in Chicago, Spillane and Lee (2014), however, indicate that different transitions impact on the social conditions encountered by new principals, easing or aggravating some of the problems they face. Internally-appointed principals, for example, experienced lower levels of practice problems given that they benefitted from their familiarity with knowledge and people. As one of their participants pointed out:

I knew the climate and the culture of the school...I knew the people, I knew what the school's vision was, what we were working toward, what people were dedicated to accomplishing. So I think that went a long way because I was already part of that, so I didn't have to learn it and take the time to kind of figure out the culture of the school. (Spillane & Lee, 2014, p. 454)

Other similar studies are discussed later in section 2.5 below.

As detrimental as the evidence might describe, principal succession can also result in positive consequences, although these are not often exposed in the literature (Oplatka, 2004), and as clearly articulated by Thelin (2020, p. 442), "principal turnover cannot be assumed to always be a problem, or a problem for everyone, everywhere". In some schools, principal turnover is considered planned

discontinuity (Hargreaves, 2005) and the best decision for that school. For example, Miskel and Cosgrove suggested that principals new to a school wanting to improve student outcomes may do this by working closely with teachers as well as by focussing on the instructional organisation of the whole school and whilst this may be unsettling at the beginning, “it can lead to changes that result in increased effectiveness and add to the long-term viability of the school” (Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985, p. 98). Similarly, the qualitative study conducted by Draper and McMichael (2000) on ten new headteachers and their approaches, found that in more than half of the schools involved, the staff displayed support for the new principal. The study conducted by Oplatka (2004) linking the arrival of a woman principal and its impact on mid-career teachers is an excellent example of this. The findings revealed that principals who displayed warmth and developed trusting relationships with these teachers instilled in them a sense of renewal demonstrated via an increase in enthusiasm, energy and sense of self-efficacy. Similarly, in an earlier study (Kirby & Bogotch, 1996) new principals who displayed collaborative practices had a positive impact on how teachers perceived aspects of their own work.

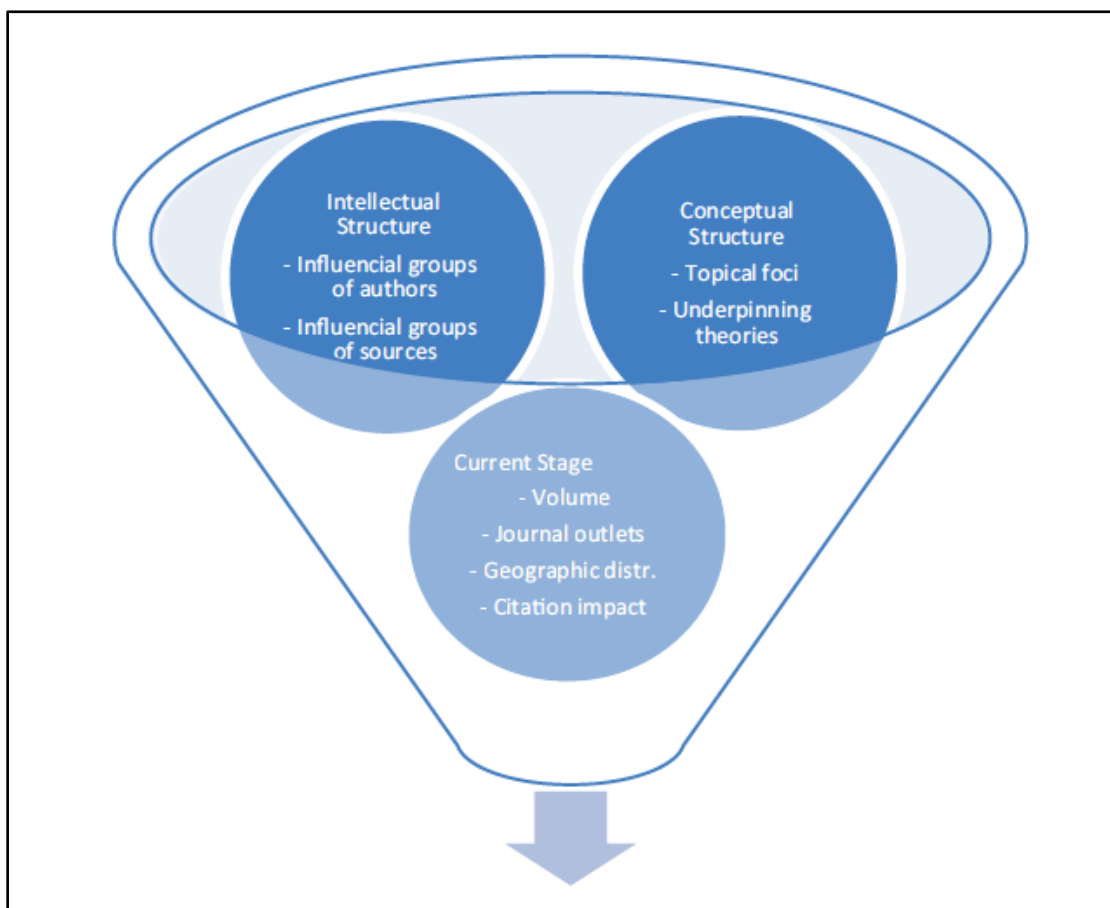
Additionally, in schools of urgent need of a turnaround, a new principal can be the key to its improvement and success, particularly if he or she remains in that role for a significant amount of time (Fullan, 2001). The existing literature, whilst small, provides significant empirical evidence of new principals that have succeeded in transforming low-performing schools in particular (Leithwood, Harris & Strauss, 2010; Meyers & Hitt, 2017; Murphy & Meyers, 2008). The evidence gathered from studies in these underperforming contexts, suggests new principals:

- understand the different stages that comprise school turnaround
- are able to identify clearly which school conditions have the greatest potential for improving student achievement
- identify and enact the most effective leadership practices for improvement
- are able to sustain improvement as the school moves from one stage to another

(Leithwood et al., 2010)

2.4 Principals new to a school

Epistemological contributions to the field of new principals are relatively recent in comparison with those on the broader characteristics and practices of established principals, hence the relative scarcity of research output (García-Garduño et al., 2011; Kılinc & Gümüş, 2020). Nonetheless, the interest in research on new principals has increased significantly in the last 20 years (Kılinc & Gümüş, 2020). The systematic literature review conducted by Kılinc and Gümüş (2020) is the only one to use bibliometric methods together with content analysis to analyse the field. For this review, the researchers designed a conceptual framework comprising three dimensions: intellectual structure, conceptual structure and the existing state of the knowledge base (Fig. 2.1). Following a rigorous methodology, the researchers conducted a bibliometric analysis of 118 articles and reviews from 1966 – 2018, out of which 115 were also reviewed for content analysis.



International Research on New Principals

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework for the review of research on new principals.

(Kılinc & Gümüş, 2020, p. 4)

The bibliometric analysis showed that the research output for publications on new principals has increased rapidly. In addition, almost 50% of the total number of publications took place in the last ten-year period (2010 – 2018) (Kılinc & Gümüş, 2020). This analysis, however, also revealed some imbalance with regard to the origin of these publications. For example, more than two thirds of these originate from English-speaking countries. As the researchers suggest, this has serious implications for the knowledge base about new principals given the impact of contextual factors to their trajectory (Kılinc & Gümüş, 2020). From the content analysis, Kılinc and Gümüş (2020) found three main foci within the study of new principals: New principal preparation and development, new principal socialisation process and new principal's role in school improvement plans.

As part of the development for this area of research, two important international research projects lead the way by promoting, developing and contributing conceptually and empirically to a deeper understanding of the arrival of new principals in schools. Firstly, the International Study of Principal Preparation (ISPP) whose contributions since 2004 have exposed the realities of new principals and their preparation in 15 countries (Slater, García-Garduño & Mentz, 2018). Similarly, the International Beginning Principal Study (IBPS), created in 1999, is a cross-national study investigating the experiences of new principals during their first two years (García-Garduño et al., 2011). The vast majority of research had focussed on how new principals confront the known and unknown demands of the job, how they tackle the everyday challenges, make sense of their position (Daresh & Alexander, 2016; Spillane & Anderson, 2014; Spillane, Harris, Jones & Mertz, 2015; Spillane & Lee, 2014) and come to weave their own principal identity (Crow, Day & Møller, 2017; Crow & Møller, 2017; Scribner & Crow, 2012). In some parts of the world, new principals have been formally trained for the principalship, whilst in others, new principals face an abrupt and unprepared start (García-Garduño et al., 2011). In any case, “new principals bring skills, knowledge, beliefs, experiences, and values from their experiences as administrators and classroom teachers that shape their expectations for their new position” (Spillane & Lee, 2014, p. 437). Given the significance and influence of school leadership as outlined earlier in this chapter, gaining more insight into the lives and experiences of new principals is imperative. As expressed by Walker and Qian (2006, p. 298):

It is important that we understand where beginning principals are coming from (in terms of motivation and preparation), what they are expected to do and what they actually do (how effective they are), the problems they face, how to support them (professionally and psychologically) and how to turn them towards ongoing learning and improvement.

The following three sections (2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3) explore theoretical and conceptual frameworks, which serve as different lens for better understanding the presence and trajectory of a new principal in a school. Although the following frameworks also fall under the classification of principal succession, they have been included in this section of this chapter given their specificity on new principals.

2.4.1 Stage theory

Educational leadership researchers have employed several theories for encapsulating and understanding principal succession. In some instances, these models have stemmed from non-school settings, such as in industry and sports where studies on the succession of managers have had a longer existence (Gordon & Rosen, 1981; Ogawa, 1991). Stage theory, for example, has been a useful approach for understanding principal succession as a stretched-out phenomenon, rather than just one single event (Hargreaves et al., 2003). Miskel and Cosgrove (1985), for example, developed a framework for the study of leadership succession, which was an extension to an earlier model devised by Gordon and Rosen (1981). The original model (Gordon & Rosen, 1981) was created as a way of conceptualising the different events and phenomena that occurred during succession and was based on a two-phase model involving (1) pre-arrival and (2) post-arrival factors as part of the dynamics of succession. Four years later, Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) modified Gordon and Rosen's framework to suit the school setting and by adding a third model, which they labelled Succession effects (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Framework to guide the study of leader succession

Pre-arrival factors	Arrival factors	Succession effects
Reason for succession	Demography	Changes in
Selection process	Organizational structure	• Reputations
Reputations of leaders	School culture	• Orientations
Orientation of leaders	Educational programs	• Arrival factors
	Successor actions	
	Community	
	School effectiveness	

(Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985, p. 89)

According to the researchers, the indicators under succession effects represent the changes that occur in the pre-arrival and arrival factors, which are expected to vary as a result of a change of principal (Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985). The authors believe that:

Succession studies can supplement and provide alternative strategies for understanding the nature of leadership in schools. For example, cross-sectional studies of groups and administrators during periods of relative equilibrium do not reveal the full range of variation and complexity in schools and leadership. (Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985, p. 102)

Hart (1985) put the above framework to the test when she undertook a phenomenological study in which she investigated her own succession to the principalship in a Junior High school in the USA. Hart (1985, p. 12), who also divided principal succession into pre-succession, succession and post-succession stages, found that the personal traits of the new principal as well as principal's perceived intentions dominated the narrative.

In contrast, Ogawa's (1991) framework offers a completely different lens for examining principal succession. This framework approaches it from an impact perspective where the interest lies in how individuals experience and make sense of a principal succession (Table 2.2). With regard to the first focus, Ogawa (1991) affirms that succession events are perceived from a number of perspectives, in turn accounting for the difference in individual responses towards them. For some individuals, for example, the succession may be perceived as threatening existing norms, whilst others may interpret succession as reinforcing them. He suggests that these differences are linked to three sets of contextual factors: (1) organisational forms, that is, the relationship between existing organisational norms and the behaviour of the successor, (2) conditions surrounding the succession, which allude to circumstances such as whether the succession was forced or unforced and, (3) characteristics of the succession process, such as the receptiveness of individuals towards the successor and whether these had been part of the selection process (Ogawa, 1991, p. 32).

Table 2.2: General foci for the study of administrator succession

Focus 1	Focus 2
Organizational members' sense-making of succession	Organizational and other contextual factors affecting how individuals make sense of administrator succession Organisational norms Circumstances surrounding succession Characteristics of the succession process Presuccession factors

(Ogawa, 1991, p. 32)

The last factor corroborates Miskel and Cosgrove's (1985) succession effects by stating that prearrival factors need to be considered as much as postarrival factors in order to gain a better understanding of the impact of succession. For Gabarro (1987, p. 20), leader succession (not restricted to educational leaders) includes five stages: (1) taking hold, (2) immersion, (3) reshaping, (4) consolidation, and (5) refinement. The author found that new leaders introduced waves of changes to their organisation usually during the first, third and fourth stage regardless of the type of succession.

In studying 29 principals in Denmark, England and Scotland, Reeves, Moos and Forrest (1998) developed a theory of principal career stages in which they described succession in eight stages, each with an estimated time frame. The three first stages included a reciprocal process of familiarisation between the new principal and the school, followed by three middle stages focussed on the introduction of changes, which tended to be at first superficial and then more substantial. Finally, the last two stages were characterised by a more distributed model of leadership and a "reaching the summit" stage (7), followed by a disinterest from principals, which made them search for other pathways. According to these findings, Reeves et al. (1998) conclude that it can take between four and ten years for a principal to impact positively on the school, coinciding with Fullan's (1991) earlier study and suggesting it takes new principals between five and seven years to make a positive impact. Fullan's model included three stages: initiation, implementation and institutionalisation, however, he issues a caveat by expressing there is really no perfect formula for principal impact (Fullan, 1991). As a way of consolidating findings from previous studies, (Weindling, 1999, pp. 98-99) developed a model, which included six stages:

- Stage 1 - Entry and encounter (first months)
- Stage 2 - Taking hold (three to 12 months)
- Stage 3 - Reshaping (second year)

- Stage 4 - Refinement (years 3 to 4)
- Stage 5 – Consolidation (years 5 to 7)
- Stage 6 – Plateau (years 8 and onwards)

Oplatka's (2012) review of the research on early career stage of new principals draws findings from 34 empirical studies from 1990-2011, which he uses to design a conceptual framework of the early career stage of new principals (Table 2.3). This framework, encapsulated in two concepts (experiences and tasks), is based on the premise that "people progress through a series of distinct occupational stages during their careers, with each stage being characterized by differences in work attitudes and behaviours, types of relationships, employees' needs and aspects of work valued by the employee" (Oplatka, 2012, p. 130).

Table 2.3: Conceptual framework of the early career stage of new principals

Experiences	Tasks
(1) A feeling of 'reality shock', 'surprise' and responsive orientation to the lack of a full understanding of what it is to be a principal or administrator.	(1) Mastering the basic skills and competencies needed to perform effectively and efficiently in principalship.
(2) An overemphasis on technical rather than instructional work aspects, resulting in some sense of frustration and lack of professional fulfilment.	(2) Developing an understanding of the school structure, culture and environment in order to stabilize one's position in the school.
(3) Dealing with multiple tasks and unexpected negative events before acquiring sufficient practical managerial knowledge and skills.	(3) Becoming accepted as a competent educational leader whose staff and stakeholders trust his/her expertise and ability to run their schools.
(4) The co-existence of challenges and enthusiasm along with stress, loneliness, professional insecurity and fear of failure.	(4) Devising a new school vision with staff and constituencies leading to a new change programme for the school.
(5) Uncertain, sometimes suspicious principal–staff relations.	(5) Coping successfully with stress, frustration and negative emotions that accompany the establishment of a new role.

(Oplatka, 2012, pp. 146-147)

Finally, whilst stage frameworks have contributed significantly to the body of research for understanding and improving the lived experiences of new principals, they have not been exempt from criticism, given that stage frameworks can expose a lack of consideration for factors such as gender, culture and context as well as the difficulty posed by deciding when a stage ends and another begins (Oplatka, 2012).

2.4.2 Socialisation theory

Another theoretical lens for understanding principal succession stems from Merton's (1968) socialisation theory, which focusses on socialisation as a bi-directional process through which individuals not only attain the necessary skills, norms and knowledge to perform effectively a role within an organisation, but also where both the individual and the group influence each other (Merton, 1968). In addition, Normore (2004, p. 111) suggests that "a major component of any leadership development or succession process involves socialization, whereby attention is drawn to the leader and the context simultaneously." Socialisation is a reciprocal process (Crow, 2007) and particularly different for new principals in their first three years as the pace of their development is particular due to contextual and personal factors (Oplatka, 2012). Socialisation is complex given the idiosyncratic characteristics of individuals and exacerbated by the fact that organisational socialisation is "highly contextual and contingent on the culture of the organisation" (Bengtson, Zepeda & Parylo, 2013, p. 146). Socialisation theory involves two phases, professional and organisational socialisation (Greenfield, 1985; Merton, 1968). Professional socialisation attends to the knowledge, dispositions and skills needed to be a member of a profession (Crow, 2007). Parkay, Currie and Rhodes (1992), for example, conducted a longitudinal study of new principals where the researchers examined the professional socialisation of 12 new principals during their first three years. The analysis suggests that new principals pass through five stages of professional socialisation: survival, control, stability, educational leadership and professional actualisation (Parkay et al., 1992, p. 56). The results of this study contribute significantly to the field, not only through the experiences of these principals, but also by shedding light on how professional socialisation changes over time. In addition, this study provided suggestions on how best to support principals through these stages, described by the researchers as training, networking and coaching (Parkay et al., 1992).

Organisational socialisation, on the other hand, deals with the values, knowledge and behaviours needed to fill a role in a particular organisation (Hart, 1991). Other scholars define it as the process through which individuals "become socialised into their new occupation" (Spillane & Lee, 2014, p.

434), as it is impossible to suggest that any work setting leaves those who work in it indifferent (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Van Maanen and Schein (1979, p. 37) identified six socialisation tactics together with their opposing counterpart in order to better understand the socialisation process: (1) collective vs individual, (2) formal vs informal, (3) sequential vs random, (4) fixed vs variable, (5) serial vs disjunctive, and (6) investiture vs divestiture. For new principals, learning about the values, behaviours, norms and expectations associated to their new work environment is pivotal for a smooth transition into the principalship and cannot be left to chance (Van Maanen, 1978). As a way of understanding exactly how new principal socialisation occurs, Crow's (2007) study on the socialisation of new English primary school principals, explored the content and methods of the socialisation process of four new principals as well as their perceptions of the process. Crow (2007) found that new principals experience distressing first-year experiences and need to learn how to develop important relationships and self-learning, a learning which occurs through different methods and sources of professional, organisational and personal socialisation.

Organisational socialisation is also a cultural and perspective lens, through which individuals can make sense of what is common ground and what is unfamiliar territory (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). According to Hart (1993), succession and socialisation are not only connected, but also both offer different, yet complimentary epistemological perspectives from which to conceptualise the transition. As explained earlier in this chapter, Hart (1991) emphasises the importance of understanding leader succession from a "multidirectional, social viewpoint" (Hart, 1991, p. 452). A number of studies on new principal's socialisation have shed light on the process itself and the nature of these multidirectional relationships. For example, the 10-year qualitative study conducted by Weindling and Earley (1987), focussed on newly-appointed secondary principals in England and Wales. The significance of this study is manifold. On the one hand, most of the studies on principal succession at the time were from the USA and those that were being conducted in the UK, concentrated on primary school principals (Weindling & Earley, 1987). Funded by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), the study sought to gain insight into the skills that principals needed to fulfil the role, the demands they encountered during their first years on the job and how they managed these demands. In addition, the study would offer recommendations for in-service providers involved in the training of senior management. The study showed that the most significant challenge faced by these principals involved relationships with staff and the management team. Historical factors, such as the influence of the predecessor, appeared to be an important factor in the principals' transition to the role. These principals made efforts to be approachable and visible throughout the school and only began to delegate after their first year. Despite the challenges they faced, these principals agreed that the positives outweighed the

negatives. A number of findings from this study were also confirmed years later when Bengtson et al. (2013) examined the practices of four school systems in USA that controlled the socialisation of new principals as they begin their role. Their findings suggest that both formal and informal socialisation tactics as well as having a sequential step-by-step organisational socialisation plan is an essential element in supporting new principals, particularly during the more fragile stages of socialisation. In other words, a successful transition to the principalship and the nature of the socialisation experiences within it are mostly stated by the organisation. In addition, the organisations need to recognise their role in the socialisation process (Bengtson et al., 2013).

One of the factors that can impact on the success of a change of principal lies in the nature of the succession itself. Using a random sample of 16 new primary school principals, Lee (2015) investigated the relationship between different types of succession and the challenges faced by new principals. She found that successions which had received the least planning resulted in new principals with less information and knowledge, confirming that planned and early socialisation practices put in place by the schools are necessary for effective succession. She also found that “the more discontinuous the new administration’s trajectory is with the previous administration, the greater the staff resistance that the successor principal tends to face” (Lee, 2015, p. 262). Some scholars have suggested that distributing leadership can be a way in which to lessen the negative effects of principal succession, particularly those effects impacting on school culture (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Mascall & Leithwood, 2010). Mascall and Leithwood (2010, p. 372) explain:

When leadership distribution is neither planned nor aligned, then the self-sustaining culture drifts, gradually loses its collective sense of vision and purpose, and becomes increasingly balkanized; each teacher focuses on his or her classroom, works in relative isolation from colleagues, and takes responsibility only for his or her own work. The result is an ineffective organization of “neglect” and “anarchy,” where student achievement may remain unchanged, or even deteriorate. (Mascall & Leithwood, 2010, p. 372)

Hart’s (1993) holistic approach to succession gathers multiple perspectives for understanding and learning about succession; that of the new principal, those affected by the change and thirdly, the interactions that result from those socialisation processes. In her book, *Principal Succession, establishing leadership in schools*, Hart (1993) emphasises the importance of this rounded view for an effective study of principal succession. She explains:

If we examine [succession] only from the perspective of the principal, we fail to explain the history of the event of the school and are unable to account for the conduct of the people involved, but if we go too far in focusing on outcomes and ignore the dynamic mix

of people, processes and contexts that shape succession and the schools and districts in which succession occurs, we lose track of the qualities and power of the individual [and] we fail to tap the uniqueness and creativity of the single person that stimulates much of our interest in leadership in the first place. (Hart, 1993, p. 8)

This contextual “uniqueness” emphasised above, adds the missing element from previous frameworks, by giving equal importance to all affected by succession. As a result of this convergence of leader succession and organisational socialisation paradigms, Hart (1993) suggests three fundamental beliefs about new principals and the schools in which they begin to work. (Fig. 2.2).

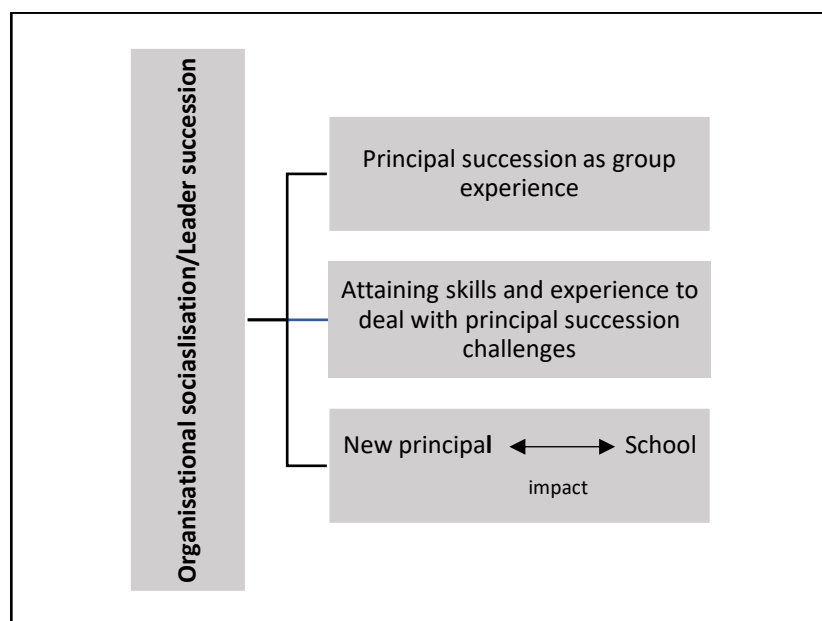


Figure 2.2: Organisational socialisation/Leader Succession Synthesis.

(Hart, 1993, pp. 266-267)

Firstly, principal succession needs to be understood as a group experience where the active players (new principal and school) influence each other, regardless of whether the new principal is a novice or experienced. In addition, Hart (1993) warns that too much emphasis placed on the new principal risks ignoring the impact he or she exerts, similarly, too much focus on the impact may come at the cost of the creativity of the new principal. She adds that, whilst acknowledging the challenges of leader succession and the multiple factors that add to this complexity, those involved can attain the skills and experience necessary to deal with the challenges of principal succession. The third and final observation is that schools also impact on the new principal as much as the new principal

impacts on school environment, relationships and outcomes. Hart (1991) suggests four key themes surrounding organisational socialisation inquiry for succession research: “(a) tactics employed by the organisation; (b) socialisation stages through which new members pass; (c) personal and social contexts which shape the process; and (d) outcomes or effects” (Hart, 1991, p. 453). Weindling and Dimmock (2006), in their longitudinal study of new headteachers in the UK, the researchers devised a conceptual socialisation stage framework of principalship, similar in structure to the one presented earlier in this chapter by Reeves et al. (1998), although specifically aimed at the socialisation process. Weindling and Dimmock (2006) reaffirmed a seven-stage model for new principals’ socialisation, initially developed earlier (Weindling, 1999): preparation, entry and encounter, taking hold, reshaping, refinement, consolidation, plateau (Weindling & Dimmock, 2006, p. 335). Stage three, in particular (taking hold) is expected to expand between three to 12 months and is comparable to other similar first stages found in other studies (Daresh & Male, 2000; Gabarro, 1987; Weindling & Earley, 1987). Crow (2006, p. 310), on the other hand, argues that “[t]he nature of work in post-industrial society and the changes in education, including a knowledge society, technology, demographic changes, and public accountability” call for a different approach to beginning principal socialisation. To this effect, Crow (2006, p. 316) suggests a conceptual framework that extends those concepts outlined by Van Maanen and Schein (1979):

- (1) Content of socialisation (Anticipatory socialisation, Professional socialisation, Organisational socialisation, Personal socialisation, Learning content)
- (2) Sources of socialisation
- (3) Methods of socialisation
- (4) Outcomes of socialisation

For example, Crow (2006) brings forward the socialisation process to the time when teachers are witnessing a principal in action. He also includes students and parents as sources of socialisation, which previously had predominantly only included experienced principals, teachers, university professors and other education providers. In addition, Crow (2006) introduces other methods of socialisation, which he labels as “cultural modes” (Crow, 2006, p. 320) , such as rites, ceremonies, stories and myths. Finally, in terms of outcomes, Crow (2006, p. 321) suggests that “in a post-industrial society where roles are dynamic” so, too, must be the socialisation outcomes as they need to respond to unique contexts. Although Crow’s (2006) framework is based on the reality of new principals in the USA, nonetheless, there are general implications for the understanding of beginning principals’ socialisation in other national contexts.

2.4.3 Internal and external principal appointments

The decision to appoint a principal from within or outside a school can stem from a number of factors. In some school systems, policies may mandate this decision, whilst in systems with high levels of autonomy the choice between an internal or external appointment is not a priority. Carlson's (1961) qualitative study on the succession and performance of a total of 24 superintendents in USA using the origin of the leader (internal or external) as a variable, is one of the earliest studies on leadership succession, and whilst it is focussed on superintendents and not principals, it nonetheless contributes to the research on leadership succession in educational settings. In his study, Carlson defines internal and external appointments as *insider* and *outsider*, respectively. Carlson found that both these groups differed in the importance they gave to place and career, defining the insider as place-bound and the outsider as career-bound. He identified that if the administration of the district was deemed satisfactory, either an insider or outsider would be appointed. However, if the administration was considered to be underperforming, then an outsider would be selected. Carlson explains:

The conditions of employment indicate that the school board will be satisfied if the insider "keeps things as they are," but they expect an outsider to make changes and are only satisfied when he does. School boards expect a creative performance from outsiders and are happy with a stabilizing performance from insiders. Carlson (1961, p. 214)

In addition, Carlson's study suggested that outsiders' success was measured in terms of change, while for insiders, success was defined by how these individuals maintained the status quo, and in "keeping the organization committed as it is" (Carlson, 1961, p. 217). Given that this study focussed on superintendents, it is not possible to ascertain the degree to which an insider and outsider impacted on different groups within a school, a limitation Carlson (1961) admits, however, this study successfully establishes theoretical and practical implications of internal and external school leadership appointments. Years later, Birnbaum (1971) found that outsiders who had been socialised through familiarisation of the role, adequate training, and in situ supervision resulted in less conflictive appointments than those made by insiders. Carlson's (1961) research served as a theoretical framework for later studies on insider and outsider appointments. Hoy and Aho (1973), for example, conducted a study of 60 new secondary principals in USA, both internal and external appointments. In contrast to Carlson (1961), they were interested in how patterns of succession influenced the perception faculty members had on the new principal. They found that those who were insiders seemed less disposed and less likely to be agents of change compared to their outsider counterparts, concurring with the findings claimed by Carlson (1961). In addition, they also concluded that insiders were at a disadvantage. Hoy and Aho explain that insiders confront a social

system that is already defined while the outsider is faced with system that has been “temporarily suspended because of his/her arrival. This has the potential to place the outsider at an advantage with respect to organizational development and adaptation because of the inherent opportunity to reshape the ‘structural and normative patterns of the social system’” (Hoy & Aho, 1973, p. 87). Outsiders were perceived as change agents and less authoritarian, resulting in teachers being more satisfied in their jobs, displaying loyalty and experiencing a high level of morale.

Four years later, Ganz and Hoy (1977) undertook a similar study, this time exploring 60 new principals in elementary schools in USA, out of which half were outsiders and half insiders. This study had two aims, firstly, to measure the principal’s leader behaviour, and secondly, to measure teachers’ reactions to the school and principal. Using a set of scales and questions, the researchers were able to gain data on topics such as authoritarianism, emotional detachment, hierarchical independence and influence, orientation to change, teacher satisfaction and morale, loyalty to the principal, mobility and leadership style (Ganz & Hoy, 1977). The data confirmed some of the differences between insiders and outsiders already established by previous research (Carlson, 1961; Hoy & Aho, 1973); outsiders were more inclined to change jobs for career advancement, cementing the definition of career-bound principals, and they were more frequently described as change agents by their teachers. They did not find, however, any significant differences in patterns of succession and teachers’ job satisfaction, morale or loyalty to the principal. In terms of leadership behaviour, the data did not reveal any significant difference as a result of the pattern of succession where teachers described their principal as non-authoritarian, emotionally detached and being able to influence their superiors (superintendent and school board). The researchers also confirmed that the nature of the social systems for both insider and outsider elementary principals remained the same as for high school principals, thus confirming the advantage of the outsider with regards to organisational development and the opportunity to reshape the structure of that social system. As Ganz and Hoy (1977) point out, the most significant claim from these three early studies on patterns of succession is that change is more likely to arise from an outsider rather than an insider appointment.

In contrast, a large-scale quantitative study investigated the relationship between internal and external principal succession and teachers’ perceptions of principal effectiveness using a survey which included 73 principals and more than 3000 teachers (Johnson & Licata, 1995). By the end of the first year, the researchers found no difference between insider and outsider principals with regards to perceptions of principal effectiveness, although teachers did show more confidence towards insiders as they were perceived to be already familiar with the school norms and culture. The findings from a case study by LeGore and Parker (1997), however, produced very different

results by establishing that an insider new principal displayed characteristics associated with outsiders, inasmuch as the new leader was perceived as a positive power in supporting teachers and initiated changes for school improvement.

Other recent studies have made significant contributions to the insider/outsider debate despite their differences. Chalstrom (2007) investigated internal appointments within the public-school system in Iowa and in contrast with earlier findings (Hoy & Aho, 1973), suggests that the internal hiring of principals needs to be considered as a norm in succession planning. Whitlock-Pope (2010), on the other hand, gave a more comprehensive insight on this debate by comparing the challenges faced by insider and outsider new principals in their first years on the job. Her focus was on the existing advantages (if any) of internal or external appointments, using data collected from three case studies each from a different school system (public, private and Catholic), the findings confirmed that the differences were not at all significant. It could be argued that insiders have some clear advantage as the school environment is not unfamiliar to them and they may have already developed trusting relationships with colleagues. Myung et al. (2011) conducted a study in Florida to determine the extent to which principals were “tapping” teachers as an informal recruitment mechanism in order to encourage teachers in considering a principal role. Using multiple regression to model which principals were more likely to tap and which teachers were more likely to be tapped, they found that the majority of the principals had been tapped by their predecessors. The data also revealed that principals tap teachers who have more middle leadership experience and are better equipped to take on the role. Interestingly, the data also concluded that a disproportion of principals tend to tap teachers who are male and of their own ethnicity (Myung et al., 2011, p. 721).

A later study that examined the relationship between assistant principal promotion (within school, district and external) and employability, showed a significant positive relationship between within-school promotion and employability. The researchers suggest internal applicants are better positioned for principal promotion than external applicants given their knowledge and experience already obtained while working in the same environment (Buckman, Johnson & Alexander, 2017). Moreover, and in contrast to the previous research discussed above, this study also suggests that because internal applicants may be more aligned with the leadership expectations, this provides them with an “organic advantage over external candidates” (Buckman et al., 2017, p. 43). Similarly, Burkhauser et al. (2012) found that internal appointments were more effective than their external counterparts. Favouring the preparation and appointment of internal applicants within school districts was also a theme that emerged from a study on principal succession and professional development, where internal candidates were perceived as being more cognisant of the policies, practices and the culture of their school districts, and thus, were viewed as better prepared and

remained longer in their roles compared to those appointed externally (Parylo & Zepeda, 2015). Given the empirical evidence between employability and internal promotion, these scholars conclude by encouraging assistant principals to consider principal positions within their schools and district. Schools that groom teachers to become future principals can produce positive outcomes, however, this can only occur if principals are trained to identify and develop this talent in a way that is unbiased and transparent, nonetheless, principals should be engaging in the “the daily fostering of current and future leaders” (Fullan, 2002, p. 417).

Only one study sought to examine any connection between the internal or external hiring of principals and minimal student achievement, concluding that hiring type was not a statistically significant factor. It did, however, establish that schools led by internal appointees fared worse than those appointed externally (Buckman & Tran, 2018). Finally, in the longitudinal study from the USA and Canada mentioned earlier, the researchers found those schools that appointed internal candidates as principals provided the best examples of successful principal successions as they were prepared and “groomed to follow their leader’s footsteps and further their achievements within the culture of the school” (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006, p. 19). One area that has not been addressed with regard to internal appointments is the void that is created when the promoted principal assumes his or her role and leaves behind a vacant seat. Whilst it might seem a change of lesser importance, the ramifications this “minor succession” might have on the school community warrants further research.

2.4.4 Challenges faced by new principals

Even in the most planned of successions, new principals face many challenges in their new role which can determine the degree to which they can improve their school and remain on the job (Armstrong, 2014; Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Clarke, Wildy & Pepper, 2007; Clarke, Wildy & Styles, 2011; Crow, 2007; Daresh, 1986; Daresh & Male, 2000; Daresh & Playko, 1994; Dor-Haim & Oplatka, 2020; Draper & McMichael, 2000, 2003; García-Garduño et al., 2011; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999; Marshall, 2018; Northfield, 2014; Oplatka, 2012; Parkay et al., 1992; Parkay & Rhodes, 1992; Quong, 2006; Spillane & Anderson, 2014; Spillane & Lee, 2014; Spillane & Lowenhaupt, 2019; Tahir, Thakib, Hamzah, Said & Musah, 2017; Walker & Qian, 2006; Weindling, 1999; Weindling & Earley, 1987; Wildy & Clarke, 2005, 2008, 2009, 2011; Wildy, Clarke & Slater, 2007; Wildy & Loudon, 2000). This means newly-appointed principals must learn to create their own path and deal with a variety of incoming, outgoing, insider and outsider knowledge (Meyer, Macmillan & Northfield, 2009a; Oplatka, 2012; White & Cooper, 2011). Similarly, new principals are expected to be mindful of their

predecessor's "ghost" (Rooney, 2000, p. 77) given they tend to exercise their role under the shadow of the previous principal (Weindling & Dimmock, 2006). Moreover, "the new principal has to learn basic practical managerial skills, diagnose the school culture and environment, develop leadership capabilities and devise a new school vision" (Oplatka, 2012, p. 129).

Daresh (1986, p. 169) described the main challenges for new principals in three categories: (1) problems with role clarification, (2) limited technical expertise, and (3) difficulties with socialisation to the profession and the system. These problems were also found in later studies (Duke, 1988; Weindling & Earley, 1987). The parallel study conducted by Daresh and Male (2000) on the experiences of 16 new principals in USA and UK, confirmed the "culture shock" experienced by the principals from both groups with regards to the intensity of the role as much as the perceptions of others (Daresh & Male, 2000, p. 95). Moreover, these principals felt they had been assigned to a "honeymoon" period and that some staff had withheld information from them until they had a better sense of the principal's value system (Daresh & Male, 2000, p. 96). An underestimation of the demands of the role and the resilience needed to exercise it was revealed equally by both principals and headteachers. This was often accompanied by feelings of stress, which forced them to devise strategies for recreation and rest. They provide a framework that consists of three parts: self-awareness, socialization and technical and managerial duties. It would appear that they have included socialization theory and tasks and challenges into one framework, plus the self-awareness one.

Similarly, Oplatka (2012) synthesised the main challenges faced by new principals as the "reality shock, insufficient managerial competence, low practical expertise in educational administration, a greater propensity to make mistakes, high levels of stress and a sense of loneliness" Oplatka (2012, p. 144). A longitudinal study in the UK not only examined the challenges faced by new principals, but, more importantly, studied them to see if they had changed over time. The researchers found that over 20 years the challenges remained the same: dealing with the predecessor, the established school culture, underperforming staff and improving school image (Weindling & Dimmock, 2006).

Ironically, principal socialisation can be very individual (Hart, 1991) and feelings of isolation and loneliness are common experiences of new principals, which can become a strong indication of their work experience and, in some instances, their intention to leave (Bauer & Silver, 2018; Bauer, Silver & Schwartz, 2019; Draper & McMichael, 2000; Rooney, 2000; Weindling & Earley, 1987). A mixed-methods study examining the experiences of isolation by new principals in Malaysia, however, found that those principals experienced low levels of isolation, although its causes and solutions resonated with ones found in other similar studies (Tahir et al., 2017). They also found that female principals experienced higher levels of isolation compared to males and also that urban new

principals also felt isolation more strongly than their rural counterparts, two findings which had been exposed in earlier studies.

In several studies the authors have been able to associate this isolation with the ultimate sense of responsibility experienced by new principals (Spillane & Lee, 2014; Weindling & Earley, 1987). Referring to the “occupational socialisation” of new principals, a term used by the researchers to refer to the socialisation of new principals into their new role in a particular school, Spillane and Lee’s (2014, p. 434) study also shed light into the challenges of new principals. Using a sense-making framework, they found an ultimate sense of responsibility to be one of the “reality shocks” faced by new principals, which they suggest contribute to problems of practice, such as task volume, as well as task unpredictability and diversity, which were manifested in feelings of loneliness and stress (Spillane & Lee, 2014, p. 434). In addition, those new principals in the study who had been appointed internally experienced less problems of practice compared to their external counterparts who had assumed the role unwillingly given their prior familiarisation of the school culture and practices. Having said that, by the end of the first three months, problems of practice had intensified for both groups (Spillane & Lee, 2014). The researchers suggest that instilling a sense of shared responsibility in others, may assist in easing the ultimate sense of responsibility felt by a new principal and consequently, problems of practice (Spillane & Lee, 2014). Following on from this study and using the same data, Spillane et al. (2015) explored this idea further by examining new principals’ sense making of their role and its implications for adopting a distributed approach to leadership. They found that the way in which new principals make sense of their role determines their disposition or reluctance to embrace a distributed view on leadership, where the diversity and volume of the work might ignite a disposition to distribute leadership, and their sense of ultimate responsibility constrains it moving them towards a more vertical and heroic approach to school leadership (Spillane et al., 2015). The degree to which these approaches varied was dependent on the school context inherited by these new principals. In schools in desperate need of being salvaged, for example, the volume and mixed range of work as well as the “ultimate sense of responsibility” was greater than in schools which were not in any threat (Spillane et al., 2015, p. 442). Adding to the literature, Spillane and Anderson (2014) found that new principals’ sense making:

emerges from their diagnosis and prognosis of their local schools as organizations” and that organisational legitimacy and integrity manifest differently across schools and set localized puzzles that prime principals’ attention and prompt them to view stakeholders and the relationships between them in different ways. (Spillane & Anderson, 2014, p. 28).

Daresh and Playko (1994) conducted a study with 420 aspiring principals (undergoing principal certification at a university in USA) and 100 practising principals with the aim of establishing the

skills presumed to be important for principals and also to ascertain if these were consistent between aspiring and established principals. The researchers found significant discrepancies between aspiring and existing principals' perceptions of the skills needed to be an effective principal. In particular, aspiring principals placed greater importance on technical skills, whilst experienced principals placed greater emphasis on self-awareness and socialisation skills (Daresh & Playko, 1994). Findings of this nature have significant implications for principal preparation and ongoing development once in the role. New principals require specific supportive strategies in their new role (Hargreaves et al., 2003) and those in practice require ongoing support through formal and informal pathways, particularly of peers outside their school (Armstrong, 2014; Daresh & Male, 2000; Parylo, Zepeda & Bengtson, 2012). Regardless of the volume and nature of preparation programs, special emphasis must be placed on the contextual factors of each school (Bengtson et al., 2013; Draper & McMichael, 2000; Reeves et al., 1998; Spillane et al., 2015).

The challenges faced by new principals from diverse national and cultural settings highlight similarities, yet also differences unique to their cultural and national contexts. In South Korea, for example, one of the major challenges for new principals lies with the significant power exercised by the teachers' union and its influence on school decision making (Kim & Parkay, 2004), whilst in China one of the challenges is the opposite, where new principals struggle to uphold basic working conditions for their staff (García-Garduño et al., 2011). In Chile, on the other hand, the study conducted by Montecinos, Bush and Aravena (2018), which focussed on the challenges faced by new principals (largely elementary principals) compared whether experienced new principals faced different challenges than those faced by first-time principals. Following a mixed-methods approach, the researchers found that challenges faced by new principals could be classified in four categories and that these were not statistically different from one group to the other. These categories included "system categories (45%), people (33%), place (15%), and self (7%) categories" (Montecinos et al., 2018, p. 204). When challenges were grouped according to whether they were external or internal, however, the intensity with which they were experienced differed from one group to another. Experienced principals reported high levels of intensity when the challenges came from within the school (managing down), while for novice principals this was experienced with challenges coming from outside the school (managing up).

In Mexico, a study on new elementary principals' first year in the role, revealed that dealing with teacher lack of motivation and absenteeism are some of the most significant challenges for these new school leaders (García-Garduño, Slater & López-Gorosave, 2010). Finally, a study on 20 new principals in Barbados (Marshall, 2018) found that mentorship from former principals as well as previous experiences in leadership assisted new leaders in transitioning to the role, concurring with

an earlier Canadian study (Armstrong, 2014) in which more than 90% of participants deemed mentoring as the most successful type of support before and after assuming the role.

The following section in this chapter introduces the topics and subject matter that is at the very heart of this thesis and is one of its central concerns. When a new principal steps into their new school for the first time, not only is it important to understand how new leadership is exercised, but also how it is lived and experienced by those at the receiving end of new leadership.

2.5 Teacher responses to a new principal

Teachers seem to be greatly aware of the impact of a change of principal (Hargreaves et al., 2003), and yet the volume of empirical studies in this area is surprisingly low (Meyer, Macmillan & Northfield, 2011; Oplatka & Ben Or, 2019; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018; Zepeda, Bengtson & Parylo, 2012). This is concerning given that gaining more insight into how new leadership is experienced and perceived by those who receive it is equally important (Wahlstrom & Seashore Louis, 2008) since it provides a different perspective on the succession process (Matthews & Crow, 2003) and contributes to the success of the new leader (Daresh & Alexander, 2016). It is also important to recognise teachers as a separate context (Draper & McMichael, 2003) as they are an important source of socialisation for new principals (Crow, 2006). In a similar vein, given that teachers impact directly on student achievement (Hattie, 2009), principals need to be cognisant of how teachers perceive them and the responsibilities associated with the role (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Leithwood & Seashore Louis, 2012). As suggested by Meyer et al., “new principals’ actions are under close scrutiny by teachers as they attempt to understand the implications of the new principal’s administration” (Meyer, Macmillan & Northfield, 2011, p. 22), making it challenging for new principals to motivate and promote their vision to teachers (Benaim & Humphreys, 1997; Dunning, 1996). One of the dilemmas of new principals is having to deal with the multiple expectations from different groups (Daresh & Male, 2000) as well as the response from teachers immediately after taking on the role (Spillane & Lee, 2014), which can impact significantly on social relationships. An example of this is the study of a first-year principal who sought to “recouple” school accountability with a change to teacher instruction, resulting in teachers experiencing a threat to their autonomy, which they labelled as turmoil (Hallett, 2010).

Expectations, values and attitudes impact on how school groups (subordinates) appraise their leaders, while at the same time, communication networks can change as the new leader becomes more acquainted with the new environment (Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985). The findings from a study in the USA on first-year principals (Burkhauser et al., 2012), suggests that teachers’ perceptions of

their own work environment impact directly on their decision to leave their school. This study brought to the surface a number of key strategies employed by these new principals that had assisted them in developing cohesiveness in their schools. These strategies included: “recruiting strong staff immediately, conducting one-on-one meetings with all staff, respecting prior practices and culture, being visible in the classrooms and communicating clear and fair expectations” (Burkhauser et al., 2012, pp. 42-43). Similarly, the study conducted by Johnson, Kraft and Papay (2012), provides substantial evidence to support that teachers’ determination to leave their school is mainly explained by their discontent with their work environment, namely professional relationships, school leadership and school culture, all of which are even more complex in times of change.

With the arrival of a new leader, it is not only the new principal who is involved in the socialisation process. Those individuals who welcome the newcomer also go through this process, which begins during the presuccession stage and continue throughout the new principal’s tenure (Fauske & Ogawa, 1987; Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985). In his search for answers on how teachers made sense of a change of principal and which factors impacted on this sense-making, Ogawa (1991) found that teachers had passed through three stages of postsuccession: Enchantment, Disenchantment and Accommodation (Ogawa, 1991). The enchantment stage was characterised by a positive and benevolent perception of the principal, where through a number of principal qualities, teachers attested to the principal’s commitment to the school. This was followed by a disenchantment stage, born out of a “dramatic change” (the dismissal of a long-standing administrative individual). This stage made teachers feel angered and insecure as they no longer felt the principal was acting in the best interests of the school. The third stage, accommodation, is one where teachers began coming to terms with the situation and feeling that the changes instigated by the principal had had little or no impact on them, particularly if they did not impact on teachers’ classroom practice. Ogawa (1991) identifies this as teacher isolation, that is, when teachers retreat to their classrooms as a way of coping with difficult situations. During this last stage, teachers also felt the principal was probably waiting for the right time before making more significant changes. Ogawa (1991, p. 51) concluded that postsuccession sense-making had been impacted by two sets of factors: a group norm and characteristics of the succession process. In addition, the data also suggested that a general expectation of change and presuccession sense-making also impacted in the way teachers interpreted the succession events. The empirical evidence from both these studies (Fauske & Ogawa, 1987; Ogawa, 1991) contributes significantly to understanding the strong relationship between presuccession and postsuccession sense-making and also about the expectation of change and its relationship with principal succession. This study surfaces some interesting questions, for

example, had the 'dramatic change' not taken place, what impact would this have had on the nature and length of the stages and what implications, if any, might there have been for the stages had the successor been appointed internally. Daresh and Playko (1995) in their study of eight new principals, developed a framework for explaining teachers' reactions a new principal. The authors identified five stages through which teacher reactions could be understood. These were stages that resembled those experienced by terminally-ill patients: denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance (Daresh & Playko, 1995, p. 324) . Whilst it is an important contribution, the caveat is that the data were only collected from principals and not from teachers, therefore, relying solely on the principals' perception of the experiences of others.

Another recurring theme regarding teachers' responses to a new principal is teachers' anticipation and expectation of change that is associated with the arrival of a new principal (Ganz & Hoy, 1977; Hart, 1993; Hoy & Aho, 1973; Johnson & Licata, 1995; Weindling & Earley, 1987). Not surprisingly, principal succession is recognised as one of the "five major change forces" that individually and collectively lead to significant changes in school direction (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006, p. 14). At the same time, principal succession can destabilise the implementation of change initiatives (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Weindling and Earley (1987), for example, found that most teachers did not resist change, moreover, most of them welcomed it, however, it was the way in which change was introduced that could sway their support. The researchers in this study found that teachers granted the new principal a "honeymoon" period before expecting changes to take effect (Weindling & Earley, 1987, p. 208). Similarly, Johnson and Licata (1995) showed that whilst teachers and principals accepted that change was inevitable during succession, teachers experienced anxiety as the anticipation of change made them feel vulnerable regarding their autonomy. The study also confirmed that new principals who were perceived by teachers as strong and visionary did not seem affected by teachers' feelings of vulnerability. The researchers concluded that whilst new principals need to build credibility quickly, they will not be successful if they fail to consider teacher autonomy. Similar findings emerged from another study which suggests staff feel concern for the instability of the school when too many changes are introduced simultaneously by their new leader, even when these were perceived as successful (Burkhauser et al., 2012).

Fewer studies, though no less significant, have examined more closely schools that have experienced high principal turnover and how teachers respond to such impending change. Whether dictated by policy or through unfortunate circumstances, high principal turnover can impact considerably on staff, and school culture alike. Although the majority of these studies are focussed on the Canadian context, they provide extensive empirical evidence on the impact of succession on teachers individually and as a collective (Macmillan, 2001; Macmillan & Meyer, 2003; Macmillan,

Meyer & Northfield, 2005a, 2005b; Meyer et al., 2009a; Meyer, Macmillan & Northfield, 2009b, 2011; Meyer, Macmillan, Northfield & Foley, 2011). These studies confirm that a new principal has the potential to change school culture and either, positively or negatively, affect teacher and school morale, particularly if the newcomer makes changes to structures and policies that teachers have perceived as successful, which can result in high teacher turnover (Moreno, 2019). In his study of principal succession in five high-turnover schools, Macmillan (2001) found that teachers who experienced frequent principal turnover dealt with change differently than those whose change of principal was more sporadic. In the study, teachers commented on how high-principal turnover impacted on their school culture, where often the principal was not considered as an integral contributing member to the culture of the school given his or her short-term presence. Moreover:

When succession is frequent and predictable, however, teachers may react with more than customary caution and anxiety, for they learn to respond not just to one shift but to recurring shifts of direction: not to the endurance influence of one leader who will stay, but to the possibly ephemeral influence of waves of leaders who will all assuredly move on. (Macmillan, 2001, p. 53)

Macmillan (2001, p. 62) suggests that teachers coped with the rapid changes in the principal's office through three stages: (1) Education, where the staff tried to educate the newcomer on the norms and culture of the school. It was also at this time when teachers revealed what was expected of the new principal. If this failed, then came (2) Negotiation, where teachers negotiated the impact of the principal's proposed changes. If a consensus was not reached, this resulted in a last stage of (3) Marginalisation where the new principal was ignored and subsequently, made to use administrative authority or simply leave. In contrast with earlier research suggesting frequent principal turnover as beneficial (Aquila, 1988; Boesse, 1991), Macmillan (2001) concludes that high principal turnover, may have the opposite effect, resulting in resistance and indifference to change, where teachers grow stronger, yet further away from their new leader. Finally, it would seem that high principal turnover seems to be at odds with the research suggesting that it takes at between five and seven years for principals to drive school improvement (Fullan, 2001).

A three-year study of 100 teachers and 12 schools in Canada (Macmillan et al., 2005b) is one of the most significant studies that has explored the impact of principal succession on teachers, specifically on areas such as trust, teacher morale, relationships and values. This study has provided important empirical evidence, which has enlightened the challenging path for both principals and teachers during succession. The researchers, for example, confirm that experience of high principal turnover does impact on how teachers perceive the principalship. At the same time, they found that trust is a critical element when determining positive or negative principal-teacher relationships. "Teachers

need to be able to trust that the principal will support them in their work, and principals need to be able to trust teachers to teach” (Macmillan et al., 2005b, p. 283). They argue that trust can be better understood as a continuum, rather than a hierarchical structure as originally recommended by Bottery (2003). This continuum contains four stages: Role, Practice, Integrative and Correlative (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4: Four stages of trust

Stages of trust	Definition
(1) Role Trust	Teachers trust the principal to function within the legal mandate of the position. That is, the principal will follow the laws, policies and regulations that govern schools and the position.
(2) Practice Trust	After observing the principal’s practice, teachers trust the principal will respond to similar situations similarly.
(3) Integrative Trust	After observation of the principal in a multitude of situations, teachers’ trust is based on their identification of underlying principles on which the principal makes decisions.
(4) Correlative Trust	Teachers’ trust is based on a deep understanding of the principal’s beliefs and philosophy such that the principal and teachers function as a well-choreographed, mutually supportive team.

(Meyer, Macmillan, Northfield, et al., 2011, p. 66)

The researchers caution that some principals may remain “stalled” in one stage, and whether this is positive or negative needs to be explored further (Macmillan et al., 2005b, p. 291). Also, in schools where the new principal is an internal appointment, some of these stages may become compressed.

Oplatka (2011), however, highlights the importance of considering principals’ career tasks when thinking about trust building between new principals and their staff. Meyer, Macmillan and Northfield (2011) also found that the micropolitics that exist between principal and teachers during succession prompted individuals’ status to change as a direct consequence of the arrival of the new principal and that individuals and groups used overt and covert strategies which did impact on how new principals exercised their role (Meyer, Macmillan & Northfield, 2011). In addition, principals who acknowledged the presence of groups as power bases used these to their advantage, while for those principals who ignored them, the impact on the school community as a whole was negative. Findings from a study examining how high principal turnover impacts on teacher morale (Meyer et al., 2009a) revealed that the practices and characteristics of the new principal had the potential to change the culture of the school thus affecting positively or negatively on each teachers. The

findings of their study also concluded that there were many factors that influenced the degree to which teacher morale is affected by leadership succession, namely: “informal leaders, experience level of staff and the degree to which the principal is considered to be an integral part of the school” (Meyer et al., 2009, p. 171).

A limited number of studies have widened the response perspective by including stakeholders other than the new principal and teachers. For example in Israel, Benaïm and Humphreys (1997) also interviewed parents in their study concluding that all stakeholders felt the need to be involved in the succession process. A similar study from Canada, also included the perspectives of the outgoing principal, non-teaching staff, as well as parents and students (Jones & Webber, 2001). Using a staged succession theoretical framework, the authors found that all stakeholders experienced the same stages in their own unique way. Jones and Webber (2001) concluded that powerful relationships within the school had the potential to act as a catalyst for effective principal succession. Duncan and Seguin (2002) also included teachers in their one-case study revealing contrasting perceptions between the new principal’s perception of self and how others perceived her, resulting in her termination 18 months following her commencement. One of the main criticisms in the eyes of teachers and other stakeholders was that the new principal did not pay sufficient attention to teachers. An interesting study linking an internally-appointed principal with teachers’ perception of the internal change of responsibility highlighted the importance of perceptions and the role they play in the succession process (Rivera-McCutchen, 2014). In this study, while the principal did not change her leadership practices, the way in which she was perceived by teachers did change. Teachers expected their once-peer to continue to behave as in the past, and when she didn’t, this resulted in a negative impact on staff.

One of the most recent studies exploring teacher responses to a new principal suggests that the perceived image of the former principal as well as the determinant factors for his or her departure play a significant role in how teachers formulate a perception of their new leader. The findings also suggest that the first one-on-one conversation between the new principal and teachers influences how they respond to the newcomer’s arrival (Oplatka & Ben Or, 2019). In summary, the scholarly work outlined in this section makes a significant contribution to the field, yet more research specifically focussed on the teacher experience during a change of principal is required from broader national and educational contexts.

2.6 Australian studies

Cross-national comparative studies confirm that the challenges facing school principalships in Australia are no different to those being experienced by principalships in other nations (Cowie, 2011; d'Arbon, Duignan & Duncan, 2002; Doneley, Jervis-Tracey & Sim, 2018; García-Garduño et al., 2011; Gronn & Lacey, 2006; Marks, 2013; Wildy & Loudon, 2000). This has led to a significant research output on a number of topics within educational leadership, such as principal succession planning (Gronn & Lacey, 2006; Marks, 2012, 2013; Wildy & Clarke, 2011) and successful school principals (Drysdale, Goode & Gurr, 2009; Drysdale & Gurr, 2011; Gurr, 2009, 2014, 2015), to name a few.

The scholarship on leadership preparation and development in Australia, for example, is one of these topics that has been investigated extensively (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), 2015; Cranston, 2008; Degenhardt, 2013; Dinham, Anderson, Caldwell & Weldon, 2011; Dinham, Collarbone, Evans & Mackay, 2013; Gurr & Drysdale, 2015; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Russell & Cranston, 2012). Unlike the USA and other nations where the preparation of school principals is mandatory and heavily regulated, the minimum requirement for becoming a principal in a government school in Australia is a teaching qualification and teacher registration, although a number of programs exist that offer principal preparation programs. In addition, in faith-based schools, some preparation on faith development is required (Gurr & Drysdale, 2015). Despite this absence of regulation, or perhaps in spite of it, the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), a national body, created the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* (AITSL, 2011) with the aim of providing a generic framework to assist in the preparation and development of principals. Identifying context as an important factor in the development of school leaders, has played an important role in Australia given its characteristics (Dinham et al., 2011). Principal preparation and development of Australian principals face many challenges and the report prepared by AITSL (2015) on the preparation of future principals offered a number of recommendations for ensuring new principals are properly trained for the role.

The most recent review of educational leadership research from Australia —research publications from four Australian journals between 2006 – 2013— reported that 51% of the articles examined focussed on principals alone (Gurr & Drysdale, 2016, p. 201). The small number devoted specifically to beginning principals confirms that published research on this topic in Australia is low (Quong, 2006) and that the most significant research output is attributed to the scholarship of Helen Wildy and Simon Clarke and colleagues (Clarke & Stevens, 2006; Wildy & Clarke, 2005, 2008, 2009, 2011). Their research on beginning principals in rural and small schools in Western Australia and

Queensland, has exposed the added challenges these new school leaders face given their unique contexts, such as remote locations, low student population (sometimes less than 100 students), being a principal and also a teacher, and in many cases, a lack of appropriate preparation before taking up the role. Their findings have also highlighted a dichotomy where novice principals displayed high expertise in teaching and learning, yet poor interpersonal skills proving detrimental to both the principals and the schools. As a result of a decade of research, these scholars devised a conceptual framework for principal preparation, which is structured around four interdependent focal points: “place, people, system and self” (Wildy & Clarke, 2008, p. 735). A study within the International Study of Principals’ Preparation (ISPP), of which Australia is a member, sought to examine whether these novice principals felt prepared to respond to the challenges they faced in their first year in the role (Clarke et al., 2007). The findings within *Phase Two* of this study, revealed principals’ feelings of surprise as they encountered challenges in their first year, which prompted them to re-evaluate some of their preconceived assumptions about the role. In addition, principals reported not feeling sufficiently prepared to face these dilemmas (Clarke et al., 2007). *Phase Three* of this study surveyed 45 beginning principals, also in Western Australia, with the aim of capturing beginning principals’ challenges during their first three years as principals and ascertain in what way preparation programs equipped them to deal with these challenges effectively (Clarke et al., 2011). The survey showed that the three biggest challenges were: “managing paperwork, dealing with poorly performing staff [and] achieving a work/life balance” (Clarke et al., 2011, p. 170). At the same time, the three items for which they felt least prepared were: “dealing with poorly performing staff, applying system policies [and] balancing system imperatives with local needs” (Clarke et al., 2011, p. 170). Another study, also focussed on non-metropolitan schools, was conducted to understand further the challenges faced by female beginning principals in these contexts. By investigating the lived experiences of five female principals, Dunshea (1998) found that women beginning principals are likely to experience gender discrimination and sexism, which seems to be exacerbated by the conservative cultural fabric of these communities.

Quong’s (2006) self-reflective study of his own first year as a principal also brought to the surface the challenges he faced as a novice school leader. Employing an action learning methodology, Quong explained that his biggest challenge concerned “when to act and when not to act” (Quong, 2006, p. 386) and as a way to deal with this issue, he proposes a problem-solving framework informed by three questions: “When should I intervene?”, “Am I ready to confront?” and “What can I learn from the experience?” (Quong, 2006, p. 384). Finally, a study from New South Wales (NSW) examined the career transitions from 15 teachers into the principalship. These individuals had all been recipients of a NSW Quality Teaching Award. Using individual reflective interviews,

McCulla (2012) found that the trajectory from teacher to principalship was deeply “biographical, incremental and developmental rather than predetermined, lock-step or even aspirational” (McCulla, 2012, p. 87), suggesting that preparation programs need to take into consideration the positive and influential impact of social and professional networks, inter-personal dynamics and informal mentoring as these individuals move from teachers to principals.

From a methodological perspective, Australian studies on beginning principals are heavily tilted towards self-reflection and narrative forms of inquiry, which may seem appropriate given the nature of their respective research questions, however, with the aim of gaining knowledge and insight into the whole picture of new principals in schools, more research needs to address other lens from which to acquire a better understanding of this scenario in schools, such as teachers, students, or other school groups. In addition, a search was conducted on doctoral theses from Australian Universities between 2000-2019, which resulted in only seven theses that explored new principals, all of which employed the principals as their exclusive unit of analysis.

2.7 Chapter summary

School principals, new or established, play a central role if they are to lead schools that foster positive learning cultures and produce high student outcomes. Successful principals achieve this through the creation of a culture of trust, the distribution of leadership as well as through the support of professional development initiatives that push staff members to work in collaboration and thus develop social capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). In addition, “[t]he principal’s influence is important precisely because it intersects with and, at its best, galvanizes the leadership efforts of others across space. Whilst principals often feel alone, their actions and efforts are always influencing and influenced by others” (Hargreaves et al., 2003, p. 2). Given the importance of school leadership and the negative impact a change of principal can have on the whole school community, particularly those defined as disadvantaged (Branch et al., 2009), gaining more insight into how new principals experience their role as much as how new leadership is lived by all those in contact with leadership is necessary. Principal succession is unavoidable, having ripple effects on everyone in the school community. New principals face many challenges from the moment they are appointed as they learn skills, knowledge, accumulate experience and develop their identity as school leaders. Principal succession, the same as leadership itself, is a social process and “any type of innovation in a school involves a tapestry of interactions within the community of teachers, school leaders, and the wider community” (Perkins & Reese, 2014, p. 45), and whilst there is empirical evidence for understanding the consequences that a change of principal can have on the school community

(Snodgrass Rangel, 2018) an extra lens is needed. Further research is required to understand the impact of a new principal, how this impact is perceived by teachers and what repercussions this may have on their professional lives.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the methodology employed for this study is presented, beginning with a description and justification of this study's research design, with specific focus on case study approach, followed by a discussion on the study sample. This section presents a description of the data collection tools employed together with the process of analysis and interpretation of the data. Issues regarding ethical considerations, trustworthiness and rigour are then outlined, following a description of the delimitations and limitations of the study.

3.2 Research design

The decision for adopting a particular research design needs to be informed by one's own stance about the knowledge and reality of the topic (Bush-Mecenas & Marsh, 2018), the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of what is already known and, ultimately, the questions that guide the research. The epistemological stance of this study is constructivism, where individuals seek to understand and make sense of their world. To this effect, focussing on perceptions is appropriate. For this study, perception is defined as "an individual's access to experience and interpretation in the world" (Munhall, 2008, p. 607). Similarly, Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that individuals achieve this through the development of "subjective meanings of their experiences", which tend to be socially and historically negotiated (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 24). Taking this stance, the role of the research is to get as close as possible to how participants perceive and make sense of a situation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moreover, multiple perceptions of a given experience, as in the case of this study, become the fabric of a pluri-narrative world (Munhall, 2008).

This study employed a qualitative methodology through the use of a collective case-study approach. A qualitative methodology best suited this type of research given the interpretative nature of qualitative inquiry where the core of the investigation is concerned with how people make sense of experiences, how they construct their worlds and what values they assign to those experiences (Merriam, 2014). By using the arrival of a new principal to a school as a situation, the approach was to observe, describe and interpret the nature of this experience through an understanding of how teachers perceived their new principal, responded to his/her practices and reflected as to how these perceptions affected their work environment (Moreno, 2019). At the same time, this research investigated the perceptions that new principals have of themselves and how they compare to

those formulated by teachers (Moreno, 2019). The choice to conduct a qualitative method research for this study was also grounded on the assumption that it is through this method that contextual uniqueness and significance of perceptions would best be brought to light, understood and interpreted (Patton, 2002). Qualitative data are focussed on “people’s lived experiences [and] are fundamentally well suited to locating the meanings people place on the events, processes, and structures of their lives and for connecting these meanings to the social world around them” (Miles et al., 2020, p. 39). Knapp (2017) suggests that the practice of qualitative research design is not linear, but rather much more dynamic and relational triangle (Fig. 3.1), where the researcher looks for a “converging solution” to the research questions (Knapp, 2017, p. 33). In addition, he believes this triangle model is specifically useful for novice scholars as it provides the researcher with reference points that can assist in securing a high-quality research design since, “[i]n high-quality designs, framing ideas, methodological strategy choices, and research questions all map on to each other, and each justifies the others” (Knapp, 2017, p. 44).

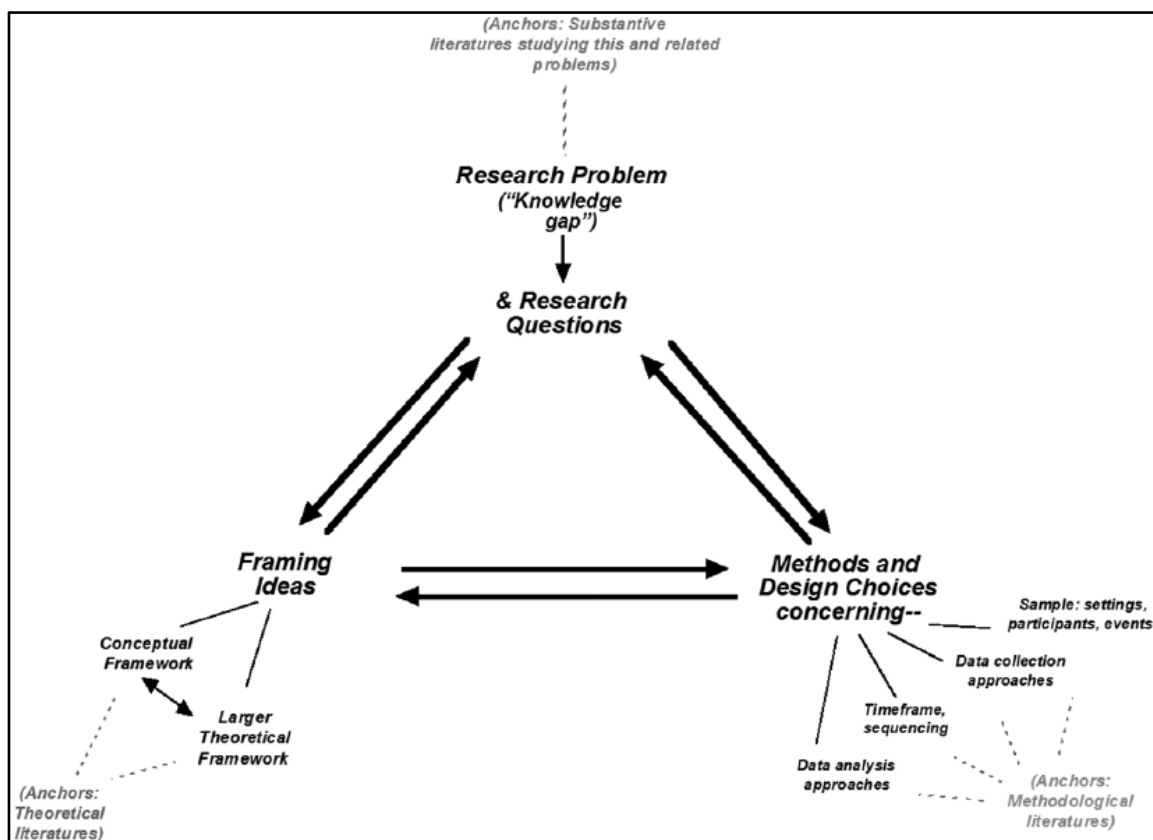


Figure 3.1: The qualitative research “design triangle”.

(Knapp, 2017, p. 34)

3.2.1 Qualitative research in educational leadership

Qualitative research has been widely employed by scholars in advancing the knowledge base of educational leadership. In particular, it is this type of methodology that has contributed to a wider and deeper understanding of school leaders operate, yet Brooks and Normore (2015, p. 799) argue that “there is relatively little methodological literature devoted to describing and considering issues specific to the qualitative study of educational leadership”. According to Knapp (2017, pp. 28-29),

[E]ducational leadership brings certain aspects of qualitative design into view, more than might otherwise be the case...leadership generally seeks to influence many aspects of the organization, group, or community, and as such closely observing a wide range of events and activities provide potential qualitative insight into the exercise or effects of leadership...[b]ecause leadership is so dependent on relationships, qualitative interviewing that captures both ends of these relationships can be particularly helpful.

Ärlestig, Day and Johansson (2016a, p. 8), also attest to the employment of qualitative methodology when investigating principals, as this methodology can contribute rich data regarding the nature of principals’ work and its environment, including “principals’ values, behaviours and tasks; teacher motivation, emotions, efficacy and classroom practices; school culture, identity, organisational trust; and the distribution of leadership”. The field of educational leadership has employed qualitative research to explore a number of concepts such as perceptions (Brooks & Normore, 2015), given that through this avenue researchers are able “to understand multiple realities that are socially constructed based on these perceptions. Perceptions are interpretations, and for most individuals, interpretations become their truth. Thus perceptions are extremely powerful and influential in human thought and behaviour” (Munhall, 2008, p. 2). In his study of how a faculty made sense of principal succession, Ogawa (1991) justifies employing a qualitative methodology given that the aim of his study was to understand how teachers reflected on and acted towards the change of principal. This thesis, similarly, aimed to gain an understanding of how teachers perceived and interpreted their new principal and the impact it had on their professional lives.

3.2.2 Case studies

This study employed a collective case study methodology, where each case constituted a school with a new principal. Case studies are bountiful in educational research, yet there continues to be uncertainty regarding its definition (Merriam, 2014). Whilst definitions converge on many levels, they also distance themselves depending on their emphasis. Merriam, for example, defines case study as an “in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (Merriam, 2014, p. 40).

Concurring with this definition, is the one offered by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), who define case study as a “unique example of real people in real situations” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 289). Yin (2014), on the other hand, defines case study as a twofold definition (Fig. 3.2), which comes across as a more holistic approach to its understanding by addressing not only the phenomenon and the context, but also the processes of validity that accompany the research.

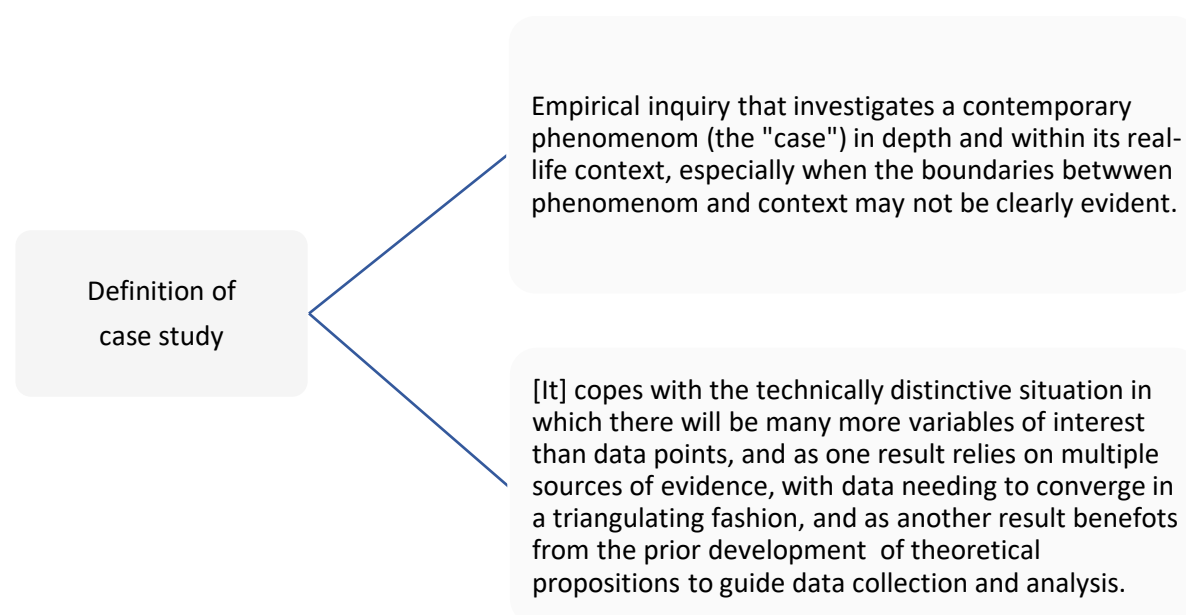


Figure 3.2: Twofold definition of case study.

(Yin, 2014, pp. 16-17)

There have been many attempts to classify case studies according to their description or function (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2014). Stake’s (2005, p. 437) classification of a case study being instrumental, resonates with this study as in his view, instrumental case studies provide an insight into the issue or seek to redraw generalisation. In these types of case studies, the case (in this study, the schools) are of secondary importance as they play a supportive role in the facilitation of the understanding of the phenomenon (the change of principal).

For this study, three case studies were used in order to gain richer and more compelling data and interpretation. According to Merriam (2014), case studies can be characterised by being either descriptive, particularistic or heuristic. This study, in many ways, has elements of all three

characteristics. For example, the focus on the particular event or phenomenon (the arrival of a new principal to the school). This specificity on an event makes it a good approach for questions or situations arising from everyday life. This study also had a descriptive focus inasmuch as the data collected were rich and a thick description of how the participants lived and experienced the phenomenon. Lastly, this study was also heuristic in the sense that it intended to “illuminate the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study... extending the reader’s experience, or confirming what is known” (Merriam, 2014, p. 44). As discussed in Chapter Two, the research on how teachers respond to and experience the arrival of a new principal to a school is scant, and so through a case study methodology, this study referenced what is already known, and at the same time contributes new knowledge on the topic.

Collective case study is one case study design. Also known as multicase, cross-case or multisite studies, collective case study is useful for exploring a “phenomenon, population or general condition” (Stake, 2000, p. 437). This type of design allows for in-case analysis followed by cross-case analysis where commonalities and differences between case studies can be examined. In collective case study design, the individual cases maintain their individuality, however, without excluding them from belonging to the collection as a result of their idiosyncrasies (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As Stake (2006, p. vi) explains: “[e]ach case to be studied has its own problems and relationships. The cases have their stories to tell.” In this study, each case was analysed separately (Chapters Four, Five and Six) followed by a cross-case analysis and discussion (Chapter Seven). Guided by the research questions, this design assisted in understanding how teachers from each school responded to the presence of the new principal in the school, taking into consideration school contextual factors, whilst the cross-case analysis uncovered common perceptions and responses from participants from all three schools as well as the differences experienced.

Case studies, as with all methodologies, have strengths and limitations. Case study design offers the opportunity to study real-life and complex situations taking into consideration many variables that can impact on the phenomenon being studied. At the same time, case studies result in a rich and holistic report of a phenomenon (Merriam, 2014). Similarly, case studies can pose limitations, however, these limitations should be understood in relation to the nature of the problem being studied and in its effective capacity to answer the research questions rather than on the methods alone. Cohen et al. (2011, p. 293) caution that if case studies are not carried out properly, they run the risk of not being “easily open to cross-checking, hence they may be selective, biased, personal and subjective”. A known criticism of case study design surrounds its limited generalisability. Yin (2014, p. 21) argues that the same question can be asked of experimental studies and adds that case studies can be “generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes”.

Erickson (1986), however, points out that the generalisability of case studies lies in the particular, where what is learned can be transferred to comparable situations.

3.3 Research questions

This study addressed three research questions:

4. How do teachers perceive their new principal?
5. How does this perception impact on teachers' work environment?
6. How can teachers be supported during a change of principal?

3.4 Study sample

3.4.1 Research sites

The data for this study were collected in three schools in Metropolitan Melbourne (Table 3.1). All had a new principal for at least one year and no more than two years. This delimitation has been informed by prior research on stages of new principals, where a new principal has been positioned within the first two years of appointment. In the framework developed by Weindling (1999), this encompasses entry and encounter, taking hold and reshaping (see section 2.4.1 herein). The choice of three case studies is based on the scope of this study (D.Ed). The schools were chosen by their availability and willingness to participate. The research sites included school campus(es) and in the case of Case study One, other sites external to the school where meetings/gatherings with the school community were held. Whilst it was a condition of the nature of this study that all three case studies needed to include a new principal, the sample has been enhanced by the diverse characteristics of these case studies, such as type of school, principal career trajectory, the nature of the appointment, etc. It is believed that "the greater the variation across the cases, the more compelling an interpretation is likely to be" (Merriam, 2014, p. 49).

Table 3.1: Participating schools

School name (pseudonym)	School type	Student population	Teaching staff	Appointment Type	Principal career trajectory
Kingston College (KC)	Independent ELC – Year 12 Co-educational	1913	230	Internal	Novice (Male)
Summerhill College (SC)	Independent ELC – Year 12 Co-educational	764	118	External	Novice (Female)
St Frances College (SFC)	Catholic Year 7 – 12 Girls only	1043	95	External	Experienced (7yrs) (Female)

3.4.2 Research participants

The participants for this study included the principal and 12 teachers from each school, totalling 3 principals and 36 teachers. In multi-campus schools (Kingston College and Summerhill College), six teachers from each campus were chosen in order to have equal representation from each school campus. Other than the principal, the participants were chosen through purposeful selection “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). Invitations to participate were sent out to all teachers from each school, with the only condition being that they had to have been employed at the school before the change of principal had taken place. Once consent forms were completed, participants were chosen from each school, which as a whole represented a diverse range of attributes such as gender, age, years in the teaching profession, years employed in the school and teachers with and without a leadership role of some kind. These criteria are important as they allowed the researcher to gather the perspectives and perceptions of individuals, whilst belonging to the same group (teachers). Chapters Four, Five and Six, corresponding to Case study One, Two and Three respectively, include the distribution of these attributes.

Table 3.2: Research participants

School name (pseudonym)	Principals	Teachers	
Kingston College	1	12	Campus A 6
			Campus B 6
Summerhill College	1	12	Campus A 6
			Campus B 6
St Frances College	1	12	
Total no. of participants	3	36	

3.5 Instruments for data collection

Case study data collection can be obtained from a number of sources. Yin (2014, p. 105) suggests six sources that are particularly useful for this type of design: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation and physical artefacts. The data collection tools employed for this study included:

- Semi-structured interviews
- Non-participant observations
- The examination of relevant school documents.

These will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are considered one of the most common tools for collecting qualitative data (Merriam, 2014). Conducting effective interviews, however, requires careful preparation. Interviews need to be purposeful and need to be guided by the epistemological stance of the researcher(s), the identified problem and the research questions (Merriam, 2014). In-depth interviews also assist in capturing change over time (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Patton (2002) justifies interviews as the most effective tool for collecting data that assists in eliciting perspectives and sense-making from its participants. He explains:

We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The

purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective.
(Patton, 2002, pp. 340-341)

Given that the first two research questions of this study invited participants to share their perceptions of a new principal and the impact, if any, this perception had on their professional life at the school, it was decided that semi-structured interviews would be best suited for the type of responses the researcher was seeking. Semi-structured interviews offer flexibility, allowing the participants to "define the world in unique ways" (Merriam, 2014, p. 90). In addition, this flexibility is also shown with regards to the order in which the questions are posed to the participants (Lewis-Beck, Bryman & Liao, 2004). Interviews are effective tools as they can ask people about their past and future and can provide aspects of their identity otherwise undisclosed. Semi-structured interviews enable respondents to include context-specific and rich data to explain their responses and also to avoid the limitations of pre-set categories.

One of the ways to secure good data from interviews is to ask good questions (Merriam, 2014). The design of the semi-structured interviews for this study was guided by the model created by Rubin and Rubin (2012), which the authors label "Responsive Interviewing Model". They explain:

Responsive interviewing is a style of qualitative interviewing...[t]he pattern of questioning is flexible; questions evolve in response to what the interviewees have just said and new questions are designed to tap the experience and knowledge of each interviewee. (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 36)

According to the authors, this model is defined by four characteristics: (1) An emphasis on the search for content and richness, whilst at the same time accepting the complex nature of real life, (2) Both the interviewer and the interviewee's personalities impact the content of the interview, (3) The interview is characterised by an exchange that takes place within a meaningful, yet temporary, relationship, (4) Its flexibility (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 38). This model proposes a way of conducting in-depth, interviews based on three types of questions: Main questions, Follow-up questions and Probe questions (Figure 3.3). Table 3.3 provides a sample of the principal and teacher interview questions and how they assisted in answering the research questions.

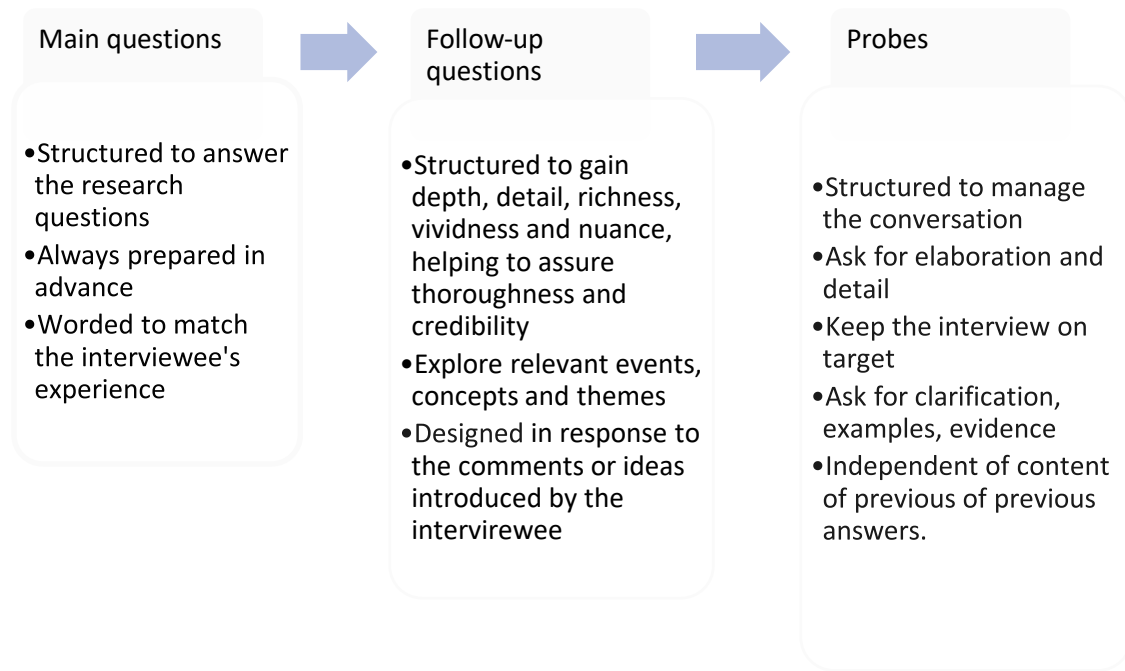


Figure 3.3: Responsive Interviewing Model.

(Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 119)

Table 3.3: Sample of principal and teacher interview questions

Research questions	Principal interview main questions (sample)	Teacher interview main questions (sample)
How do teachers perceive their new principal?	<i>How would you describe your leadership? / What's given you your strong sense of self?</i> <i>Can you recall what were the main goals you wanted to achieve in your first 12 months in the role? / What informed those goals? / Have you achieved that? / What are some of the obstacles you have encountered along the way?</i> <i>How do you know you're doing a good job? / How you get feedback about your work?</i>	<i>How did you experience the arrival of the new principal?</i> <i>What thoughts were running through your head, when you heard him/her address the staff for the time?</i> <i>Tell me about the new principal, what is he/she like? / Can you give me some examples of what that looks like in the day-to-day?</i>
How does this perception impact on teachers' work environment?		<i>Has the presence of a new principal changed the way in which you perceive or relate to your school? / How has this made you feel?</i> <i>Has the arrival of a new principal had any impact on your role as a teacher? / In what way is it different?</i>
How can teachers be supported during a change of principal?		<i>Is there anything you feel the new principal could have done in order to support you and your colleagues during this leadership transition?</i>

Rubin and Rubin (2012) conceive depth as the ability to ask about different points of view as well as a way of producing richness through the emergence of many ideas and themes, including those that may have not been anticipated at the start of the research. They define 'vividness' as a way of obtaining "a realistic picture that comes alive", whereas nuance is concerned with the presence of "positions between the extremes, as well as shades of meaning" (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 105).

Two distinctive semi-structured interviews were designed for this study: one for teachers and one for principals. Whilst the first research question is aimed at understanding teacher perceptions of new principals, it was also important to gain insight into how principals wanted to be perceived and how they thought teachers perceived them. Including principal interviews allowed the researcher to use these rich data by comparing them to that obtained through teacher interviews. For the teacher interviews, main questions were concerned with the core of the research problem and the research questions, in this case, teachers' perceptions of their new principal, the impact of this perception on their professional lives and teacher support during a change of principal. Follow-up questions were structured around gaining greater depth to responses and to elicit concrete examples of what the perception of the new principal and its impact looked like and how they were experienced. Probe questions were raised spontaneously and either elicited more clarification or were used to bring back the participant to the topic. Principal interviews, on the other hand, were divided into two areas: (1) the individual and the role (self-description, leadership practices, career trajectory, professional socialisation and leadership identity), and (2) the individual and the context (organisational socialisation, goals, aims, vision for the school, school improvement plans).

Interviews for this study were conducted on school sites and lasted between 45-65 minutes. Interviews were audio recorded to facilitate data precision and analysis. Once transcribed, they were sent back to each participant for checking (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In order to assure confidentiality, the names of the schools as well as the names of all participants were assigned pseudonyms through a coding system (e.g. 1/T3 = Case study One/teacher three) or by assigning a particular person with a first name pseudonym (e.g. Lisa).

Despite their effectiveness, interviews can pose challenges. Some of these may be ethical where the participants may feel uncomfortable in revealing personal feelings or emotions, which they had not intended to reveal (Cohen et al., 2011; Merriam, 2014). Interviews can also reveal bias "due to poorly articulated questions" (Yin, 2014, p. 106). Interviews also tend to be time consuming and intensive (Creswell, 2012; Kervin, Vialle, Herrington & Okely, 2006).

3.5.2 Non-participant observations

Observation is a research method that allows researchers to observe and record systematically people's actions, behaviours and interactions (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011, p. 170). They provide data collection in the natural setting where the phenomenon occurs, although still requiring the same level of systematic approach and rigour as interviews and other data collection tools (Merriam, 2014). Through the use of observations, researchers are able to obtain "thick description of the social setting, the activities and the people studied, in order to understand culture through interpretations rather than from pre-established laws or frameworks" (Hennink et al., 2011, p. 170). Observations complement interviews by providing the researcher access to non-verbal communication. Brooks and Normore (2015) recommend observations as a useful tool for acquiring knowledge from non-verbal communication. They explain:

Observations can be useful in myriad ways as a means to check for nonverbal cues and expression of feelings (e.g. movement of eyes, head, gestures, etc.), determine who interacts with whom, grasp how participants communicate with each other, and check for how much time is spent on various activities. (Brooks & Normore, 2015, p. 801)

The role of the researcher during observations can be understood as a continuum, from being a full participant to a full observer (Merriam, 2014). For this study, a non-participant approach was employed where the researcher was identified as such, yet she did not take part in any of the activities taking place in the setting being observed (Bryman, 2004). In order to contribute to the research questions and as a complementary tool for interviews, for this study observations were chosen where the principal interacted with staff and/or students. These observations were in both formal and informal settings and took place in school grounds, as well as off-site settings such as community and event venues. In total, ten observations per school took place. The nature of the gatherings that were observed included staff meetings, leadership team meetings, professional development sessions, social events, daily briefings, meetings with prospective families, and school tours.

The limitations of observations as a research tool allude to the high subjective nature of human perception (Merriam, 2014). Accessibility can also be a limitation. In order to avoid bias and aim for a high level of objectivity, the researcher adopted Merriam's (2014, pp. 120-121) six-point checklist for recording highly descriptive field notes, which includes:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. The physical setting | 4. Conversation |
| 2. The participants | 5. Subtle factors |
| 3. Activities and interactions | 6. Researchers' own behaviour |

Information regarding the observations that took place for each case study are outlined in Chapters Four, Five and Six.

3.5.3 Documents

Documents are an excellent source of data as they are oblivious to the presence of the researcher or any other type of manipulation (Brooks & Normore, 2015; Merriam, 2014) and they tend to be most useful when combined with interviews and observations (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Researchers have different ways of categorising documents. Merriam (2014), for example, mentions two groups: public records and personal documents. Documents can also include audio and audio-visual material.

For this study, the rationale for using documents was multi-fold. Firstly, to support the evidence gathered through interviews and observations; secondly, to examine how the appointment of the new principal had been communicated to the school community. In addition, it was also important to gain insight into how new principals were using written communication to enact their leadership and to refer to some of these documents during interviews. The documents sighted included public records, school archival material, school public website, newsletters, yearbook, meeting agendas, minutes of meetings, memoranda, news clippings, as well as non-written material such as videos from the school websites and radio interviews. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter were also examined.

Working with documents can pose some challenges. Documents need to be examined carefully, with special attention given to their purpose and audience. For this reason, Brooks and Normore (2015, p. 802) believe researchers need “to ascertain the degree to which such documents represent an idealized or espoused perspective on the work rather than an actual or critical perspective”. Failure to do this may result in biased and misinformation. Verifying the authenticity and accuracy of documents was undertaken by checking authorship, date, purpose, originality, and whether the document was a primary or secondary source (McCulloch, 2004; Merriam, 2014). Access to some school documents can also be an obstacle. For this study, principals were generous in providing almost unlimited access to material requested by the researcher.

3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

Choosing the correct approach for analysing the collected data requires an in-depth understanding of the type of data gathered and matching the most effective analysis method to assist in

interpretation. One thing is to have plenty of data, and another is to have the ability and competency to understand, interpret what the data represent, and convey it convincingly. The analysis of qualitative data is best done early and concurrently with the data collection, making this process one of the distinctions from quantitative data analysis (Merriam, 2014). In a similar vein, Day and Gurr (2018, p. 350) agree that by doing so “the two [data collection and analysis] become closely integrated”. This study employed a data analysis method devised by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2020).

Based on an earlier model designed by Miles and Huberman (1994), Miles et al. (2020, p. 40) visualise qualitative data analysis as “three concurrent flows of activity comprised of data condensation, data display and data conclusion/verification” together with the data collection (Figure 3.4). This model supports the interactive and organic nature of qualitative data analysis mentioned above (Day & Gurr, 2018; Merriam, 2014).

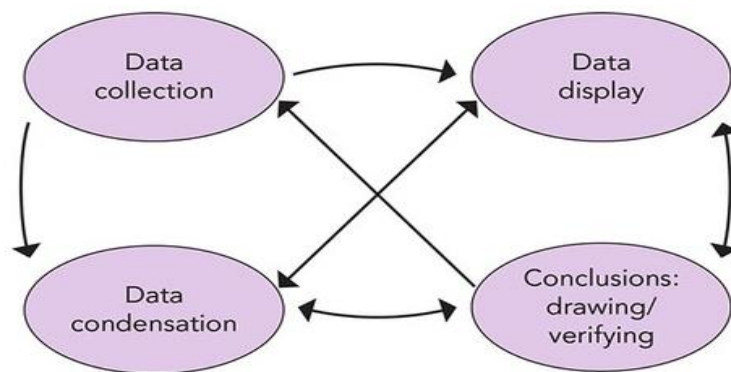


Figure 3.4: Components of qualitative data analysis: Interactive model.

(Miles et al., 2020, p. 44)

In this model, the data are made stronger through condensation, as opposed to reduction. This is achieved through an ongoing process of “selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and/or transforming the data that appear”(Miles et al., 2020, p. 40). In the case of this study, this came from the interviews, observations and documents. The data analysis comprised two stages: within-case analysis followed by cross-case analysis. The data condensation process for both stages consisted of two steps:

- First cycle coding
- Second cycle or pattern codes

(Miles et al., 2020, pp. 131-132)

Codes are classifications or “labels that assign symbolic meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (Miles et al., 2020, p. 132). Saldaña (2016, p. 4) explores further this symbolic nature by stating that a code “assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data”.

Interviews were transcribed within 48hrs of being conducted in order to begin first cycle coding soon after that. Field notes from observations as well as annotations from documents sighted were also completed soon after so that coding could be done with as much of the data collected at hand. Once first cycle coding was completed for all data, second cycle or pattern codes were identified and categories and sub-categories were created (Table 3.5 and Table 3.6) in order to allow for concepts and themes to emerge. A variety of coding types were used, during the first and the second cycle, such as descriptive, In Vivo, process and attribute coding, amongst others (Miles et al., 2020). The analysis across the three cases was informed by the emerging themes from each case study, which allowed comparing similarities and differences between cases.

Researcher: How does she do that?

C/T10: Well, partly, she's got a quirky sense of humor. She's out there with the girls. It's not uncommon for her just to stick her head into a classroom. She'll say: "Is it okay if I come in?". She'll walk in and she'll say: "hello girls, everyone good, everyone learning stuff?". She's invited the girls to the morning teas that she has with the girls and she also did the same last year as well. So, she's visible, she's approachable, she's got a quirky sense of humor. So, I think that helps her to get people onside rather than have them offside and that seems to be the way in which she goes about her business, which is good.

Researcher: And this perception that you have formulated of her when she arrived has that evolved or changed in any way almost 18 months down the track?

C/T10: No, I can't say it has. She struck me, as I said, as someone who was professional and committed. She had a vision and that hasn't changed at all.

Researcher: How would you describe her leadership, how did she lead, what does that look like?

C/T10: Inclusive an empathetic, might sum it up?

Researcher: Does she consult?

C/T10: She does, she invites consultation, but I still have the opinion that she knows what she wants to achieve. I think she would be prepared to modify it or to vary a little if there was weight of opinion that supported that, but one of the things I like about what she's done so far is that she does have a clear vision of what she wants the school to be and the school to achieve and she works

Coding Density

- 14u T Humours
- 14r T Intelligent-knowledgeable
- 19d Socialisation
- 16h T Providing feedback to Ppal
- 10 T Appointment
- 24b T Informal indicators
- 23 T Overall impact of Ppals
- 15d T Student-centred
- 18c T P Impact on T & L
- 21 T Nature & Pace of change
- 14n T Strong-confident
- 12a T ES Positive-Benefits
- 14a T Visible
- 14p T Approachable
- 15a T Visionary
- 14g T Inclusive
- 14v T Supportive
- 15b T Consultative
- 15k T Goal-driven
- 15e T Open-minded

Figure 3.5: Nvivo 12 sample of coding and thematic analysis process.

Home Create Data Analyze Query Explore Layout View			
Application		Window	
Coding		Detail View	
DATA	Name	Files	References
Files	12a T ES Positive-Benefits	18	38
File Classif.	12b T ES Negative-Challenges	2	4
Externals	13 T P Leadership expectations	32	135
CODES	14 T Principal Perception	0	0
Nodes	15 T P Leadership perception	0	0
CASES	15a T Visionary	21	47
NOTES	15b T Consultative	26	54
SEARCH	15c T Values teachers	26	54
MAPS	15d T Student-centred	17	32
	15e T Open-minded	14	16
	15f T Ethical	21	43
	15g T Distributed-empowering	14	31
	15h T Impulsive	3	13
	15i T Collaborative	6	11
	15j T Micromanaging	1	7
	15k T Goal-driven	21	38
	16 T PT Relationship characteristics	0	0
	17 T Impact of ppal on Teachers	0	0
	17a T P impact on Tmorale	29	75
	17b T P Impact on Tmotivation	9	19
	17c T P impact on sense of belonging	34	44
	17d T P impact on T-T relationship	28	30
	17e T P impact on T-S relationship	31	34

Figure 3.6: Nvivo 12 sample of use of categories and sub-categories.

3.6.1 Data management and display

Data display (Figure 3.4) refers to the way in which the data were organised and managed in order to maximise “analytic reflection and action” (Miles et al., 2020, p. 40). Similarly, Yin (2014), emphasises the importance of having all data in one place, which he refers to as the case study database. Merriam (2014) adds that keeping everything in the one place is even more indispensable for multiple case studies.

The qualitative analysis computer software, NVivo v12 (QSR International Pty Ltd.) was used not only for data analyses, but also for storing and managing all data collected. This software is most suited for qualitative analysis given its capacity in organising, classifying, categorising content and themes within and across cases (Figures 3.5 and 3.6). Matrices were also used for assisting with the analysis and a with providing a more comprehensive visual display of the data, not only for the researcher, but also for reporting the data. The matrices employed were generated by NVivo software and later converted to Excel or Numbers (Mac spreadsheet program) (Table 3.3). Other matrices were created by the researcher using the aforementioned programs.

Table 3.4: Sample of matrix employed to display data analysis

+ Interviews Observations Documents Teacher Ppal Perceptions T Ave / Ppal Self-perception																
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P																
Node14 Matrix																
	A : AT01	B : AT02	C : AT03	D : AT04	E : AT05	F : AT06	G : AT07	H : AT08	I : AT09	J : AT10	K : AT11	L : AT12		Ave/Ts	Ppal	
1 : 14a T Visible	3	11	4	5	3	3	3	7	7	4	5	9	64	5.33	11	
5 : 14e T People person	3	5	4	0	0	2	1	1	1	3	0	2	22	1.83	10	
19 : 15e T Values teachers	1	2	5	0	0	0	0	4	2	3	1	0	18	1.50	10	
3 : 14c T Authentic	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	3	0	3	2	0	15	1.25	7	
17 : 15c T Visionary	1	3	1	2	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	2	14	1.17	7	
9 : 14i T Goal-driven	0	3	0	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	13	1.08	6	
18 : 15d T Consultative	1	1	4	4	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	13	1.08	6	
15 : 14o T Self-regulating	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	4	0.33	6	
7 : 14g T Inclusive	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	5	0.42	5	
23 : 15i T Distributed	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	2	0	7	0.58	4	
20 : 15f T Student-centred	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	0.58	3	
2 : 14b T Approachable	5	5	2	5	3	3	6	2	5	3	1	5	45	3.75	1	
11 : 14k T Casual-Relaxed-Outgoing	1	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	1	3	2	1	15	1.25	0	
22 : 15h T Principled	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	3	3	0	2	13	1.08	0	
16 : 14p T Friendly	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	3	0	3	11	0.92	0	
8 : 14h T Energetic-Passionate	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	11	0.92	0	
4 : 14d T Good communicator	2	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	9	0.75	0	
6 : 14f T Trustworthy	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	1	1	9	0.75	0	
10 : 14j T Accessible	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	0.42	0	
21 : 15g T Open-minded	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	5	0.42	0	

3.7 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations have implications for how research is conducted, interpreted and maintained (LeCompte, 2015). With regards to the conduct of research, this study followed the rules and guidelines outlined by The Melbourne Graduate School of Education Human Ethics Advisory Group (MGSE HEAG). Once clearance was obtained from this body (Ethics ID: 1646777, approved 5 January 2017) permission was sought from The Department of Education and Training (ID: 2017_003363, approved 16 May 2017) and Catholic Education Melbourne (ID: 0614, approved 29 May 2017). No prior permission was required to approach private independent schools other than the principals themselves. Once schools accepted the invitation to take place, participants were given a Plain Language Statement that outlined the aim of the study and the expectations of each participant. All participants returned a signed copy of the consent form understanding that interviews would be audio taped and that a transcription would be sent out to them for checking. Participant consent forms also indicated that they could withdraw from the study at any time and that pseudonyms would be employed to protect confidentiality. In addition, all participants were made aware that if they experienced feelings of distress during interviews, the recording would be paused and continued if and when they desired. Participants were also reminded of counselling facilities available at the school. The principal in each school assigned a staff member who liaised with the researcher for the purpose of organising visits, interviews, booking rooms, etc. The staff was also

notified of the study and of the presence of the researcher on school sites. Contact details of the researcher and thesis supervisor were made available to participants and they were encouraged to contact them if any concerns arose.

3.8 Trustworthiness and transferability

The trustworthiness of qualitative research relies on whether the tools for collection were well constructed, the documents properly analysed and the conclusions supported by the data (Merriam, 2014). This study adopted Merriam's (2014) proposed strategies for promoting rigour, trustworthiness and transferability (Table 3.4).

Table 3.5: Strategies for promoting trustworthiness and transferability

Merriam (2014)	This study
Triangulation	Variation in data collection sources and tools (interviews, variety of observations and documents sighted).
Member checks	Interview transcriptions were returned to each participant for checking.
Adequate engagement in data collection	Ongoing process of going back to the data, looking for discrepancies and new interpretations.
Researcher's position or reflexivity	In relation to the researcher's positionality and as outlined in Section 1.1, the researcher experienced a change of principal in the school in which she worked prior to the commencement of this doctoral degree. The researcher had no relationship with the schools discussed in this study. The researcher kept a journal during the entire process of the study for the purpose of critical self-reflection in order to rule out bias, assumptions and relationship to the study.
Peer review / examination	Discussions with supervisors, colleagues as well as presenting sections of this study in conferences for which feedback and discussion was sought.
Audit trail	Closely monitored by doctoral supervisors in line with university guidelines and procedures.
Rich, thick descriptions	Incorporation of detailed account of each case presented in three separate chapters.
Maximum variation	Study sample included two school systems, as well as demographic variations of participants (Table 3.2).

(Adopted from Merriam, 2014, p. 229)

3.9 Delimitations and limitations

Delimitations are concerned with the boundaries that have been set for the study, some of which have been chosen by the researcher or imposed by external factors. The delimitations of this study are partly defined by the university degree to which it belongs. Doctoral theses need to comply with particular size boundaries. This study comprises three case studies, all of which are located within the same metropolitan city (Melbourne, Australia). Although the invitation to participate in this study was extended to all school systems (Government, Catholic and Independent schools), only Catholic and Independent schools are represented in this study as no government school accepted the invitation to take part. Only 12 teachers from each school were interviewed together with the principal, allowing for smaller, yet rich enough data for within-case and cross-case analysis.

The limitations of a study, on the other hand, are concerned with the restrictions imposed by the methods. The limitations of this study are those associated with qualitative studies and case studies, in particular. This study sought to understand teacher perceptions of beginning principals and how these perceptions impacted on teachers' professional work environment. Perceptions are subjective and constructed by each individual at a given time and the researcher relied on the authenticity of the participants. At the same time, the researcher engaged in a continuous self-reflecting practice in order to distance herself from personal bias or assumptions as explained in the previous section. All other limitations pertaining to the methodology employed or any other aspect of this study was considered carefully and discussed with supervisors.

3.10 Chapter summary

The aim of this chapter was to outline the methodology chosen for this study. Each element of the methodology was carefully considered and justification for each decision has been explained, recognising the advantages and limitations that came with every decision. The validity and trustworthiness of this methodology was taken into consideration through the data collecting methods used, the analysis and interpretation processes, the self-reflecting practice of the researcher, as well as all ethical implications. The findings of this study should, therefore, be understood in the knowledge that the chosen methodology was the most adequate in producing rich and reliable findings, which can also inform other research in similar settings.

CHAPTER FOUR: CASE STUDY ONE - KINGSTON COLLEGE

4.1 Introduction

Chapter four is the first of three chapters that represents Stage One of the data analysis process outlined in Chapter Three. Chapters Four, Five and Six present each case study in this thesis. These chapters share a common core structure to assist the cross-case analysis presented in Chapter Seven. The core structure includes a school and principal profile followed by summary findings that aim to answer the research questions. Pseudonyms for each school and all participants have been used.

4.1.1 School sample

The participants for this case study included 12 teachers, (six from each campus) as well as the principal, “Peter”. Some of the teachers interviewed had a leadership role and all 12 had been employed at the school during the change of principal. Participants were interviewed once individually, whilst the principal was interviewed on two separate occasions. Table 4.1 provides information regarding the observations undertaken at Kingston College, which were chosen to answer the specific three research questions: how teachers perceived their new principal; the impact this perception could have on their work environment; and how teachers can be supported during principal succession. Observations were conducted at school events where the principal engaged in activities with members of the school community (for example, staff, parents, students, board members, prospective parents as well as alumni). Table 4.2 displays the demographic characteristics of the participants. Purposeful sampling was used to select participants as staff had to be employed at the school at the time of the appointment of the new principal. Additionally, an equal number of participants was chosen from each campus. The sample also included a broad representation of the teacher population based on age, gender, role in the school, years in the profession and years employed at the school. Finally, Table 4.3 displays the school documents that were sighted to complement the data gathered through the interviews and observations.

Table 4.1: (KC) School observations

Observation	Date	Campus	Hours	Description
1/Ob1	Jul-17	A	1.5	School Tour
1/Ob2	Jul-17	B	1.5	School Tour
1/Ob3	Aug-17	A	1.5	Staff Meeting
1/Ob4	Oct-17	offsite	1.5	Graduation ceremony
1/Ob5	Oct-17	offsite	1.5	Valedictory celebration
1/Ob6	Oct-17	A	1.5	Staff meeting
1/Ob7	Aug-18	A	1.5	Staff meeting
1/Ob8	Aug-18	A	1.5	Principal's Exec. Meeting
1/Ob9	Aug-18	offsite	1.5	Friends of the school lunch
1/Ob10	Aug-18	A	1.0	Staff PD session

Table 4.2: (KC) School interviews

Participant	Pseudonym	Gender	Age group	School Campus	Years in the profession	Years at the school	Date
Principal	Peter	M	45-54	A/B	20+	9	Jul-17 / Oct-17
Teacher*	1/T1	F	45-54	A	26+	6-10	Jul-17
Teacher	1/T2	F	35-44	A	11-15	6-10	Jul-17
Teacher*	1/T3	M	25-34	A	6-10	2-5	Aug-17
Teacher	1/T4	F	45-54	A	26+	16-20	Aug-17
Teacher*	1/T5	M	35-44	A	11-15	6-10	Aug-17
Teacher	1/T6	F	35-44	A	11-15	6-10	Oct-17
Teacher	1/T7	F	35-44	B	11-15	6-10	May-18
Teacher*	1/T8	M	35-44	B	16-20	16-20	May-18
Teacher*	1/T9	F	35-44	B	6-10	6-10	May-18
Teacher	1/T10	F	65+	B	26+	21-25	May-18
Teacher	1/T11	M	45-54	B	26+	16-20	May-18
Teacher	1/T12	F	35-44	B	11-15	11-15	Jun-18

* Teacher also held a leadership role at the time of the interview.

Table 4.3: (KC) School documents sighted

Document No.	Document Name	Format
1/D1	Homepage	website
1/D2	Student Learner Profile	PDF
1/D3	Prospective Student Brochure	Brochure/PDF
1/D4	Strategic and Master Plan	PDF
1/D5	Student Well-being Policy	PDF
1/D6	Graduate Teachers Program	website
1/D7	School Magazine (two per annum)	PDF
1/D8	Annual Community Report	PDF

4.2 School profile

Kingston College is an independent co-educational school in the Melbourne Metropolitan area catering for students from Early Learning Centre (ELC) to Year 12. Through its publicity and marketing initiatives, Kingston claims to enjoy a highly respected reputation as one of Victoria's leading schools in terms of academic achievement, its diverse extra-curricular activities and its internationally-minded outlook towards education through established international partnerships with other educational organisations (1/Ob1, 1/Ob2, 1/D1, 1/D3). Kingston was founded over 100 years ago as a school for boys, becoming co-educational in the last 25 years (1/D1). In 2017, there were 1913 students, although for the first time in eight years there had been a decrease in enrolments. (Figure 4.1).

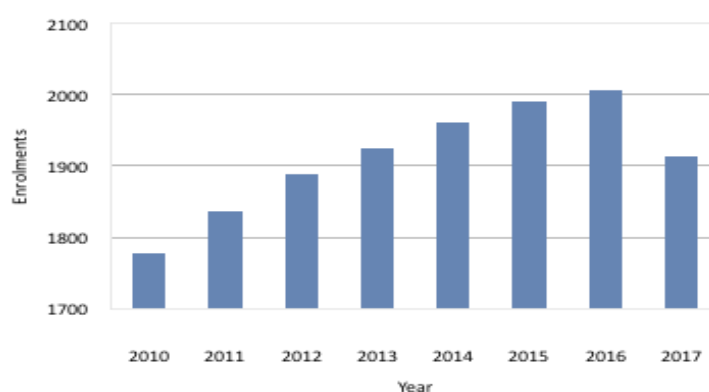


Figure 4.1: (KC) Student enrolments 2010 – 2017.

(ACARA, 2019)

In 2017, Kingston employed 230 teaching staff, with approximately 87% full time (ACARA, 2019). The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) for the school was 1148, indicating that the school has students from educationally advantaged backgrounds. 65% of the students were in the top quarter for educational advantage and only 2% identified in the bottom quarter. (Figure 4.2). Kingston College is managed by a Board of Governors which oversees all school activities as well as compliance and governance requirements, although they have entrusted all management and operational responsibilities to the principal (1/D1, 1/D8).

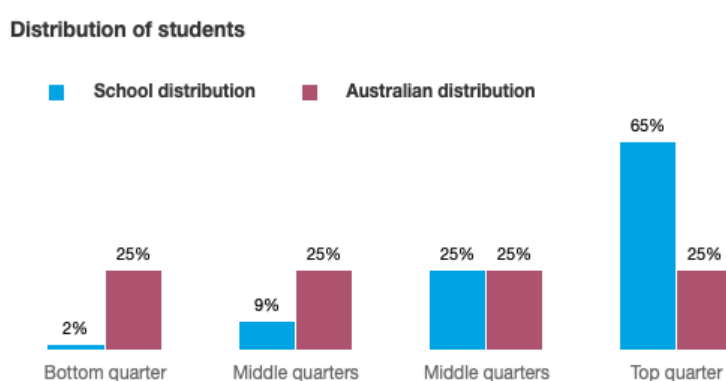


Figure 4.2: (KC) ICSEA distribution, 2018.

(ACARA, 2019)

4.2.1 A multi-campus school

Campus A is situated 10kms from the city centre and is the oldest of the two campuses. Campus A includes an ELC for 3 to 5-year-old students, a primary school (Prep – Grade 6) and a secondary school (Yrs 7 – 12). The principal's office is located on the premises and most whole-school meetings and decisions take place in this campus. Campus B, situated 46kms from the city centre and 26kms from Campus A, opened in the early 1990s and consists of a primary school (prep – Grade 6) and a secondary school (Yrs 7 – 12). Each campus runs with a certain level of autonomy with a Head of campus at the helm of each one. The complexities of running a multi-campus school can be challenging at the best of times. Due to a number of factors, such as location, and demographic characteristics, participants from each campus see themselves as separate groups, especially with matters regarding curricula, school cohesion and culture. This concept of being different appears to be more apparent for teachers from Campus B, with three out of six teachers expressing this sentiment.

They [staff at Campus A] feel like we're the country cousins of [Kingston College] and some people really struggle with that idea. It doesn't feel like one school. It feels like there's [Campus A] and [Campus B]. (1/T7)

There's a bit of a "poor me" mentality out here...we're the poor campus, the poorer cousins and I've experienced that, and I've pushed back against it because we provide as much opportunity for the kids at both campuses...(1/T9)

There is a "them' and "us" sense. That will never change... you've only got to go on camp or walk into a classroom and it will take you 15 minutes to see there's a huge difference between kids here and kids down there. (1/T11)

Other Campus B participants recognise Peter's efforts in bringing the two campuses closer together.

[Before] we've tried to have people meet cross-campus to develop curriculum, but it seems to be happening a lot more now and that was because of [Peter's] ideas and his pitch to the board of the requirements that the school needed going forward. You can see elements of that happening at the moment, which will only improve the school. (1/T8)

Yes, that's definitely what he is working towards; the one Kingston College and it is actually working a lot better, but it's got a way to go. (1/T10)

The above comments are also congruent with Peter's intentions regarding this idea.

I think the relationship side of [principal and Campus B] is strong, but there is still a Campus A-centric view... we need to improve it and break down these barriers. They're different cultures. (Peter)

4.2.2 The appointment

Peter was appointed principal in November 2015, following a year as acting principal. His predecessor had held the position for almost 20 years and had contributed significantly to the development of the school. Peter is the fifth principal of Kingston College and the first internal appointment. He began working at Kingston in 2008 as Head of Campus A. Three years later, he became deputy principal. His office is located on Campus A, although he spends one day a week at Campus B. Peter reports to the School Board once a month and they conduct a formal annual appraisal. He describes his relationship with the board as supportive and also feels he has the autonomy to run with his own ideas.

A board member said recently, "well, we knew when we appointed Peter, we were going to get some out-there ideas", and I love that, but I think for the right reasons, [in] asking "is this good for our kids?" (Peter)

I also think the board says I'm unbelievably visionary. (Peter)

As an internal appointment, Peter reflects on the benefits and the challenges of being an *insider*. Having been part of the leadership team for a number of years, Peter was no stranger to how the school operated, he knew who the key people were and had already established many professional relationships with the teachers at the school (1/Ob3, 1/Ob6, 1/Ob7). This insider knowledge and position, however, also proved challenging. Part of the process of developing his principal identity, involved re-aligning some of those relationships and discovering that teachers also needed to re-adjust their relationship with him given his new role. This was not always easy.

I was fortunate in that the current principal then stepped back with any major decisions, so for example, the next year's budget he said "well, it's going to be your budget, you organise it". Any curricular decisions, any major appointments, all were my appointments. So, it's a very fortunate situation where you're already within a school. (Peter)

Being in the school, I could start talking to various teams about getting things in place. So, we hit the ground running even before my official appointment commenced. (Peter)

I think one of the difficult things that I was aware of, but I hadn't realised how strong it would be, was the management of people who I was on the same level with and then, all of a sudden, you're not on the same level. That became quite complex, particularly in a couple of instances. So, those individuals would say, "you've changed" and I would say, "well, yes, I have because I'm not in that role". (Peter)

4.2.3 The principal

With more than 20 years of experience as a teacher and educational leader, Peter's perception of self resonates authenticity and pragmatism. The themes of authenticity and pragmatism were observed (1/Ob5, 1/Ob8) and surfaced during our interviews as shown in the following quotes.

I learnt many years ago that I have to be who I am, if I'm not who I am, it's just not going to work for me and it's not going to be good for the organisation. (Peter)

The core Peter hasn't changed, the role I'm doing has changed, but the core values of what I'm about haven't changed. (Peter)

Our focus is on classroom practice. We got rid of our mission and our vision because nobody ever (a) reads it or (b) understands it and we have a single purpose now and our purpose is to develop young women and men of character; That's what we're about, really simple, everyone gets it. (Peter)

4.3 Teacher perceptions of the new principal

Participants from each campus were invited to share their thoughts on how they perceived their new principal. During the data analysis, a total of 24 themes emerged from teacher interviews, which were then classified as either relating to personal qualities (16 themes) or leadership qualities (8 themes), however, only themes that were mentioned at both campuses by six or more participants overall have been included in the discussion given their weight and frequency. The only exception to this rule is the theme “Relaxed/Casual” where despite having only five teachers commenting on this theme, it is worthy of discussion given that all of these came from the same campus. Table 4.4 and Table 4.5, respectively, display these themes along with the strength of response represented by the frequency with which each participant made a comment attributed to each theme. The information has been sorted in descending order of total number of comments and also includes whether these themes were captured during observations at each campus. The content of Table 4.6 and Table 4.7, whilst following the same structure as Tables 4.4 and 4.5, displays the total number of themes and their frequency, this time emerging from the principal’s interviews. These have also been classified as either relating to personal or leadership qualities.

Table 4.4: (KC) Teacher comments attributed to principal perception (personal qualities)

	Themes	Campus A								Campus B								
		1/T1	1/T2	1/T3	1/T4	1/T5	1/T6	Total Campus A	Obs. Campus A	1/T7	1/T8	1/T9	1/T10	1/T11	1/T12	Total Campus B	Obs. Campus B	TOTAL (A + B)
Personal qualities	Visible	3	11	4	5	3	3	29	✓	3	7	7	5	5	9	36		65
	Approachable	6	6	2	5	3	3	25	✓	6	2	5	4	1	6	24	✓	49
	People person	2	5	4			2	13	✓	1	1	1	5		3	11	✓	24
	Authentic	1	1	2		2		6	✓	1	3		3	2		9	✓	15
	Humorous				1		1	2	✓	1			7		2	10	✓	12
	Energetic/ Passionate	2	2	3				7	✓			1			3	4	✓	11
	Relaxed/ Casual							0	✓	1	2	2	3	2		10	✓	10
	Communicative	3	1	4				8	✓			2				2	✓	10
	Trustworthy						1	1			1	2	1	1	1	6		7
	Inclusive	1						1	✓		1		2		1	4	✓	5
	Decisive					1		1	✓		1		2			3	✓	4
	Friendly	1				1		2	✓				2			2	✓	4
	Supportive			1				1	✓			3				3	✓	4
	Accessible			2		1		3								0		3
	Perceptive				1			1	✓				1			1	✓	2
	Inspiring			1				1	✓						1	1		2

Table 4.5: (KC) Teacher comments attributed to principal perception (leadership qualities)

		Campus A								Campus B								
	Themes	1/T1	1/T2	1/T3	1/T4	1/T5	1/T6	Total Campus A	Obs. Campus A	1/T7	1/T8	1/T9	1/T10	1/T11	1/T12	Total Campus B	Obs. Campus B	TOTAL (A + B)
Leadership qualities	Values teachers	1	2	5	1	1	1	11	✓	1	4	2	3	1		11	✓	22
	Consultative	1	1	9	4	1		16	✓		2				1	3	✓	19
	Goal driven		3		3	4	2	12	✓				2	1	1	4	✓	16
	Visionary	1	3	1	2		1	8	✓		2		2		2	6	✓	14
	Ethical				1		2	3	✓			3	2		2	7	✓	10
	Student-centred		1	1	1		1	4	✓						3	3	✓	7
	Open-minded					1	1	2	✓	1			1	1		3	✓	5
	Empowering						1	1	✓				1	1		2	✓	3

Table 4.6: (KC) Principal comments attributed to self-perception (personal qualities)

	Themes	Principal	Obs. Campus A	Obs. Campus B
Personal qualities	Visible	11	✓	✓
	People Person	10	✓	✓
	Authentic	7	✓	✓
	Approachable	3	✓	✓
	Reflective	1	✓	
	Confident	1	✓	✓

Table 4.7: (KC) Principal comments attributed to self-perception (leadership qualities)

	Themes	Principal	Obs. Campus A	Obs. Campus B
Leadership qualities	Values teachers	11	✓	✓
	Visionary	7	✓	✓
	Goal-driven	7	✓	✓
	Consultative	6	✓	
	Inclusive	5	✓	✓
	Empowering	5	✓	✓
	Micromanaging	3		
	Open-minded	1	✓	✓

4.3.1 Personal qualities

4.3.1.1 Visible

Visibility proved to be the most commented theme in both teacher and principal responses. Peter's visibility around the school, including both campuses, is evident in all teacher interviews suggesting this is an important feature of his work. This is experienced through different ways, such as light conversations with students, staff, parents and visitors to the college.

He makes the effort every Wednesday to be out here and stay for recess. He's out here for most of the assemblies... he has made a conscious effort of being visual, being in the

staffroom, being connected to the teachers as much as possible... [he] has probably brought that different element to being cross-campus and trying to get involved with things and going to things and making sure he's at things and participating and encouraging things while he can. (1/T9)

For Campus A staff, Peter's visibility is a continuation of what they have experienced. As head of that campus, he had already displayed this attribute, therefore, these teachers were accustomed to seeing him around the campus. All six teachers from Campus A (1/T1 – 1/T6), frame their perception of Peter as visible by making connections with his previous role, and they expressed reassurance when aspects of the person they already knew are still present even now as principal, as these two quotes reveal.

His leadership is very hands-on and present, so he's always down in the Junior School, always walking through the Middle Years, [he] knows many students. (1/T1)

I thought, I wonder if we'll still see him around and within two or three days of being appointed, he was up at morning tea. He's still out and about...he's still a visible presence around the campus. He was at morning tea today, for example. (1/T2)

For Campus B staff (1/T7 – 1/T12), on the other hand, five out of six teachers made reference to his visibility in relation to Peter's predecessor. This is shown in the following examples.

The kids would never see the previous principal. They would only see him at assemblies and things. So, if he was to come through the school, the kids wouldn't have a clue who he was. (1/T12)

I look to him as a leader in the school who I think is doing his best with the time constraints to give every campus a bit of his time, which I don't think has happened all the time in my time here. (1/T11)

For these teachers, principal visibility is fundamental, and as a theme, it emerges more prominently from teachers from Campus B (36) in comparison to those from Campus A (29). According to the former group, this theme manifests itself through Peter's interactions with students, teachers and other members of the school community. Furthermore, four out of six teachers were, in fact, explicit in expressing Peter's deliberate efforts in making himself visible on that one day a week when he visits Campus B.

I think he's visible, he does come out here at least once a week. He's located himself in the library on a couple of occasions where the students are and he's seeing the activity of the campus. He visits classrooms to show that he's a presence around, showing the kids he's

interested in what they're working on... you see him here at recess, he'll come in and have a chat to staff and move around the staffroom and [he] makes sure he says hello to everyone. (1/T8)

[Peter] coming in and making a point of even popping his head in and chatting to the kids or having a joke with them and being approachable in the way that he speaks to them and addresses them in those assemblies, makes them feel warm. It's different, it's just a different leadership style to previous leadership. (1/T12)

A distinction between visibility and presence warrants attention at this point. Based on all 12-teacher comments, visibility, is referred to as the tangible presence of the principal, whilst presence alone, is referred to as a non-tangible, presence. Following this distinction, presence appeared to be more important for teachers from Campus B. For them, just knowing that he is on campus or in communication with them via e-mail, for example, somehow compensates for his lack of visibility. Despite not seeing him on campus every day, his presence and communication with them is felt.

He's here, yet he's not here. (1/T7)

He does have a presence. We get regular updates through e-mails (1/T12)

For Peter, visibility also proves to be the strongest emerging theme of his perception of self. As he has done in his previous role as Head of Campus A, for Peter, visibility is an intentional aspect of his leadership, although now, he has the challenge of managing two campuses. The rationale behind this intention appears to be twofold: firstly, for the purpose of building relationships and connecting with the school community, and secondly, in order to accomplish one of his main goals as principal; to bring together the notion that whilst there are two campuses, Kingston College is one, united school.

I build in walking time, for example. The former principal was an outstanding principal, but that wasn't him. (Peter)

I love being out and about... we're a service organisation and every interaction is an important interaction. (Peter)

I meet with the Head of campus [B] in the morning, that's probably my only meeting and then I walk around the school, go to the primary school, head to the middle and senior schools and always have morning tea with the staff. [Campus B staff] do love the fact that I'm out there though, because the former principal wasn't out there as much, and certainly the kids and the parents love that. (Peter)

4.3.1.2 Approachable

Upon taking up the role, Peter was determined to maintain his current practices as a relation-builder leader who encourages members of the community to approach him and engage with him in conversation. (1/Ob1, 1/Ob2, 1/Ob4, 1/Ob5, 1/Ob8, 1/Ob9). With the change of role, however, also came a change of office to one that was further removed from the everyday action and where accessibility to the principal meant getting through some gatekeepers. Regardless of these quandaries, Peter set as one of his priorities to “open up” the principal’s office so that it may be perceived as an inviting and welcoming part of the school as he explains in the following quote.

The other thing I did when I first started here [as principal], I invited anyone who wanted to come down [to my office], because I remember staff used to say to me, "I've never been in that room." I don't know what it's like. So, I had like an open house and I said, "just pop in". (Peter)

As Peter goes about developing his identity as principal, particularly as an internal appointment, remaining approachable proves challenging on occasions. On these instances, Peter is quick to remind people that he is the principal now and that perhaps someone else could assist them.

A negative of my openness is that some parents will then think, "Well, I know [Peter], I was talking to [him] at sport, I can ask him anything, if I have a problem, I'll go straight to him and not the Head of campus" And so, I push that straight back. If it's not resolved, of course, ultimately it comes to me. (Peter)

Approachability is also a resonating theme for all 12 teachers as a descriptor of Peter’s personality. It needs to be noted, however, that as with visibility, there is a clear delineation between campuses. All six teachers from Campus A, discussed Peter’s approachability as principal in relation to his approachability as Head of campus.

He is still approachable. (1/T1)

I think people still feel that he's really approachable even though we're much further into the process of him being principal. (T/T2)

People talk about having an open door, but Peter genuinely does. So, you can walk in, no appointment, and if he's free he'll stop and listen for as long as it needs to be said. And that's still the case, it's just that he's not as free as he was. (1/T4)

In line with Campus B teachers’ remarks on visibility, all six teachers from this campus consistently speak about his approachability in comparison to that of his predecessor.

Peter is more hands-on, involved and wants to be seen as approachable [he is] showing that he can be approachable and that he's just like everyone else. (1/T9)

I would feel more at ease if I had to go and speak to him about an issue...he's more approachable. (1/T7)

I would be able to approach him for things and I'd feel very comfortable doing that.

4.3.1.3 People person

During observations, Peter was consistently seen interacting with members of the community, interactions which were sometimes by chance and at other times, intentional (1/Ob1, 1/Ob2, 1/Ob4, 1/Ob5, 1/Ob8, 1/Ob9, 1/Ob8). He addressed most people by their first name, and on occasions, engaged in conversation that went beyond the context of the school (1/Ob3, 1/Ob6, 1/Ob7). At the same time, when members of the community spotted him on and off campus, the interactions were reciprocally friendly. (1/Ob1-1/Ob10). For him, engaging and working with people defines his personality and leadership.

My leadership is relational, I am a relationship leader...I think relationships, to an extent, is the way I lead. (Peter)

I believe that as a relational principal, when you make the hard decisions you have already won people. So, I think relationships are very important. (Peter)

If I run into students out of school for example, I want to greet them and talk to them, that's the sort of community symbolic principal I want to be. (Peter)

As mentioned earlier, when appointed to the role of principal, Peter was aware that one of his challenges as an internal appointment was how the staff would adapt to his changes in responsibility. In achieving this, Peter deliberately created some distance between him and the teaching staff as he explains in the following quote.

I see me as being the person that's down in the trenches with the kids and the parents in particular, probably not enough with the staff, I probably keep the staff at arm's length. (Peter)

Nine out of the 12 teachers interviewed portray Peter as a people person, making it the third most important theme in terms of comment frequency (Table 4.4). It is worthy of mention that from a total of 24 comments for this theme, ten comments explicitly expressed the value teachers assign

to a principal who wants to get to know them on a personal basis, showing an interest for who they are and not only for what they do.

I remember him talking to me, just me for about ten minutes and doing that with everybody and asking me nothing to do with school; just about myself... You bump into him in the street and he stops to talk to you, so, I feel like he knows me, as opposed to "She teaches this subject". (1/T2)

He sees me as a person, he knows something about me as a person other than the job that I do. (1/T3)

One thing Peter does really well is, I do think he tries to get to know his staff on a personal basis. (1/T6)

He's got the ability to be social with them [teachers], like, "What did you do on the weekend", and try and get that understanding of who they are. (1/T8)

I think his relationships are his strengths and I think quite a few people will tell you that. (1/T1)

Two teachers specifically commented on Peter's deliberate intentions in forging relationships with members of the community.

He seems very kind and, in the way that he speaks to the kids, he wants to relate to them. He likes to tell stories and tell jokes and things. So, I think he seems like a bit of a warmer sort of principal... I'm not sure if he knows me personally by name, but he'll always come up and talk and look me in the eye and say hello. He might ask if he's not sure. (1/T12)

He does try to get to know you on a more personal level. And I think that's nice and it does make him more willing to go above and beyond for that person rather than someone who doesn't have time for small talk. (1/T6)

4.3.1.4 Authentic

Observing Peter in a variety of school contexts provided evidence that regardless of the tone of these occasions, he remained true to his persona. (1/Ob1-1/Ob10). Authenticity is a very present theme during Peter's perception of self. It is clear that he is not prepared to change his ways simply because he is now the principal, as the following quote explains.

It's very hard to totally change who you are, and I don't want to change who I am because that's who I am. For example, my speeches have to have "Peter" in them... It's who I am. (Peter)

This assertion is corroborated by teachers' comments, where four out of five teachers from Campus A raise this concept of authenticity when describing Peter. As their former Head of campus, teachers are particularly observant of any changes in his character and behaviour as he exercised his new role. All teachers who contributed to this theme, did so by expressing a positive opinion in having a principal who displayed the same characteristics as when he was in his previous roles.

Part of his strengths is, he is still Peter. (1/T1)

He is still the same. (1/T2)

It's Peter's personality, that's part of who he is. He is still a person that's on the ground, that's my experience and I don't see a huge gap there at all. (1/T3)

There's no difference between what he was like before and what he's like now. (1/T5)

For teachers of Campus B, on the other hand, despite the fact that their interactions with Peter are far less frequent, they are, nonetheless, able to recognise a genuineness within him that reassures them that Peter the principal is not that much different from Peter the former deputy principal or former Head of Campus A.

I like Peter because he doesn't change just because his positions changed. (1/T7)
From when he was the deputy principal of the school to the principal now, obviously the title has changed, but the way that he addresses the staff, is involved with the staff is exactly how he was as that deputy principal...What you see is what you get with Peter. (1/T8)

I think his personality is brought to the job...I don't see that he's changed a lot and I don't really see why you would need to...people accept him and respect him for who he is. (1/T10)

I don't think he's changed incredibly. (1/T12)

4.3.1.5 Relaxed/Casual

As a continuation of the previous theme, one of the ways in which Peter manifests authenticity is through his relaxed and casual nature. (1/Ob1, 1/Ob2, 1/Ob3, 1/Ob5, 1/Ob8, 1/Ob9). Despite only five teachers making references to this aspect of Peter's personality, all five came from Campus B. In interpreting this occurrence and considering how these teachers have conceptualised the perception they have of Peter, it could be argued that this lack of a balanced distribution of comments on this theme may be attributed to how differently he is perceived by these teachers from Campus B in comparison to his predecessor.

I think with Peter I'm able to have a pretty relaxed relationship and he's very relaxed, he's not that sort of standoffish type of guy. (1/T9)

He's much more relaxed in his dealings with people and more open, he's quite free to laugh at things...He walks into our room; the kids just love him and he's always smiling and funny with them. (1/T10)

He's laid-back...He's the principal and he's got that persona, but when he goes in the classroom, he does have that casual feel and he's not expecting the kids all to stand-up and say good morning. He's is quite happy for them to feel comfortable in his presence. (1/T8)

He is more laid back [than the previous principal]. (1/T11)

For Peter, being "laid back" also surfaces implicitly in his comments with regard to his self-perception as being authentic.

I try not to be too blokey, but I am naturally, though. (Peter)

Allusions to Peter's relaxed nature, however, also surface during teacher interviews irrespective of the campus in reference to Peter's suitability for the role of principal. When asked about their reaction upon learning that Peter had been appointed, six out of 12 teachers commented on being surprised, given his laid-back and relaxed nature, especially with regards to being the public face of the school.

Some of the people I've seen as headmasters or principals are probably slightly different in nature to Peter in that they've been more academic, so in that sense I was a little bit surprised, it didn't sort of fit in my perception of what the principal is like, not to say it's a good or bad thing, but it didn't fit with what I was expecting...I'd expect to be a little bit smoother, like public speaking and that kind of side of things, but he's definitely got better over 18 months...(1/T5)

As a leader I didn't see him really doing that job, but now he's doing it and he's doing a wonderful job. (1/T10)

He's probably less of a polished public speaker or he'll quite openly say I wasn't particularly academic at school, those kinds of things. And in a way, I thought that it was quite exciting, somebody who's open about that kind of thing who could still become a principal. (1/T2)

Furthermore, a number of comments were specifically directed at the suitability of a casual and relaxed person to fill the principalship.

Maybe the way he carries himself or the way that he speaks to us, it's a very casual way and I guess as staff we don't want him to speak to us in a casual way when we're talking about our careers on the line, kind of thing. (1/T7)

As a public speaker, he's not as polished, which he uses at times as a strength. He talks about being in the trenches and really can connect with teachers quite well, but this is a fairly elite, good-reputation school and sometimes I see it as a flaw that he doesn't quite polish up as well as other principals making public presentations. (1/T4)

So Peter is quite "blokey", I suppose, and when he speaks to staff he makes a lot of jokes...Sometimes I didn't know if that personality would be what the community would expect from a private school principal, but I think because of that, I think the parents see him as really down to earth and relatable...But I did wonder if that being like the ultimate sort of face of the school, whether that's what the governors would have wanted or not. (1/T6)

This raises an interesting concept regarding teacher-formulated stereotypes surrounding a principal, and in this case, surrounding a principal from an "elite private school". Based on the evidence above, a number of teachers associate a private school principal with someone who is an articulate and polished public speaker and less casual. When comparing to how Peter believes he is perceived by the teaching staff, the congruency is undisputable, as the following comment reveals.

There is a bit of a sense of "how did he get to be principal, this is a highly prestigious school and we've got Peter from the bush running it". Having said that, the general community love the fact that it was someone personable...Some of them see me as very unsophisticated, blokey. (Peter)

I think they would sort of say, "He's unsophisticated, but there's a warmth and a passion". (Peter)

4.3.1.6 Trustworthy

Only one teacher from Campus A discussed the quality of trustworthiness, indicating that the concept rates low. This absence, however, should not in any way suggest that Peter is not trusted by the remaining five teachers. Teachers from Campus B, on the other hand, were more explicit, as the following quotes suggest.

Yes [I trust him]! I believe he wants what's best for the school and just in the decisions that he's making, and you see all the changes and those sorts of things. (1/T12)

I'd say he's honest in his dealings with staff. (1/T8)

I don't know the facts and it's his position and I have to trust that he knows all information (1/T9)

I've got no reason to not trust him. (1/T11)

4.3.2 Leadership qualities

4.3.2.1 Values teachers

As teacher interviews flowed from perceptions of leader to perceptions of leadership, these were also recorded in terms of the frequency with which they were mentioned (Table 4.5). The strongest emergent theme is identified as the importance of having a principal that acknowledged teachers and their work in his quest for improving student learning and school effectiveness. The way in which teachers express feeling valued by Peter includes being acknowledged and known individually as well as collectively.

I know he's there and I know that he does value you. (1/T1)

He's first and foremost also a teacher, and he wants to maintain an interest and show support to us. (1/T3)

He's really interested in the work that you do and the processes you go through. (1/T10)

Other ways in which teachers feel valued go beyond and are expressed in terms of past, present and future contributions. For example, those teachers whom Peter already knew, feel valued because he remembers what they have done in the past, he is also aware of those that are currently contributing and is prepared to invest in developing teachers for the betterment of the school. (1/Ob1, 1/Ob8).

I feel like he understands things and he's recognised what I've done in the past. (1/T2)

He and the other members of the executive team have made it clear that a goal is putting time and effort and money into developing teachers. (1/T3)

He left a voicemail earlier in the year just saying he had had some feedback that things are going well, and he was very positive about it. So, it was nice to take time out of his days to do that. (1/T5)

One-off little comments here and there that you know. Certain levels of autonomy that I have in that role that he has said, "Yes, you're doing this because you can do it". (1/T4)

I got home last night and there was a letter in the mail from him congratulating me...and that's important. Sometimes you feel like you're worked into the ground but, that's

everywhere you go and so it's nice and those little gestures that people recognise, even just a simple card or a letter. (1/T9)

With the aim of exploring this theme further, teachers were asked to elaborate on what being valued looked like for them by providing some examples. One of the ways in which they believe Peter demonstrates this is by giving teachers autonomy to lead and make decisions as suggested by the following examples.

He's not that type of person who's got that authority, that power, "I'm up here, so you need to listen", it's not that type of leadership style that he has. (1/T7)

Peter has continued to distribute leadership and put trust on middle management. (1/T10)

He's quite good at trying to put the right people in the right place. (1/T6)

In describing his leadership approach, Peter places the same prominence to valuing teachers in a very similar manner. He recognises the contribution teachers offer towards the fulfilment of the school's goals and that in order to achieve that, staff need to be acknowledged, supported and developed (1/Ob3, 1/Ob6, 1/Ob7, 1/Ob8, 1/Ob10, 1/D4, 1/D5, 1/D6) as he explains in the following comments.

The biggest difference is going to be teachers...We go a long way to go to achieve that, but ultimately, that's where I'd like to be known as like "I want to go to Kingston because they expect a lot, but they look after you. I don't mean financially but also in a developmental perspective. (Peter)

If the staff are going to be the best version of themselves, they come to Professional Development on a Thursday night exhausted, they've had six [classes], sport, and then you say to them "Sit down, we want you to really be creative and think" I don't think that works... I know when the staff are under the pump and so I know when to pull back. (Peter)

4.3.2.2 Consultative

Having a principal who shows a genuine interest in teachers' ideas and perspectives were worthy of mention for seven of the 12 teachers interviewed, although not all seven teachers referred to it in the same manner. Four teachers, two from each campus, acknowledge Peter's leadership as consultative and provided specific examples of what this looks like.

He'll often stop and ask me for my opinion on something that's completely unrelated to my area of the school. He just fishes all the time to get more opinions. (1/T1)

He wouldn't seek only my advice, but he would seek my advice because that's my area of expertise...even if he doesn't take my advice to the letter, he would be informed by my advice and he would respect me for that...the decisions made, whether I agree or disagree with the decision, I feel that I've been part of the process and I respect that. (1/T3)

He obviously consults with key people, but also participates in that feedback of what's occurring out there in the workplace. (1/T8)

Here we are asked for feedback and a lot of those professional days with the principal where we get together and talk in teams are really good. (1/T12)

Others, however, are more critical around this theme and provide some examples of how this aspect of his leadership could be improved. The fact that these three examples below emerge from Campus A, leads the researcher to reflect on whether this is a sign that perhaps in his previous role as Head of campus, Peter engaged in more consultation and now that he is principal, he has chosen to step back.

I think that's an area that we probably need to work on as a school. I know that it's not possible to consult everybody about everything all the time, but perhaps consultation or communication about some of these changes with the whole staff would be good. (1/T2)

Peter said he was going to do it and he's done it. There was some discussion with [Middle management] about different models and stuff like that, but the impression I get is that the model we're getting is what Peter wanted in the first part and that's fine. (1/T5)

That's probably not Peter's strength; sharing the strategic thinking behind decisions. Quite often decisions are made and there's not a lot of explanation... My perception sometimes is that he doesn't care about the consultation anyway. I've heard him say things like "I'm the one that has to be accountable for it, so I'll make the decision"... He has a very, very strong views. And he's willing to listen, but usually very unwilling to be challenged. (1/T4)

Upon reflecting on his leadership, Peter speaks about the role staff consultation plays in his decision-making process. How teachers interpret consultation and how Peter understands it is not necessarily the same. Peter is quick to clarify that whilst he sees value in consulting staff, it does not necessarily mean he will take those recommendations on board.

As I always say to staff, consultation doesn't mean democracy. Some people say, "well, what's the point, I said we wanted this, and you didn't do that", well, it's not about that. (Peter)

I have this group of people, as I said, that are brutally honest, but respectful who say, "I don't think that's the way to go". Now, sometimes that might mean, I still do, or you pause and reflect upon. (Peter)

By the same token, he is also open to receiving feedback from teachers on his overall performance, which he admits can be a challenging, but valuable exercise.

Next year I'm considering doing a 360° [reflection tool], which is pretty brutal sometimes, because how you perceive yourself as is often very different to how others perceive you. I think that's the most honest way. You've got to be very open to feedback and not hurt, but having said that, you do get hurt by some of it because despite being a principal, you're still human. (Peter)

4.3.2.3 Goal-driven

In conjunction with being a visionary principal, a theme which will be explored later in this chapter, Peter's leadership is perceived as driven by the set goals he considers indispensable to achieve in order to accomplish his vision for the school.

He's very driven, he's got very clear ideas about the direction he wants to take the school....he's driven to try and improve outcomes for students in that way by investing in staff and giving them more time to do their jobs and those kinds of things (1/T2)

I like the fact that he gets stuff done and, I think, it's something which is very positive. (1/T5)

He's about putting things into action and making changes. He's driven. (1/T12)

He's firm and I like that about him. When he says something that he truly believes he's not mucking around anymore... and he says things like... "this is what we're going to do and we're not accepting anything else and we're not having people that are not going to collaborate with their partners. So, if you don't want to do that you know where to go". (1/T10)

At times, however, this determination towards meeting goals comes across as having tunnel vision.

I think he'll get an idea in his head and try to make it happen immediately without sometimes considering the knock-on effect of other things. (1/T5)

For Peter, being goal-driven and pragmatic is also a reoccurring signature theme of his leadership (1/Ob7, 1/Ob8, 1/D4) as the following comments suggest.

You put your energy into fixing the problem rather than worrying about it. (Peter)

We got rid of our mission and our vision because nobody ever (a) reads it or (b) understands it and we have a single purpose now and our purpose is to develop young women and men of character. (Peter)

When I was away at a conference, I was looking at notes on my phone about what my vision for a school was and I would say 90% has now come to a reality. (Peter)

4.3.2.4 Visionary

During one of the interviews, Peter was quick to admit he is not a leader with attention to detail, rather, he is much more interested in the bigger picture and focussed on putting the right people in the right place (1/D4, 1/D5, 1/D6).

I'm not a detail person, never have been...I think I'm quite visionary...I believe my role now is to set the direction and then to ask the right questions. Where are we at with this...? (Peter)

For a number of years, I had been mentally developing by own strategic plan, where I wanted the school to go, and I had presented that to the board who had accepted that general direction. (Peter)

Peter reflects on the advice he received from the chairperson of the board upon assuming the role, advice with which Peter aligned and provided him with the liberty to execute his leadership in a way that was distinctive, but also in congruence with the school board.

He said to me, "Peter, 20% of the time you need to make sure the board is happy, 40% of the time you should spend on operational matters and 40% of the time you should sit in your office and dream" ... That 20%-40%-40% formula has really been powerful for me because I've been given permission to dream. (Peter)

Peter's passion for the future he envisages for the school is evident as he speaks about the lasting impact he hopes his leadership will have on Kingston College (1/Ob1, 1/Ob2).

It excites me to say that in the next years we'll be able to put in place things that will have a genuine impact on student learning and a genuine impact on staff development. That excites me. (Peter)

There's no point changing if it doesn't have a life beyond me as principal, beyond the current teachers, beyond the people who believe in it. That's says it works, that says it's real, if we come back in 20 years' time and it's still there. (Peter)

Eight out of 12 teachers described Peter's leadership as visionary, a leader with clear expectations and achievable goals. This sentiment is felt by participants from both campuses.

He is very clear on what he wants and not only is it what's the best for the school, he wants the best for the students and at times there may be staff that are a bit unsure about that, but in the whole people understand the clearer picture and where we're intending to go as a school. (1/T8)

He definitely sees things in a much bigger picture now. He's not in charge of the campus now, he's in charge of the school. So, his scale of what's important and what isn't has gone up. (1/T4)

He's got lots of ideas about change and how to improve learning and all of those things. He's got very clear ideas about the direction he wants to take the school. (1/T2)

He is firm in what he believes in and what he wants to happen and also, he's got his own thoughts on how things are going to be. (1/T10)

Two of the teachers who make reference to his focus on the "big picture", question whether this focus might also be at the expense of the fine details.

Peter has a lot of ideas, he's quite visionary, but he's not interested in the detail. (1/T6)

He's pretty good at the big ideas and then likes other people to fill in the details, which is a great thing for a principal. So, my concern and my anxiety there would be, how far would that go, how big would the big ideas be and then how much would fall under other people. (1/T4)

4.4 Impact of perception of principal on teachers' work environment

Once teachers had formulated their perception of Peter, it was then important to establish if and how this perception had impacted on their life at school. This was achieved by asking questions that explored the impact (if any) within different areas of teachers' professional lives. As a result of the data obtained, teacher comments were classified in three areas: teacher well-being, teacher capacity and professional relationships. Teacher comments were then classified as having had a positive (PI), negative (NI) or no impact (0) on each of their sub-areas. If teachers mentioned both positive and negative impact, this is reflected by a split cell (Table 4.8). The surprises in the distribution of teacher comments in the aforementioned table, warrant close analysis, in particular, the patent negative impact on teacher well-being emerging from Campus A, and the substantial positive impact on professional development across both campuses.

Table 4.8: (KC) Impact of new principal on teachers' work environment¹

		Campus A						Campus B					
	Sub-areas	1/T1	1/T2	1/T3	1/T4	1/T5	1/T6	1/T7	1/T8	1/T9	1/T10	1/T11	1/T12
Teacher well-being	Teacher morale	PI NI	NI	PI NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	PI	PI	PI	PI	PI
	School connectedness	PI	NI	0	NI	0	0	0	0	0	PI	0	PI
Teacher capacity	Professional development	PI	PI	PI	0	PI NI	0	PI	PI	PI	PI	PI	PI
	Teaching practice	PI	PI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Professional relationships	Teacher – Teacher relationships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Teacher – Student relationships	0	PI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

¹ PI = Positive impact, NI = Negative impact, 0 = No impact

4.4.1 Teacher well-being

4.4.1.1 *Teacher morale*

For some teachers, teacher morale has shifted as a result of his appointment. Four out of six teachers from Campus A feel that teacher morale has been impacted negatively. For others, it is a combination of negative and positive impact. Shifts in morale revolve around the fact that Peter is no longer their Head of campus, which can be translated into an indirect impact of his appointment. This means that they have experienced a sense of loss, which has hindered their adaptation process with the new Head of Campus, in other words, Peter's successor.

Before Peter was principal, I felt like I had a really good Head of campus and now that Peter is principal, it's been a difficult transition... With our current head, he's a very different personality to Peter, so it's not as easy to go and just discuss things with the [new] Head of campus. So yes, I definitely miss when he was just the Head of campus, not going for a new role. (1/T6)

During the data analysis, it became apparent that for these teachers, a change of principal has had a significant effect on certain areas of their work environment. Furthermore, it was precisely due to other indirect changes, not Peter becoming principal, that resulted in experiences of low morale.

I suppose it's not so much him as him being principal, [which] means that we've got a completely different campus... you've got staff that are very used to having someone very approachable that they can go and talk to... so, I think they feel that things have changed. What we've had is almost the reverse here, in that we've had a person who was very visible, and still is, and now we've got a new Head of campus who has a very different style, what has unsettled people is that they don't get that now. (1/T2)

I don't think teaching morale has been necessarily impacted by his role as the principal, because he was very conscious of teacher morale in his previous position and the staff was quite supportive. I think the other changes that have taken place may have impacted on that a little bit. (1/T3)

I don't think staff would necessarily attribute it to Peter, I think the changes which happened last year in the pastoral care system and the changes which are happening in the curriculum this year have had a negative impact on staffing... I think the way they have been rolled out has been slightly confusing... I think a lot of that negative feeling from staff would be towards the new Head of campus rather than towards Peter. (1/T5)

For others, changes to their morale came from other fronts, for example, as a result of some of Peter's personality or leadership practices.

The positive effects are his energy, the negative effects are sometimes that there are too many balls in the air, and you don't really know what's going to come up and you have to wait, and it can get a bit messy. So, I think they are morale-affecting things... He's not a manager, he's not an organiser, so if something is not seen to be rolling out orderly it can affect morale. (1/T1)

I think because there are a lot of decisions made behind closed doors, that raises then the water-cooler gossip. So, there are more conversations teacher to teacher about why and a bit of speculation and guessing and that's not helpful, it's not always positive. So, from that point of view, it has changed a little bit of the dynamic... There would be definitely people out there that feel that what they do doesn't make a difference, in that, "Well, he's going to decide to do this or that, anyway". (1/T4)

He can have a tendency to let things slide and then we go on to the new next thing. So, staff find that really difficult and that can cause some disengagement... I just think some people would say that the staff morale is very low. (1/T6)

Responses from Campus B, on the other hand, were predominantly positive and revolve around the impact of having a new principal who recognises teacher efforts and lifts their motivation in challenging times and aims at creating whole-school unity.

Sometimes you feel like you're worked into the ground but, that's everywhere you go and so it's nice, those little gestures that people recognise even just a simple card or a letter. (1/T9)

He's trying to create that sense of community and well-being amongst the staff as well and not just about the parents and the students, but about the staff too. (1/T8)

Positive comments actually feed people and I know that people who haven't had as much experience, I've seen him nurturing them in the way that he speaks to them. (1/T10)

Whether you're a kid or an adult, any little bit of positive feedback is good. It makes you feel a million dollars. People sort of lose that, people forget that it doesn't matter about your age, you grow in confidence if you get encouraged and I think that he tries to do that. (1/T11)

He's not someone that you would fear or worry about. So, it's more of a warm kind of feeling...I guess it's that passion that really stands out to me and then that inspires you and they've got those high expectations and that's what drives you to be your best (1/T12)

Only one teacher from Campus B made reference to a negative impact on teacher morale as a result of a decision Peter had made that affected curriculum and staffing in a particular faculty.

[Teacher morale], it's pretty bad (1/T7)

4.4.1.2 Teacher sense of belonging

When examining if Peter's appointment has impacted on teachers' sense of belonging or connection with the school, seven out of 12 teachers expressed no changes to their sense of connectedness to Kingston College as a result of Peter's appointment to the principalship.

These responses came from both campuses. There were only two teachers who expressed a negative impact, both from Campus A. 1/T2, articulates very well the subtle, yet powerful difference between gaining a principal and losing a Head of campus simultaneously.

Probably not because he's principal, it's probably because he's not the Head of campus anymore. So, because he's moved out of that role and somebody else who's very different to him is in that role, that's what's changed my relationship with the school, not Peter being appointed principal. (1/T2)

Whilst 1/T4, commented on how perceiving Peter as laid-back, did impact up to a certain point on this teacher's sense of belonging and pride for the school.

On a very small scale, that lack of polish when presenting outside of the school, within the Kingston community, I have no problems, but when that's extended beyond Kingston, having worked at other top schools, I wonder if he's really putting the school best foot forward all the time and that does impact your own pride in your workplace and that sort of thing. (1/T4)

Only three teachers revealed Peter's appointment as having a positive impact on their sense of school connectedness and these varied in nature. For one teacher, this is manifested in an increased sense of loyalty towards Peter, as if because of him, 1/T1 felt a bigger commitment to the school.

There are parts of the school that I'm involved in now that if I had to make an intellectual decision I would just pull out of that part and just not do it anymore, but I feel I'd be letting him down if I did that. (1/T1)

Others, on the other hand, are quick to link either his personal or leadership characteristics as the cause for this positive impact.

I would say just my love of the school probably flourished a little bit more because of his generosity of person. (1/T10)

I think [my sense of belonging has changed] in a positive way in comparison to previous leaders where you never ever saw them... I think it changed in a positive way where Peter makes himself approachable... I guess it's that passion that really stands out to me and then that inspires you and they've got those high expectations and that's what drives you to be your best and it makes you feel proud to be part of the school. It might sound corny, but you

do! When you talk to people about working here you can be really proud of being part of all of that. (1/T12)

4.4.2 Teacher capacity

4.4.2.1 Professional development

More than half of the teachers interviewed feel the arrival of the new principal has made a positive impact to their professional development as teachers and/or leaders, something that is consistent with Peter's emphasis on valuing and developing teachers (1/Ob3, 1/Ob6, 1/Ob7).

If we want kids to be the best version of themselves, we know that teachers are the most fundamental way kids can improve, then we have to do everything as a school to ensure every teacher can be the best version of themselves... I'm passionate about students and staff being the best that they can be. (Peter)

Some of the teacher evidence alludes to indirect impact as a result of, not only structural changes, but also changes to time allocation for professional development.

He and the other members of the executive team have made it clear that a goal is putting time and effort and money into developing teachers. That appraisal system came into place last year. So, definitely, there's a focus on that and that comes directly from him. (1/T3)

I've noticed is that we're given time to develop as a teacher... normally we would start at 8.30, but [one day a week] the kids start [later]. Whether we work, rarely individually, but in our department and we go through our planner or curriculum and we tease it out. We've never had that time before. There never used to be an emphasis the way there is now. (1/T7)

He would go to any lengths to give people opportunities to do things... if I asked Peter, I know I would have the same opportunities and I also see people doing amazing things that he's given his permission for them to do and it's a lot of money. (1/T10)

He probably has developed me just through osmosis, things that have happened. Teacher development is one of his goals. (1/T11)

With regards to feedback as a way of developing teachers, 1/T5 suggests that it should not only be Peter engaging in this practice, but his entire leadership team should also be promoting and driving this focus.

In some ways, yes, he empowers me, but I think he tries to do it by reaching out to individuals, whereas I would like for him to have his leadership team, which is beneath him, I would like him to encourage those to spend more time or to allow them to spend more time providing feedback. (1/T5)

4.4.2.2 Teaching practice

When asked whether the arrival of a new principal has made an impact on their teaching, the overwhelming response was a resounding no. Teachers were determined in saying that it is their own strong sense of teacher self-efficacy and teacher ability that determines how they teach.

I looked at ways to aid my teaching of the students. Now, that didn't directly come from Peter, but the school provided the support and structures that I wanted. So, I ended up with a massive value add that year. (1/T8)

There's definitely been other people in the schools that have had a lot more influence in me in the classroom. (1/T4)

I would say I do nothing differently between the two [former and current principal] because both of them were amazing Heads and they're really good at giving people opportunities to explore what they want to explore. (1/T10)

Some teachers, however, did suggest that Teaching and Learning expectations and initiatives conceived by Peter and other leaders in the school may impact on their classroom practice.

Teaching and learning initiatives that our Heads of faculty have been carrying out have impacted on classroom teachers and they have been well supported by Peter and promoted by Peter. So, for example our professional development day last year it was all on feedback... so, that has impacted on classroom strategies. So, I suppose through his support of teaching and learning initiatives, that would be the main way...(1/T1)

It probably has, I think because I'm sure the new principal is driving the change that's being implemented...he is the person who decides the change has to happen, but the person implementing the change isn't him, but he is the one who thinks it's important, he is driving it and I suspect he tells the Head of campus, 'This is what I want to happen, make it happen'. So, I suppose that has affected my teaching practice to a degree. (1/T2)

In the course of exploring this sub-area, a number of teachers spoke about Peter visiting their classes as part of his weekly routine of getting about the school and being visible. More than half of the teachers interviewed responded positively to having Peter wander into their classes. They interpret this behaviour as a way of fostering principal-student relationships and they also acknowledge the benefits of having a principal who shows a genuine interest in the teaching and learning dynamic in the classroom. For three teachers, however, these visits are met with a mixed response. It appears that in his quest to be perceived as approachable and relational to students, two teachers show concern this practice might deter students from the rigour and discipline of learning, as these comments suggest.

He does my head in when he visits my class. He always comes in and says to the kids, "Don't worry, I was never any good at [this subject]". It bothers me because it's just the low expectations of students, [it] frustrates me. (1/T5)

He does [visit my classes]. He probably shouldn't. I'm more than happy for him to come in, but he doesn't contribute anything when he comes in...and I respect that he's trying to have that presence and trying to be there and be out there, but as far as for me, I don't get any feedback on my class. if you're there, shoot me an e-mail later on to say I really liked the way you are talking to these guys or whatever. (1/T4)

The third teacher was more focussed on how these visits could be enhanced to avoid distraction to the lesson.

He interrupts your lesson. He might actually ask them [students] what are you learning about and that sort of thing. It would be nice if he just came in and sort stood back or on the side of the table with the kids and if they were working, he could just chat to that group or something and that if I'm teaching, I could just continue. I think it would be nice for him to see people teaching in that way. (1/T6)

4.4.3 Professional relationships

4.4.3.1 Teacher – Teacher relationships

Based on the data collected, Peter's appointment to the principalship did not alter the relationship teachers had with their colleagues. They believe relationships between the teaching staff is something that is up to each individual to develop.

I don't think [it has impacted on my relationship with colleagues]. (1/T3)

I've always found it important to have that positive relationship with colleagues anyway. (1/T12)

4.4.3.2 Teacher – student relationships

Similarly, for a number of teachers, their relationship with students had not been affected by the arrival of a new principal.

I don't feel that the role of the principal or any kind of leadership will impact the relationship you have with the kids. I think that's more about me as a professional and the more years of experience I have, you become more confident with what you're doing because that's our first priority. If we don't have a relationship with the kids, there is no learning (1/T12)

I think the students would be quite as comfortable and that wouldn't be an issue. (1/T3)

It hasn't [changed] because there's always been that expectation of what I've wanted from them. (1/T8)

I can't think of how it would impact on my Physics students besides their frame of mind that they're in a school where the principal is around. (1/T1)

There was, however, one teacher who attributed a positive impact to the relationship with students to a change in the pastoral care system initiated by Peter.

Yes, [it has changed] in terms of the new structure for the pastoral system that he has implemented. So that's changed. It has changed how we deliver pastoral care. So, I probably see my students individually more. I probably have more in-depth conversations with each of them, but less frequent contact, because it's now personalised mentoring (1/T2)

In addition, another teacher felt that students trust this teacher more because of the trusting relationship this teacher has with Peter.

So, there's more trust from the students in me because they know he trusts me. That's much more visible than previously. (1/T4)

4.5 Teacher support during principal succession

The third and last research question in this study, sought to examine how teachers believe they could be supported during and after a change of principal. Teachers were asked to comment on what this support would look like and who could be providing it. The participants reflected on both their past and present experiences. Table 4.9 outlines the practices that emerged from the collected data.

For nine of these 11 teachers, having a new principal that prioritises getting to know his or her staff proves to be the most valuable practice. Building relationships include engaging in discussions with different stakeholders, getting to know teachers individually and showing an interest in their work. In addition, teachers also want to be informed. They seek opportunities to be consulted and develop teacher voice and they want to have a principal who wants to empower others as the following comments reveal.

I think when someone new comes in what people want is to get to know them. I think they want to see them around the school...I think they do want to have the little informal chats with them. I think they want to feel like the principal is getting to know them and is invested in their development. (1/T6)

Know your staff, even if it's a hello. So, getting to know them and just listening to them, that's probably one of the most important things; being approachable and making that clear. (1/T12)

For new principals in front of their new staff, I think the path forward isn't going to be defined day-one and it shouldn't be. Whereas I think normal human beings they just want reassurance, predictability in that time where everyone is going through change. (1/T1)

I think everyone wants to be heard, they want to have a forum where they can say, this needs to be done or this needs to be looked at, this needs to be improved, or the school needs to extend this. (1/T7)

Table 4.9: (KC) Leadership practices for supporting teachers during principal succession

Leadership practices	1/T1	1/T2	1/T3	1/T4	1/T5	1/T6	1/T7	1/T8	1/T9	1/T10	1/T11	1/T12	TOTAL
Building relationships		1	1		2	4						1	9
Frequent communication	1	1				2						1	5
Fostering teacher voice			1				1	1		1			4
Empowering teachers				1	1								2
No immediate changes		1											1

4.6 Chapter summary

Chapter Four has focussed on the first case study of this thesis, Kingston College; an independent, fee-paying, multi-campus school whose newly-appointed principal, Peter, had been chosen from within the school. He had previously held the position of Head of Campus A. Teachers' perceptions of their new principal is positive overall, reinforcing the personal qualities he had already displayed in his previous role. Peter is perceived as an authentic and approachable leader whose focus on building relationships with members of the school community proves to be one of the pillars of his character. His leadership is characterised as visionary, consultative and goal-driven, but above all, guided by the principle that teachers and teacher development is fundamental in the quest for excellence in education. Peter's self-perception concurs significantly with how teachers perceive him, giving reason to claim that a high level of transparency exists from both lens of leadership; those that exercise it and those who experience it. Peter's appointment as principal and the

perception teachers have developed of him as their new leader has impacted on different aspects of their work environment. Teachers from Campus A saw their morale shift negatively as they came to terms with Peter moving from his previous role. Whilst they are happy for Peter and what the appointment means for his career, they also experience a sense of loss and a challenging period of adaptation as they begin to work with his successor. For teachers from Campus B, on the other hand, Peter impacts positively on their morale and sense of connectedness towards the school as they welcome a principal who takes more notice of their campus and shows an interest in developing a relationship with them. Changes in organisational structure and direction of professional development initiated by Peter also records as having made an overwhelming positive impact on the majority of teachers from both campuses. In particular, staff champion having a principal who recognises teachers' needs for time and space for development and collaboration. Only two teachers report their teaching practice as having been impacted positively by the arrival of the new principal, whilst the remaining ten teachers reported no impact at all to their practice. With regards to teachers' professional relationships with colleagues and students, more than 90% of participants reported no impact on either of these relationships as a result of the arrival of Peter as principal. Finally, feeling supported during a time of change, is vital for teachers. Having a new principal who focusses on building relationships, is communicative, provides a forum for teacher voice and empowers them are some of the practices that teachers regard as supportive during this time of change.

CHAPTER FIVE: CASE STUDY TWO - SUMMERHILL COLLEGE

5. 1 Introduction

Chapter five presents the second case study in this thesis. As per Chapter 4, the outline for this chapter will include a profile of the school and the principal followed by the findings resulting from the data analysis, concluding with a chapter summary. Again, pseudonyms have been used for the school and all participants.

5.1.1 School sample

The school sample used for this case study follows the same protocol as before. Again, some of the teachers interviewed held middle leadership roles at the time of the interviews. Table 5.1 provides information regarding the observations undertaken at Summerhill College, which were specifically chosen to support the research questions. Table 5.2, on the other hand, displays the demographic characteristics of the participants. Similar to Kingston College, Summerhill College is comprised of two campuses and so, an equal number of participants was chosen from each campus to reflect an equal campus-voice representation in the interviews. Table 5.3 displays the school documents that were consulted to complement the data collected during interviews and observations.

Table 5.1: (SC) School observations

Observation	Date	Campus	Hours	Description
2/Ob1	Apr-18	A	1.5	School Campus Tour
2/Ob2	May-18	A	1.5	Principal/Parents morning Tea
2/Ob3	May-18	A	1.5	Campus meeting
2/Ob4	Jun-18	B	1.5	School Campus Tour
2/Ob5	Jul-18	A	1.5	Staff Day
2/Ob6	Jul-18	A	1.5	School event
2/Ob7	Aug-18	A	1.5	Principal/Parents morning Tea
2/Ob8	Aug-18	B	1.5	Whole school meeting
2/Ob9	Aug-18	B	1.5	School Assembly
2/Ob10	Aug-18	A	1.5	Staff PD session

Table 5.2: (SC) School interviews

Participant	Pseudonym	Gender	Age group	School Campus	Years in the profession	Years at the school	Date
Principal	Lisa	F	45-54	A/B	20+	N/A	Feb-18 / May-18
Teacher	2/T1	F	55-64	A	26+	21-25	Mar-18
Teacher*	2/T2	M	35-44	A	16-20	2-5	Mar-18
Teacher	2/T3	F	55-64	A	26+	16-20	May-18
Teacher	2/T4	F	45-54	A	16-20	11-15	May-18
Teacher*	2/T5	F	55-64	A	26+	11-15	May-18
Teacher*	2/T6	F	45-54	A	26+	21-25	Aug-18
Teacher*	2/T7	F	35-44	B	16-20	2-5	Jul-18
Teacher	2/T8	F	55-64	B	26+	2-5	Aug-18
Teacher*	2/T9	F	45-54	B	26+	6-10	Aug-18
Teacher	2/T10	F	45-54	B	21-25	2-5	Aug-18
Teacher*	2/T11	F	35-44	B	16-20	2-5	Aug-18
Teacher	2/T12	M	45-54	B	21-25	2-5	Aug-18

* Teacher also held a leadership role at the time of the interview.

Table 5.3: (SC) School documents sighted

Document No.	Document Name	Format
2/D1	Homepage	Website
2/D2	Strategic philosophy	PDF
2/D3	Principal welcome to families	Website
2/D4	Strategic Plan	PDF
2/D5	Principal interview Nat. Newspaper	Website
2/D6	Annual Report 2018	PDF
2/D7	Annual School Magazine 2018	PDF
2/D8	School Facebook Page	Website

5.2 School profile

Summerhill College is an independent non-denominational school located in outer Metropolitan Melbourne. The school was established as a small private school in the 1920s. (2/D1). The ICSEA for Summerhill College was identified as 1135 where 59% of students were identified in the top quarter for educational advantage and only 3% in the bottom quarter (Figure 5.1) (ACARA, 2019).

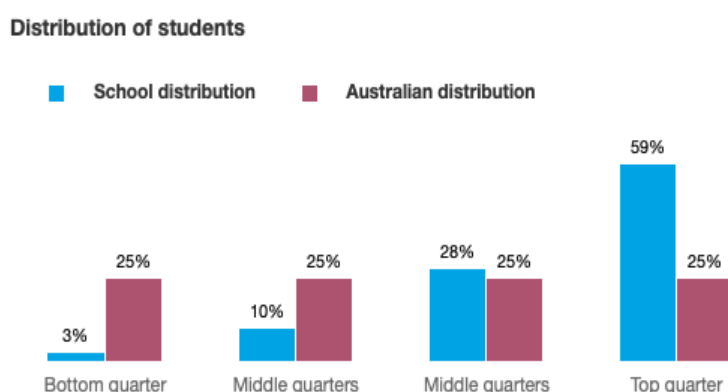


Figure 5.1: (SC) ICSEA distribution, 2018.

(ACARA, 2019)

Summerhill is governed by a school council which oversees the school strategic plan, annual budget and school policies as well as maintaining oversight of the school operations, which have been entrusted on the principal. (2/D1). Since 2010, student enrolments have fluctuated on an average

of ± 40 , please note that the greatest decrease in student population in the last nine years was recorded the year in which the current principal was appointed (Figure 5.2). In 2018, the school's student population stood at 764 with just under 75% located in Campus A. In total, the teaching staff consists of 118 teachers. Summerhill College prides itself in being a school of academic excellence with a large range of curricular and co-curricular choices for their students (2/D1, 2/D3, 2/D7, 2/Ob1, 2/Ob4). According to the *Better Education* website (2019), the school has maintained a median VCE score of 33 out of 50 for the last eight years. Through its marketing initiatives and communication channels within the community, the school reinforces its commitment to being one school despite its two-campus configuration (2/D1, 2/D7, 2/Ob1, 2/Ob4, 2/Ob7).

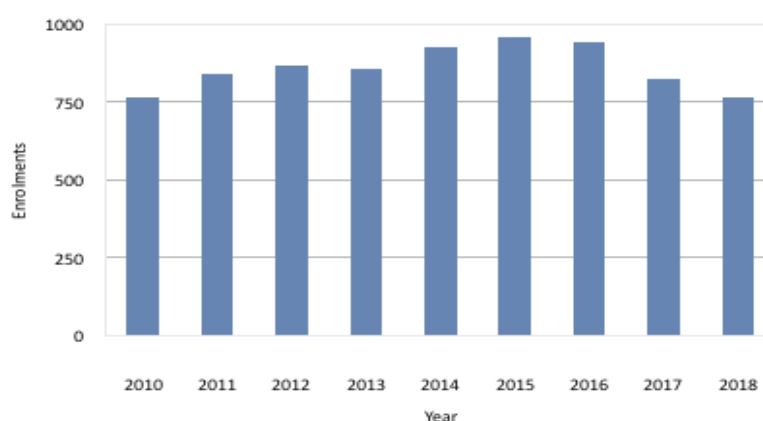


Figure 5.2: (SC) Student enrolments 2010 – 2018.

(ACARA, 2019)

5.2.1 A multi-campus school

Campus A is located 47kms from the city centre in the outer suburbs of Melbourne. It comprises a co-educational ELC and primary school as well as a girls-only secondary school. The principal's office is situated in this campus and most of the school meetings take place here. Campus B, on the other hand, is a boys-only 7-12 secondary school located 10kms from Campus A. The proximity between campuses has allowed for some senior secondary courses to be offered in a co-educational setting. As a result of this physical configuration, the organisational structure of Summerhill includes the principal, a head for each campus as well as a Head of ELC-primary school. One of the Heads of Campus also takes on the role of deputy principal. There are also a number of middle leadership roles, some of which are cross-campus positions. Despite the persistence of the

principal to project a single, cohesive school, the educational and social intricacies of each campus is palpable as reflected in the following comments (2/Ob1, 2/Ob4).

We have such different cultures and such different clientele and such different history. It's like trying to bring a ten-year-old and a 96-year-old together and expecting them to have a lot in common and they might have some things in common, but they're totally different worlds... there is still no common denominator and this is the big problem. (2/T5)

We [Campus B] are still not equal. [The staff in Campus A] I don't think, bend as much as what [we] do. I think we should be [equal] and we're the ones that are ready to adapt because we're the younger [campus], whereas as a lot of them over there don't. (2/T10)

For Lisa, the complexities of a multi-campus school also prove challenging as she begins to fulfil her role despite the short distance between campuses (10kms).

I knew trying to be everywhere would be a challenge, but I didn't realise quite how big a challenge it would be...you cannot be everywhere all the time, especially in a multi-campus school...I think I need to know every staff, by talking, going to the morning teas...(Lisa)

5.2.2 The appointment

Summerhill College has had five principals in the last eight years as a result of a combination of planned and unplanned principal succession. In some instances, this phenomenon has conditioned the way in which teachers conceptualise the transitory nature of the principalship thus impacting on how they respond to the news of yet another new principal. It appears that teachers have become accustomed to a change of principal, to the extent of almost becoming desensitised by the event, showing little confidence in the longevity of the latest appointment, as these comments suggest.

We've had a series of principals. So, we had a stability for ten years and then we've had a series of principals since then... staff are almost accustomed to that. So, hopefully Lisa will bring back some stability to staff. (2/T3)

Prior to Lisa coming on board, we just needed stability, we needed to know that the school was viable and that it was moving ahead. 2/T9)

I wouldn't be surprised if she leaves early if the right job came along. It wouldn't worry me because over the last few years we've had a few different principals. (2/T6)

We'd all been wondering what was going to happen because we'd had several changes and I suppose we were keen to find out who it was going to be and if this person was going to be around for a while. (2/T5)

During the principal selection process (and given the fragmented leadership history), the school board sought teacher opinions in order to gain an understanding of the principal characteristics the teaching staff believed their future principal should possess. One participant commented on how teachers appreciated this gesture, as they believed they could contribute to the process of a new principal's appointment.

They did ask us what we would like in a leader. There was a consultative thing and I think from memory it might have been an e-mail where you could say what sorts of things you would like. (2/T5)

Despite the scepticism as a result of the high principal turnover, Lisa's appointment was received with a high level of expectation and initial acceptance given that nine of the 12 teachers concurred with the board's decision to appoint externally. The remaining three teachers showed no specific inclination for either an internal or external preference.

I think when you appoint somebody from an external source, they bring in those fresh ideas, those new ideas...so, I think it's good to have somebody from the outside who can then come in and put a different stamp on the school. (2/T2)

I think it was necessary because too many people within the school were just used to the old habits or were disgruntled with the old things and we needed some fresh eyes and fresh leadership. (2/T8)

I think universally the staff would have been happy that it was an external appointment. There was no one really in the school who I felt was ready to take on that role. (2/T3)

In addition, Lisa's experience in the independent school sector proved to be the second most important desired quality in a principal as the following comments suggest.

She came from an independent school and understood how independent schools run. (2/T3)

I was very pleased to see that she had a lot of experience in independent schools in the city and with girls' schools in particular. So, I knew that she really understood our demographic and that was important. (2/T4)

5.2.3 The principal

Lisa is the eleventh principal at Summerhill College. This is her first principalship, although she has previously held many other leadership positions, many of them in independent schools similar to Summerhill College. At the same time, she is an active member in a number of educational

organisations, which has allowed her to obtain a variety of perspectives on current issues in educational leadership. In addition, Lisa's own personal intellectual pursuits, such as currently enrolled in a PhD, shape and inform her strong advocacy for the positive links between educational research and practice, which has also served as apt preparation for the role of principal as evidenced in the following comment.

My connection with [educational associations] gave me access to principals on a level that I wouldn't necessarily have had before. So, in terms of ideas about what would be the challenges, what everybody faces, it was a good thing to know in advance...so, there weren't many surprises when I got here... even the PhD, I think that side of things is crucial for people in this position. (Lisa)

Lisa's preparation also included visiting and meeting with the school's leadership team at the time as well as receiving the support and guidance from her then principal.

I was lucky in that my principal at the time was happy to let me go. She was very supportive. In a way she gave me a heads up on some things that might be challenges and that she had learned along the way. So, she sort of mentored me a little bit. (Lisa)

Summerhill's high principal turnover did not go unnoticed as Lisa prepared for the role, and this inherited context became a strong point of reference that has informed, and to some extent, shaped her leadership practices, at least at the start of her tenure.

From what I knew of the school, I knew that it needed a bit of healing because there had been quite a few changes in leadership in recent times. So, that to me indicated that there really needed to be some assurance made to the community that there was someone here to stay, that there was somebody who cared for the community [and] that thought relationships were important...(Lisa)

[I have] three goals; healing and building community, and for me the other one that was a bit of a no-brainer was this idea of identity. Who are we? how do we work as a one unit and that -deliberately, but indirectly has led to a whole lot of considerations for teaching and learning that I believe are benefiting the school. (Lisa)

5.3 Teacher perceptions of the new principal

The following section presents the findings in relation to how teachers perceive their new principal. Table 5.4 displays the themes that emerged from teacher interviews pertaining to personal qualities of the principal. Table 5.5 displays the themes associated with the principal's leadership qualities as perceived by teachers. As per the first case study, only themes that were mentioned by six or

more participants in total have been included in the discussion given their weight and frequency. These tables also evidence whether these themes were captured during observations and/or sighted school documents. Tables 5.6 and Table 5.7, display the total number of themes and their frequency from the principal's two interviews in relation to personal (Table 5.6) and leadership (Table 5.7) qualities.

Table 5.4: (SC) Teacher comments attributed to principal perception (personal qualities)

		Campus A								Campus B								
	Themes	2/T1	2/T2	2/T3	2/T4	2/T5	2/T6	Total Campus A	Obs. Campus A	2/T7	2/T8	2/T9	2/T10	2/T11	2/T12	Total Campus B	Obs. Campus B	TOTAL (A + B)
Personal qualities	Visible	1	1	2	4	4	9	21	✓	9	4	1	6	2	1	23	✓	44
	Authentic	5	3	2		2	2	14	✓	9	3		1	2	1	16	✓	30
	Passionate		5	1	3			9	✓	7	2	7	2	3		21	✓	30
	Good communicator	2		1	6		6	15	✓	2	1	2	3	2	2	12	✓	27
	Approachable	3		4	1	1	3	12	✓	4	1	1		4	4	14	✓	26
	Inclusive	3	1	4	2	2		12	✓	6	1			1	1	9	✓	21
	People person	3		2	1	2	1	9	✓	4	2	1		1		8	✓	17
	Friendly			1	1	2	2	6	✓	3		1	1			5	✓	11
	Internationally minded		3		1			4	✓	4					1	5	✓	9
	Knowledgeable							0	✓	1		7	1			9	✓	9
	Trustworthy				2		3	5				1		1		2		7
	Inspiring							0	✓		1		1	3		5	✓	5
	Up to date / informed		1			1		2	✓		1					1	✓	3
	Hard working							0	✓	3						3	✓	3
	Humorous						2	2	✓	1						1	✓	3
	Casual						1	1	✓						1	1	✓	2
	Self-regulating	1			1			2	✓							0		2
	Accessible							0	✓				1			1	✓	1
	Confident							0	✓					1		1	✓	1

		Campus A								Campus B								
Themes	2/T1	2/T2	2/T3	2/T4	2/T5	2/T6	Total Campus A	Obs. Campus A	2/T7	2/T8	2/T9	2/T10	2/T11	2/T12	Total Campus B	Obs. Campus B	TOTAL (A + B)	
Ambitious						1	1	✓							0		1	
Supportive							0	✓		1					1	✓	1	

Table 5.5: (SC) Teacher comments attributed to principal perception (leadership qualities)

		Campus A								Campus B								
Leadership qualities	Themes	2/T1	2/T2	2/T3	2/T4	2/T5	2/T6	Total Campus A	Obs. Campus A	2/T7	2/T8	2/T9	2/T10	2/T11	2/T12	Total Campus B	Obs. Campus B	TOTAL (A + B)
	Visionary	2	3	1	7		3	16	✓	3		4	1	2	1	11	✓	27
	Empowering	4	3	2		2		11	✓		5			3	3	10	✓	22
	Consultative	1	2	1	3		4	11	✓	1		1	2	1	1	6	✓	17
	Values teachers	2	2		3	2		9	✓	1	1			3	2	7	✓	16
	Goal driven		1	1	2	2		6	✓	2	1	1		2	2	8	✓	14
	Impulsive				5		6	11	✓			2				2		13
	Ethical	1	4					5	✓	2	1			4		7	✓	12
	Micromanaging						7	7								0		7
	Open-minded		1	2	1			4	✓		1					1	✓	5
	Collaborative			2			2	4	✓							0		4
	Student-centred	3						3	✓							0	✓	3

Table 5.6: (SC) Principal comments attributed to self-perception (personal qualities)

	Themes	Principal	Obs. Campus A	Obs. Campus B
Personal qualities	Trustworthy	16		
	Visible	7	✓	✓
	Authentic	7	✓	✓
	Reflective	7	✓	✓
	Humorous	4	✓	✓
	People person	3	✓	✓
	Knowledgeable	1	✓	✓

Table 5.7: (SC) Principal comments attributed to self-perception (leadership qualities)

	Themes	Principal	Obs. Campus A	Obs. Campus B
Leadership qualities	Consultative	6	✓	✓
	Inclusive	3	✓	✓
	Goal driven	2	✓	✓
	Values teachers	2	✓	✓
	Visionary	1	✓	✓

5.3.1 Personal qualities

5.3.1.1 Visible

Lisa's visibility in the school and towards different members of the community proved to be the most commented upon characteristic. Whilst some differences did appear between both campuses, all 12 teachers communicated at least once about the importance of having a principal who is around the school. Four out of 12 teachers show explicit gratitude for Lisa's efforts in being visible, given the busy demands of the principal role (2/Ob1, 2/Ob4).

She is visible in the staff room. She is certainly visible to the students at assembly. (2/T2)

She's very good, she's very visible and out there in the community, as well. (2/T4)

She's trying to raise her profile in the student and parent community by running principal's morning teas for parents to come in... she's making herself very visible, but she's so busy...she says makes an effort to come to the weekly staff briefings and I know that each campus has a different briefing time and she makes a real effort to get to all of them. (2/T6)

She puts herself out there, she makes a real effort to be speaking at things or to be contributing to things...she's at everything! (2/T7)

Lisa spends one day a week on Campus B. Despite this limited exposure, all six teachers Campus B teachers from regard her as visible. They do acknowledge that they would like to see more of her. The comments emerging from Campus B show how the multi-campus setting impact on how they perceive Lisa. Having to share the principal with Campus A is complex as it reverberates on their own identity and self-perception as a whole as the following comments suggest.

She certainly has spent more time here than any other principal has...she's here a full day a week and then bits and pieces and so that's more than anyone's ever done. (2/T7)

You certainly see her and she's around [but] she is at [Campus A], she knows everyone better there...here it's a bit more distant, unless you do meet up with her regularly as quite a few staff do...It would be great if she could not just go up to her office and to assembly. (2/T8)

To be honest, I wish she spent more time here...I feel, and a lot of colleagues feel, that she's over there [Campus A] a lot and she knows that stuff quite well...we feel that we're the second poor cousin of [Campus A] because [Lisa] is over there a lot more...I think as a whole we feel that we're not getting the attention that we deserve. It's sounds really childish. (2/T10)

We don't actually have the day-to-day, we only have the big picture and our day-to-day is more hinged with our Head of campus. (2/T9)

Lisa, too, sees the value and investment from being visible and uses this practice as a way of becoming known by all members of the community (2/Ob7), yet she feels she could do more in this area and has considered teaching one class in the future in order to increase that visibility and reinforce some of her teaching and learning ideas.

Junior school is gold, because the parents will hang outside the door, you can have a chat to them and you get to know them that way and they feel, therefore, more comfortable contacting you...I try in the mornings to walk around, I'll pop my head into the classroom and say have a good day. (Lisa)

I try to get to morning tea and all the rest of it and visit classrooms, but that is something I haven't done as much as I wanted to...I put my hand up to teach at the end of last year for exposure and hopefully, that everyone gets to know me a bit better and see what I stand for and see that I try to walk the talk. (Lisa)

Teachers, too, show an interest in having Lisa involved in the classroom, although currently, this is not a dominant mark of her visibility.

I would say, I haven't seen her visible in the classroom. I haven't seen that. (2/T2)

I would like her to visit classes if she had time and I appreciate that she probably hasn't, but even it would be lovely to have her pop in, but she does come to most events and she's a great advocate for it also. (2/T5)

She takes extras [replacement classes], for example. She's very keen to teach if possible. (2/T6)

One of the ways in which Lisa compensates for not being as visible as she would like is through the use of ICT and social media (2/D3, 2/D8). This practice has not gone unnoticed by staff from both campuses, who reflect on how these tools enhance Lisa's presence, especially in a multi-campus school. Five out of 12 teachers refer to Lisa's ability to have a non-visible presence in the school, which contributes to teachers' positive perception of their new leader as the following remarks suggest.

She always appears to be there even if she's not. There's always an e-mail or comment. She'll either say, "I'm so sorry I can't be there, I hope everything goes well" or "How did everything go, I heard it was fantastic"...she appears to be around all the time and yet I know she can't be because she's got to be at the other campus, but she manages to be there. (2/T5)

I know she is probably not as visible as she would like to be...she's working very hard to be visible. I reckon it's possibly a source of frustration for her, but again, she's out there on social media and getting out there that way too. (2/T6)

While sometimes she's not visible she still has a presence...she sends out e-mails congratulating people, thanking them for doing jobs and things like that. (2/T12)

5.3.1.2 Authentic

Lisa comes across as an individual shaped and guided by a self-designed set of six core values: intellect, integrity, humility, humour, excellence and global citizenship. These values shape who she is and feature predominantly in her identity as a principal. Consequently, for Lisa, sharing these

values with the school community was her first step as principal (2/Ob1, 2/Ob2, 2/Ob4, (2/Ob5, 2/Ob9, 2/Ob10).

I just have to be me. I could not be a leader of a style that didn't suit me. That didn't suit my values...so, for me it is valuing intellect, it's valuing integrity, it's valuing humility, humour, striving for excellence and global citizenship, and that has lasted me at least ten years now...I'd like to think they see me as somebody who is true to those values. (Lisa)

So, back to my own six little values, which I shared with the staff, I said this is who I am, this is what I believe I stand for and what I value and that's a heads up. So, when you interact with me be aware that I'll be guided by these things. (Lisa)

To lead I need to go back to the six things I value. I go to be leader of hearts and minds and I think the engagement of the intellect is crucial. (Lisa)

In addition, the importance of not only being, but also remaining authentic, reflects Lisa's understanding of the contextual dimension of school leadership and its role in leading successfully, as the following comment suggests.

The fit of the leader to the community is utterly crucial. I was in one job that wasn't a good fit and it was the most stressful horrible thing I've ever done, and I probably didn't do the organisation any service either. (Lisa)

Teachers acknowledge her values and understand they represent the backbone of Lisa's leadership. They respond positively to these six values and are quick to identify them in all aspects of her practice and how she manages to sustain them as seen in the following comments.

[She] spoke firstly about her life, I guess, her experiences, her passions and I think that sort of stuck with me...she's held true to her values. (2/T2)

[On her first day] she talked about her philosophy, her beliefs and then how that translates to her teaching and her leadership. So, she very much came in with, "This who I am, this is what I believe, these are the educational philosophies, these are the educators that influence me". She was very clearly outlining exactly what she is like as a person and as a leader. (2/T5)

For her, the big thing has been the strategic plan and if you look at the strategic plan, you can see [Lisa] all over it. I think the new strategic plan has that stamp all over it. (2/T7)

She models her leadership. (2/T11)

Authenticity resulted in the second most commented feature of Lisa's personal qualities with all 12 teachers bar two, making explicit remarks regarding this quality and its role in assisting with the principal transition process. As the interviews were conducted 12 months after Lisa's commencement, this provided teachers an opportunity to reflect on whether this perception had changed over time.

The person that I met at the beginning, is very much the person that she is now. (2/T3)

I think the person she presents here at the school is the person she is. (2/T2)

I like the way she introduced herself to the community through her values. She's got a very clear personal set of values and so, this is how she introduced herself to the community (2/T6)

I like the way she was very clear with her own philosophies and values and I think that's really important for us to have seen...I don't think there's been any shocks or changes or she said this and now... No. (2/T8)

As soon as you met [Lisa], you knew her personality, you knew her beliefs, her values and you knew where she was going to take this school or her leadership style, you knew straight away. Whereas, with the other appointment you knew straight away that it was not good...[she's] very authentic, very genuine. (2/T1)

I think my first reading of her was right, who she is outside of that role is very closely aligned to who she is in it as well. (2/T7)

5.3.1.3 Passionate

Another personal quality that stands out for teachers is Lisa's perceived passion and energy for all things educational. She is perceived as being genuinely enthusiastic about the possibilities for the school going forward and the readiness with which she wants to communicate future developments for the school. This is palpable to all eight participants who commented on this personal quality. Teachers from Campus B feel much stronger about this quality (21 comments) compared to participants from Campus A (9 comments). A possible explanation for this could be that because these teachers only see her once a week, this characteristic is more pronounced and continues to be somewhat a novelty as suggested below.

She's one of those incredibly busy, energetic, positive people...having looked at what we got sent out, I was like, this woman is dynamite. (2/T7)

[She is] a vibrant, forward-moving principal...I don't know where she gets her energy from! (2/T9)

She's very energetic and in some ways that inspires you (2/T10)

For two teachers, however, Lisa's passion and energy is almost a reflection of the pace at which she is trying to operate. This could be understood as a less positive trait as the following comments suggest.

I mean she's really trying to do lots of things and sometimes it's a little hard to keep up with her. (2/T4)

I just think that her time constrictions make it hard and because she's so high-energy and into so many different things, that being able to do everything would be challenging. (2/T9)

5.3.1.4 Good communicator

Having a principal who not only has a school vision but is also effective in communicating that vision is regarded as a significant characteristic of teachers' perceptions of Lisa. Ten out of 12 teachers made a positive reference to this aspect of her character. As noted earlier, teachers appreciate Lisa's focus on explaining who she is, what informs her leadership and how she plans to lead the school into the future. Teachers regard this personal quality highly whether it is in reference to her ability, for example, to address the parent community or the staff.

She has a clear vision and she expresses it openly with clarity and doesn't use jargon, doesn't press home points, a little bit self-effacing. (2/T1)

I think she's a great spokesperson, a role model for us. (2/T4)

The way she introduced this current change was awesome. I think she was very clear and honest and said, "we have to do this and this is why". I think the message has ownership, the details may or may not suit people, but the message has ownership. (2/T9)

She's been very clear right from the start on the very first meeting that this is what she wants to accomplish, this is what her goals are for the years. (2/T12)

As mentioned earlier, Lisa uses ICT effectively to communicate with both staff and the wider community. E-mails appeared to be one method through which she communicates frequently with teachers.

She's very aware of the importance of strong communication and is working very hard to try to communicate and through lots of different vehicles...she uses social media very strongly, so much more use of Facebook and Twitter and LinkedIn and all those sorts of things as a form of communication. (2/T6)

She sends out lots of e-mails. I have conversations with her about that. I think that's probably been the greatest medium for her. (2/T7)

It should be noted that for three of the ten teachers who had spoken positively of Lisa's communication skills, they also mentioned that Lisa is not always as effective in communicating with clarity. This results in a lack of thoroughness as explained in the following comments.

She is very aware of the importance of strong communication, but every now and then, not often, there's a lack of thoroughness in what she's saying. (2/T6)

I think there needs to be greater clarity at times around the structure that she's putting in place. It's quite clear to me, but that's because I have been in leadership, so the vision is quite clear to me, but I don't know if all staff have that same clarity in what she's intending to build. (2/T3)

Sometimes I just think it could be a lot quicker and a lot faster if she could just say, "This is what I've been hired to do and these are my ideas". This strategic plan is big, it's massive and I'm like, "Why don't you just give me three things, three things". (2/T4)

For Lisa, being a good communicator is an effective vehicle through which she engages with staff on matters of school vision, improvement and change (2/Ob3, 2/Ob5, 2/Ob8, 2/Ob9, 2/Ob10, 2/D2, 2/D4, 2/D5). In addition, the language she chooses to convey these ideas is the language she would like her staff to adopt as a way of developing teacher ownership (2/Ob2, 2/Ob4, 2/Ob1). This is one of the ways in which she measures her impact, as the comment below suggests.

People are starting to use the same language now, which they weren't before: "We are one school, we are growing good people, we've got to revise our values, which are part of the strategic plan, so people can refer to them". (Lisa)

5.3.1.5 Approachable and inclusive

Given Lisa's extrovert nature (2/Ob1, 2/Ob3, 2/Ob5) and desire to be accepted into the school, teachers were quick to realise that their new principal is someone who is doing everything she can to be visible, welcoming and inclusive towards members of the community, particularly teachers. Ten out of 12 teachers perceive Lisa as approachable and nine out of 12 teachers perceive her as inclusive. According to some teachers, this was not a characteristic of Lisa's predecessor, but it is a behaviour they have quickly endorsed and value. During interviews, teachers shared examples of what this looks like in the day-to-day running of the school as per the following examples.

I thought, this is a person who is really engaging and somebody who's got a great mind and she makes you want to talk to her. It's genius. That's one of her real strengths as a leader; you want to talk to her. (2/T4)

I think that staff felt very comfortable with [Lisa]...I find [her] very approachable. I always felt that her door was open and I think if I have an issue or a problem, I could talk to her about that. (2/T3)

I do feel that if I had a problem with a colleague that I would go and talk to [Lisa] about it, whereas I wouldn't have with the previous [principal]. I would have dealt with it myself. (2/T5)

One of the ways in which Lisa demonstrates to staff that she is an approachable and inclusive principal, is by inviting every single member of the teaching staff for a brief one-on-one meeting with her in her office (2/Ob3). This practice has allowed Lisa to meet every teacher individually and gain a deeper understanding of teachers' concerns as well as gathering feedback from the new strategic plan. Whilst recognising this is very time consuming, Lisa also recognises these meetings as an investment in building relationships. In addition, Lisa makes sure the principal's office is perceived as inviting and inclusive.

I am now interviewing every member of staff in relation to the new strategic plan. I would suggest that people are grateful for the opportunity to give one-on-one feedback. Overall, I have been pleased with the level of positivity. (Lisa)

I got some windows put in my door, because it was a solid door and I said, I hate it... people drop in all the time. As they're walking past, they stop and wave. (Lisa)

The following comments reveal that teachers witness how Lisa's approachability and sense of inclusion also extends to students. Lisa has made the effort to create opportunities for her to become close to students. In fact, early on in her role, she made the decision to engage with students individually as a way of showing that side of her personality and leadership.

She encourages kids to drop by and talk to her and I know kids in my campus that actually do that. (2/T6)

The way she talks to the girls in groups, the way she is with them on swimming sports and arts is very approachable. (2/T1)

I am trying to form individual relationships with as many students as possible. I'm mentoring, personally mentoring about four students. (Lisa)

5.3.1.6 People person and Friendly

Throughout teacher interviews, it was communicated that some of the previous principals had not been successful as they lacked the humane approach that teachers sought from a school leader. In addition, teachers valued a principal who placed emphasis in understanding the unique context of the school and its community as the following comments reveal.

I think that's a big difference probably from a lot of principals I've worked with in that she does look for the good rather than the not good. (2/T8)

She now has a much better understanding of our school community, which I think is probably different to what she's used to (2/T6)

[Lisa] definitely communicates that she cares about what everybody thinks... she's always positive and I think the school has been desperate for that. I mean given the amount of leadership changes we've had over the past few years; I think that's been really good. (2/T7)

She wanted to know the staff, she wanted to know the students and that was her focus and she made that very clear. (2/T1)

The above perceptions of their new principal support Lisa's own agenda with regards to the need to get to know the school community, which extends to students as explained below. Lisa also recognises that being consultative and inclusive as well as valuing teachers, are qualities for which the school board was searching for in their future principal.

That's why they selected me, because they thought that I could help build the community spirit, build the relationships, that sort of thing. (Lisa)

I have found it a complex and rich and lovely community. So, getting to know the community has been a delight, getting to know the children, and that's one area that I wish there was more time for in this role. (Lisa)

I think I need to know every staff, by talking, going to the morning teas. I think you have a sort of priority list. (Lisa)

Despite this support, Lisa is realistic when it comes to teacher perceptions. She accepts that not everyone will take to her or her vision for the school. She rests on the notion of, on the one hand, being guided by her leadership philosophy, and on the other, by spending the necessary time engaging in dialogue with all teaching staff. Lisa expressed feeling comfortable in knowing that as principal, she will not be liked by everyone.

I am old enough to know that there is no way everyone will be in total agreement with me. I can only say that I have tried incredibly hard to listen to every staff member. I hope they see me as living up to my own vision of leadership (valuing intellect, integrity, humour, humility, striving for excellence and true global citizenship). (Lisa)

There is always the potential for hurt and I know I have always wanted to be judged by my actions. I know some people will not be happy with final outcomes and it is likely that I will be blamed. I am expecting that. That is the way of the world. (Lisa)

Whilst trustworthiness did not feature strongly as one of the top themes for teachers, it was the most frequently cited quality by Lisa (Table 5.5). As an external appointment and cognisant of the context she was receiving, Lisa set out to prioritise her goals very soon after being appointed. If she was to be successful, and be perceived as such, she needed to influence teachers and bring them on board. Two of her three main goals involves restorative practices that require the development of trust. In addition, the individual interviews she has held with each member of staff are also aimed at building that trust. Lisa explains:

[I had] three goals; healing and building community, and for me the other one that was a bit of a no-brainer was this idea of identity. Who are we? (Lisa)

[Teachers] went through four principals in about six years. So, a lot of change in leadership. So, that to me indicated that there really needed to be some assurance made to the community that there was someone here to stay, that there was somebody who cared for the community that thought relationships were important because one of those principals didn't last because the relationships were not good. (Lisa)

I believe staff see me as someone who has been very open with them, so hopefully that builds relational trust. Teachers often, however, have an in-built reservation towards leadership. It's tricky...the one-on-one interviews hopefully will play a role in establishing trust. I really hope so as they are taking hundreds of hours. (Lisa)

Trust, however, takes time. Unlike other qualities such as visibility, it is an attribution that needs to be developed over time. Only four out of 12 teachers discussed trust:

I don't know [if I trust her], I don't know yet. I don't trust too many people...every now and then I just think, "I'm not sure about this". (2/T4)

When I first met her, I felt I could trust her. Mostly I do and I'll say whatever I think needs to be said to her. The mistrust, and it's only tiny, the mistrust comes from this characteristic of hers of saying one thing to one person and then the next person comes along and then she agrees with them and it's like, well, hang on, where do you sit? (2/T6)

[With regards to changes coming in] There's a little bit of nervousness there, but I do have trust that it has been thought through fairly carefully, but I suppose there is an element of doubt and an element of being mindful. (2/T9)

[When Lisa] gets up and has a talk [to the students], I relate her values and I do that because then the kids know that I'm on their side, on the leadership side, which means I have confidence in them. (2/T11)

5.3.2 Leadership qualities

5.3.2.1 Visionary

With regards to her leadership qualities, Lisa is regarded as visionary and she uses the new strategic plan to explain it (2/D2, 2/D4). Ten out of 12 teachers commented not only on the school vision itself, but also its origins and how it has been communicated to the teaching staff. It was evident that these teachers see Lisa as a principal who is committed for the longhaul in setting the path for new and better beginnings. Although Lisa creates opportunities for staff to provide feedback on the strategic plan and contribute to its design, some teachers do perceive this document to be a reflection of her vision rather than the school's vision.

For her the big thing has been the strategic plan and if you look at the strategic plan and you can see Lisa all over it (2/T7)

I think she loves to gather ideas and has a very visionary approach to things...she does have a clear vision and she had a values proposition; she has a mission statement. (2/T2)

I think she likes to spark ideas, very much a visionary, she's a big-idea person...she's spent a lot of time saying, "here's my strategic plan and here's my vision for how we can work together. (2/T4)

She has a vision...her vision is to bring [Summerhill College] into one of the top 50 to 100 schools in the state. She also has a vision to have a globally- responsible school so that we're sustainable and ethically responsible. (2/T11)

Three out of these ten teachers, however, also reflected on how a clear vision requires clear articulation and implementation, and that perhaps this is an area in which Lisa does not always elaborate. For them, clear implementation guidelines are sometimes missing. For these teachers, knowing how they will get there and what will be required of them in the process is just as important as knowing where they are heading. These teachers explain:

I think what's missing for us here at the moment, is some clarity. The whole strategic plans is awesome, [she's] giving the whole school a direction, so the direction is there on paper...but maybe it's like there's a lot there and we're not seeing it necessarily on the ground. (2/T9)

I think she has a huge picture of things and I don't think she realises sometimes we don't get what she's saying. (2/T4)

I don't know whether she had a vision before she even started of what she wanted her school to look like...I don't know whether it was preconceived or not [and] that's the detail that a creative thinker like her sometimes moves on with the next great idea and doesn't cross that. (2/T6)

Lisa also describes herself as visionary (Table 5.6). With this in mind, designing a new strategic plan for Summerhill has been the driving force for her in her first 12 months as principal, and through it, she has been able to build a new vision for the school. Lisa is a principal who focusses on the bigger picture (2/Ob1, 2/Ob4, 2/D2, 2/D4, 2/D7) and then brings in others to help to materialise it, recognising the challenges that come with doing so, as the following examples explain.

When you do strategic plan, you have to spend a lot of time getting to know your community, getting feedback. So, in fact it was gold. There were some things that straight away I could see needed doing, but the strategic plan reinforced those and also gave me license to do them. Plus, it gives you that chance to pop your own little passions in. (Lisa)

I'm not a micromanager. I'm interested in the end product but I'm absolutely not a micromanager. (Lisa)

I have had to rely increasingly on my own values & vision of leadership to guide me. The extent of the job ahead of me is becoming increasingly apparent and it is potentially daunting. I need to keep reminding myself that a) I have the strategic plan to guide me and b) I need to action it at a pace that the community and I can manage, else it will potentially be disastrous. (Lisa)

5.3.2.2 Empowering

Whilst only 50 percent of teachers describe Lisa as empowering, those that did, commented on this leadership characteristic often. In fact, five out of those six teachers across both campuses, clarified explicitly how her empowerment of others, particularly of middle leaders, goes beyond the provision of roles and titles, but truly entrusts them with the necessary autonomy for them to lead change as the following comments reveal.

[Her leadership] certainly empowers that middle management band...so, in terms of managerial or leadership quality, delegating and empowering others to make choices, I think sits central to what is the style that is now here and it comes across the whole school. (2/T1)

I certainly think distributed leadership is one of her strengths...she does well to be able to give those people [middle leaders] in those positions the authority to be able to manage those roles without them feeling like they have to check with [Lisa] first. (2/T2)

She puts a lot of belief in other people... she ignites something further for you to go and do, not just distributes, but plants an idea and then gives you the freedom to actually run with that to a degree... she's giving the next level down of leaders a lot of empowerment to make changes. (2/T8)

She's very much one to give people the power and authority to do what they need to do. she anoints people and gives them the power to see through. (2/T12)

Given the above comments, it is clear to see that Lisa is perceived as placing her trust in those middle leaders to carry on their roles with a certain level of autonomy. This perception is very revealing when examined in relation to earlier comments regarding teachers' perception of Lisa as trustworthy. Not one of the six teachers who identified Lisa as a giver of autonomy and empowering of others also describe her as trustworthy. More elaboration on this issue will be further discussed in Chapter 7. Lisa, on the other hand, has no hesitation in describing herself as empowering and predisposed to distribute her leadership. She explains below:

I am a distributed-leadership type of person and I have relied on key members of the team...we have a very happy functional leadership team at the moment. I think that makes a huge difference. (Lisa)

Having been in some dysfunctional executives...I think I'm very distributive in terms of, I have a team that I trust, and I work with. (Lisa)

5.3.2.3 Consultative

Coming into the role as a novice and externally-appointed principal, Lisa is very aware that, whilst she is bringing to the role a large amount of experience and knowledge, she needs to be perceived as a leader who is attentive, open to feedback and willing to learn. For Lisa, being consultative meant two things: Firstly, it is about asking people advice and guidance regarding new initiatives for the school. This was done through individual staff meetings and through inviting all staff to be co-creators of the strategic plan. They were involved in its evolution through participative dialogue and feedback (2/Ob3, 2/Ob5, 2/Ob8, 2/Ob10) as she explains in the following comments.

You can't do it alone, you need to explore the wisdom of others and talk to others... that sort of consultation and then lots of conversation so, you try to get around as much as you can, but I'm finding that really challenging because there just aren't enough hours in the day. (Lisa)

I'm very consultative... so, we try and work off the no-surprises rule here as well. So, that involves lots of communication and lots of flagging of ideas. (Lisa)

Secondly, Lisa also considers consultation as a way of gaining insight into how she is being perceived and how others view her performance so far. Again, the one-on-one interviews Lisa has chosen to conduct with each member of the teaching staff proves very useful as this is an opportunity not only to get to know each staff member, but also as an opportunity to gain some feedback.

I got a lot of feedback along the way about what people thought leadership should or shouldn't be, so this provided an opportunity for staff to say more ad hoc, "I love the way the school's going" or whatever or not...fortunately, it's been pretty well all in the positive. Mind you, what you say to your boss you have to take with a grain of salt. (Lisa)

Some staff are happy to tell me directly about how others feel about me. Others have volunteered how they feel in the one-on-one interviews I am having with every staff member. (Lisa)

I know some people will not be happy with final outcomes and it is likely that I will be blamed, I am expecting that. I can only say that I have tried incredibly hard to listen to every staff member. I am old enough to know that there is no way everyone will be in total agreement with me...that is the way of the world. (Lisa)

Lisa is a confident principal who will not hesitate to be decisive and make difficult decision regardless of others' opinions (2/Ob3), and yet, the balance between being perceived as too harsh or not harsh enough does occupy her mind.

We've done some tough stuff. We had two redundancies last year and one teacher was on due process. They're not easy to go through, but ultimately the community saw then that there was a capacity to make some tough decisions as well, because I worry sometimes [that] I am perceived as too soft and too nice. (Lisa)

Ten out of 12 teachers identify Lisa as a consultative principal. Not only are teachers appreciative of being consulted, but Lisa has created formal structures and avenues for this to occur, such as the establishment of the individual interviews or through her effective use of ICT tools, like e-mail. Whether or not these avenues pre-existed with former leaders is not known, yet what is evident is

that under Lisa's leadership, teachers are cognisant of her efforts to reach out and listen to what they have to say as the following comments explain.

I know last term, she met with every member of staff. That's a hugely time-consuming commitment, but she did it. (2/T6)

She will listen and she'll seek lots of opinions. She doesn't shoot from the hip, she's not reactionary. She can be very clear even in the face of someone saying, "We always do this" and she'll say, "but why, what's the good in that?". (2/T1)

Everybody who has wanted to contribute has been able to, so there's ownership there and it's been very transparent. (2/T9)

She emailed them [her goals] out to people for feedback. She's actually interviewed everybody. Everybody's had a chance to talk to her, so everybody has had a chance to say what they're feeling about things. (2/T12)

The first six to nine months of her time here she consulted...her leadership was very much about, "I believe in these values and I'd like to demonstrate to you why I believe in these values and I want to include you in the process, but at the end of the day I think this is the best path for the school". So, consultative but also very clear about what she wanted. (2/T2)

5.3.2.4 Values teachers

It is not surprising that if ten out of 12 teachers describe Lisa as consultative, that a similar number would also consider her as a principal who values the teaching staff (eight teachers in total). When asked what this looks like, more than half of these eight teachers describe the importance of having a principal that is genuinely interested in the different aspects of their classrooms, such as instruction, the students and resources. For them, this is also a sign that their principal is, first and foremost, a teacher.

With [Lisa] you share what you're doing, what you're teaching and she has a genuine interest in you, talking about students, your class and what you might have tried, what worked, what didn't work. She's very open like that. (2/T1)

She's definitely shown an interest in me and my future and gives me advice at times which is good. She suggests things for me to look at, seems interested in what I'm doing. (2/T7)

I think it's important the students see the principal as an educator first. I think that's important from the students' point of view. I think from a teaching point of view, again, that she is seen as a teacher. (2/T2)

Before [Lisa] was here I didn't feel my voice was heard as much as it is now. (2/T8)

For others, however, feeling valued means having a principal who has their back, understands their perils and supports them in challenging times. These teachers see in Lisa an advocate who fights with them, and not against them in their quest to be better educators.

I think she would always protect us; I feel she's a good protector. (2/T4)

Now that [Lisa] is principal I find there's more interest from the powers that be in it, which is good. Although we've got lots of nice friends who always support us, I feel that she is on our side. (2/T5)

She's here to do the right thing by the school and by the teachers. (2/T12)

Once again, Lisa's use of e-mail to communicate with her staff is noted, especially with teachers from Campus B. This supports her leadership as teachers feel connected to their principal, despite the physical absence as the following comments demonstrate.

She sends out e-mails congratulating people, thanking them for doing jobs and things like that. (2/T12)

I like people who acknowledge my efforts...she says, "great job" in the e-mails and she says that to me. I get direct e-mails from her and I also get huge amounts of thanks and stuff from her routinely. (2/T11)

5.3.2.5 Goal driven

Nine out of 12 teachers portray Lisa as goal driven. The term "Goal driven" is the final leadership quality that was mentioned by more than half of the teacher sample (Table 5.4). For these educators, Goal driven refers to a principal who complements a kind and inclusive nature with a clear sense of the specific targets. A goal-driven principal can see a vision become a reality. When looking at the comments, it is evident that what stands out is not so much the nature of these goals, but rather Lisa's intention in communicating them to bring everyone on board so that these goals can become everyone's objectives and not just hers.

She's got some very clear goals. She's been very clear right from the start on the very first meeting that this is what she wants to accomplish. This is what her goals are for the coming years. (2/T12)

She's involved in a lot of things; she has followed up on the things that we talked about and she has remembered the things we've talked about. She takes notes while you're meeting with her. She appears to action them. (2/T5)

She has managed to communicate that she's here for the long haul and this is what we stand for and the things that she said that we stand for are things that people can get onboard with...she's very forward thinking in terms of, "we need to be involved with this because...". (2/T7)

She's very driven. I think she takes on a lot. I remember the first time sitting down having an interview with her one-on-one, she was going so fast, and I'm pretty quick with it so I knew she's one of these people, go-getter type personality. (2/T4)

She's very driven, she knows what she wants. She's really driven, compassionate, exciting. (2/T11)

The above comments align well with Lisa's self-perception in this area. Being visionary and goal-driven are not mutually exclusive and she uses both qualities to enact her leadership. Lisa unites effectively these leadership qualities and her understanding of the school context to formulate realistic goals. These goals represent the future for the school she imagine as her comments reflect.

I don't know if it's my personality, but I know in my own mind what I need done by when. I set myself a lot of goals. (Lisa)

Three goals; healing and building community, and for me the other one that was a bit of a no-brainer was this idea of identity. Who are we? (Lisa)

5.4 Impact of new of principal on teachers' work environment

Following the thematic analysis of teacher perceptions of Lisa's personal and leadership qualities, the next step was to gain an understanding as to how this perception impacted teachers' work environment and to what extent. As per Case study One, (see Chapter Four), the same three areas were chosen to categorise this impact: teacher well-being, teacher capacity and professional relationships. Table 5.8 displays whether the perception of a new principal resulted in a positive (PI), negative (NI) or no impact (0) on each sub-area. If teachers mentioned more than one impact, this is reflected by a split cell.

Table 5.8: (SC) Impact of new principal on teachers' work environment²

		Campus A						Campus B					
	Sub-areas	2/T1	2/T2	2/T3	2/T4	2/T5	2/T6	2/T7	2/T8	2/T9	2/T10	2/T11	2/T12
Teacher well-being	Teacher morale	PI	PI NI	0	PI NI	PI	NI	0	PI	NI	PI NI	PI	0
	School connectedness	PI	PI	0	PI	0	0	0	PI	0	0	PI	0
Teacher capacity	Professional development	PI	PI	PI	PI	PI	PI	PI	PI	PI	PI	PI	PI
	Teaching Practice	PI	0	PI	0	PI	0	0	0	0	0	PI	0
Professional relationships	Teacher – Teacher relationships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 PI	0
	Teacher – Student relationships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

² PI = Positive impact, NI = Negative impact, 0 = No impact

5.4.1 Teacher well-being

5.4.1.1 Teacher morale

When examining if and how the arrival of Lisa as principal had made any impact on the working lives of teacher participants, again, teacher morale emerged as a theme that resonated. Only three out of 12 teachers registered no impact at all. The remaining nine teachers produced mixed results, where three teachers reported teacher morale as having been impacted both positively and negatively. Two teachers reported only a negative impact and the remaining four, only a positive impact. In terms of positive impact, Lisa's inclusive and empowering nature resulted in an increased sense of worth and purpose. In addition, having a principal that provides a space for teacher voice is significant to them.

When I have a leader like Lisa, then I work even harder. I come to school every day knowing that my contribution is valued, that my efforts are noticed and recognised and that I'm appreciated for everything that I do. I don't have to be told that every day, but I know it, it's there... I think people are a bit more excited and I believe in her as a principal. (2/11)

Before [Lisa] was here I didn't feel my voice was heard as much as it is now, I certainly feel I have a voice and I'm excited about how the school is changing...she has drawn things out of me, she's taught me to believe in myself more by just providing those opportunities. She believes in me, that's an honour to have been asked to do that so, I will rise to it and I'll do it. she does [motivate me] (2/T8)

For one teacher in particular, it is as though the arrival of Lisa has given this teacher a new lease on her career.

Before [Lisa], it was like, "this will be a nice retirement job, to just come here till I retire and scoot out the door". Whereas now it's like, "Oh [something's happening]! (2/T5)

For others, however, the arrival of a new principal is less optimistic with regards to teacher morale. Five out of 12 teachers in total reported a negative or somewhat negative impact as a result of Lisa's arrival at Summerhill College. The analysis of the data suggests that it is not Lisa herself that is responsible for this impact, but rather the changes she has introduced -and more specifically- the pace at which they are being introduced. This interpretation of the data is supported by earlier reports on how positively her personal and leadership qualities are perceived by the majority of teachers. When asked to develop these sentiments further, teachers commented that whilst they agree with the changes and initiatives being introduced, the speed of implementation is a concern.

This perceived reality made them question whether Lisa understands the impact these changes are having on their daily lives.

I'd say I don't feel valued. I don't know if that's an accurate impression because I don't know and that's part of the problem and because there's a lot of change happening. (2/T9)

I do feel that there are times where we have been a little bit, "Okay, now there's this, and there's this, and now there's this!"...you could hear people (not a lot) saying, "This is such a waste of time, I could be marking...I'd rather work on my own". I think that exists. Recently, I'm feeling a little bit burnt out right now...it's starting to become a little bit too much. (2/T2)

A lot of us feel a bit pulled in lots of directions and they are positive directions, but we're just a bit afraid that it's just too much at once...I said to her, there's too much of that (research and theory), you just dump that onto us, and we don't know what to do with that and we're made to feel stupid. (2/T4)

One teacher focussed specifically on changes to the organisation and how they generate feelings of vulnerability as teachers begin to feel insecure about their roles as the following comment reveals.

Anxiety levels are very high right now in these few weeks because lots of senior positions have been advertised and the interviews are happening at the moment...a lot of internal applicants, so anxiety around change is absolutely rife right now... Once people start getting appointed, I think she understands that that'll settle everyone down. (2/T6)

Lisa is not oblivious to this, and she reflects on the challenges that come with being a principal when faced with the introduction and implementation of change, as explained below.

The only people that resisted the [restructural changes] were the two people who knew that they would probably not get the [leadership] position and they didn't...we had a panel with a couple of external people, which went down very well because they knew it wasn't personal on my part and I can tell you 99% of people said, "Look, even though we know some people might be losing out, we can see why this is happening". (Lisa)

Our Exec. meets weekly and I know I rely on them for ideas re pace and process...what informs that pace? Feedback from staff. Some staff are very good at letting me know the mindset of the group and I really value the feedback...what is too fast for some is too slow for others. One can never win. (Lisa)

5.4.1.2 School connectedness

For seven out of 12 teachers, the strong connection they feel for their school has not been affected by Lisa's arrival of a new principal. If it has, teachers could not attribute this to a new principal.

I've always loved [Summerhill College]. (2/T5)

I still feel a strong sense of belonging. (2/T6)

I think that it has definitely improved over the last two years, whether it's entirely about [Lisa] or [Head of campus]. (2/T7)

Five out of 12 teachers, however, did believe that their sense of connection and belonging to the school has increased as a result of the Lisa's leadership.

I felt like I belonged anyway: staff are great, students are great, I do what I love, but I certainly do because of her belief and I feel we've got the same vision and ideas about lots of things, therefore, that makes my sense of belonging feel like I'm really in the right place with someone leading that has the same passion. (2/T8)

I feel like I'm really valued. Between her and [Head of campus], they both see my potential and I haven't had that in a couple of principals so, that actually makes a significant difference to me. (2/T11)

There's this real sense we're heading in one direction, and we're going that way together. Everyone contributes to that...but we're all contributing to that process. She's revitalised it [staff sense of belonging] I'd say and brought the campuses together by making the statement that that's what it is. (2/T1)

I'm very proud whenever she's on the radio or on TV or she represents us and that's a sense of pride. I think a lot of us do stand a little bit taller when she's out there. (2/T4)

5.4.2 Teacher capacity

5.4.2.1 Teacher Professional development

Lisa defines herself as a “leader of hearts and minds”. Strengthening the teaching and learning at Summerhill is at the core of the strategic plan and vision for the school (2/Ob5, 2/Ob10). She is not only interested in developing high-quality teachers, but also in creating a whole-school focus on what this might mean and look like now and in the future. Lisa defines teaching as a very complex profession (2/D5) and is adamant in making sure Summerhill teachers are equipped with the necessary tools and skills and that the school develops “the staff to make us the best we can be” (Lisa). To this effect, and soon after her commencement as principal, Lisa created a new position, which would oversee staff development and research. Lisa explains:

Staff learning was non-existent...there was the signing of people to go out to conferences, but there was not a focus on staff learning...we spent some time last year saying, this is going to a focus: we are going to appoint a director of staff learning and research and that person's role is to develop us all. (Lisa)

We still, here, have teachers that when I ask them, "how do you know when your kids are learning?" A couple of them said, "Oh, you can tell by the lights in their eyes", and I actually used that in an address at the beginning of the year and I said, "that's not good enough, we're going to have to be a lot more explicit about what we're looking for". (Lisa)

The Head of Teaching and Learning and I are working with the directors of curriculum on how we might develop a framework for observations that is a little bit more structured in a way, but also practical... We're trying to do this big thing on deprivatising practice, as it was. (Lisa)

All 12 teachers concur on the positive impact Lisa has on their professional development at an individual and collective level. This is high, considering that most of the changes that have taken place at Summerhill have concerned professional development. It could be argued that this reinforces earlier comments which maintain that it is not the nature of the changes that were impacting negatively on teachers' morale, but rather their timing. The following comments provide rich teacher recount of this positive impact.

You've got a dedicated person looking at curriculum, you've got a dedicated person looking at teaching and learning and all the research out there that's contributing to our understanding of how students learn. So, [Lisa's] putting structures in place to specifically improve and I do think it's having an effect. (2/T6)

The previous principal didn't have a lot of investment knowledge or interest in the teaching and learning side, whereas [Lisa] does, so that has changed...not direct impact, indirect, yes, because there's a greater drive in improvements in teaching and learning, so that impacts on my classroom practice but that's indirectly from [Lisa]... after [Lisa] came I felt that there was support. (2/T3)

The staff days are more meaningful, I think about them more. It's about real stuff. I don't mind going to them...I always used to go to them, but I used to think I'll take other work to do.... (2/T5)

I think at the moment a lot of the material we're getting from that area is so dense and so long to read that people are starting to deal with it later and perhaps never get to it. There's an issue there...certainly in terms of theories of teaching and learning [and] through that process that [Lisa] has put in place, yes, there has been a change. (2/T9)

5.4.2.2 Classroom practice

One of the most interesting, if not, alarming results drawn from the data is that whilst all 12 teachers consider professional development to have impacted positively as a result of Lisa's commencement, only four of them see their classroom practice being impacted in the same manner. If professional development is to be understood as a vehicle through which to improve pedagogy, then it is worth asking, why is professional development that is perceived as positive not having the same impact on classroom practice, and what might be impeding this progression? Eight out of 12 teachers believe their classroom practice is determined almost solely by their own sense of self-efficacy and initiative, as the following comments suggest.

That comes from my own self rather than by a principal and even with having a new person in charge of professional learning and ideas that are coming through, but it's nothing that I hadn't already done before. (2/T9)

It doesn't affect me, to tell you the truth. I'll just go and keep doing what I've done. (2/T10)

I wouldn't say [it's] vastly different, but I have implemented a couple of things. (2/T2)

Those four teachers that did acknowledge a positive change to their classroom practice, confirm that it was mainly indirectly through the structures put in place by Lisa or through the appointment of key people as the following comments explain.

Not direct impact. Indirect, yes...because there's a greater drive in improvements in teaching and learning, so that impacts on my classroom practice. (2/T3)

Unless you're boosted by something, I think you can become very staid and very stale and I feel I've been renewed by [Lisa's] arrival. (2/T5)

Probably more because of the presence of [Director of Teaching and Learning] ...it's a flow-on, she has definitely inspired me to try even harder through professional development that she's provided. (2/T11)

[Lisa] has made big changes to make that meeting process of Heads [of department] and what was decided there, much more dynamic, more inclusive and with outcomes ... so, what was happening in those meetings was translated to classroom practice and informing staff about approaches to teaching and learning. (2/T1)

5.4.3 Professional relationships

5.4.3.1 Teacher – Teacher relationships

The last area that focussed at principal impact on teachers' work environment, focussed on professional relationships, specifically, the relationship amongst teachers and between teachers and students. The overwhelming majority of teachers confirmed that the arrival of Lisa has not impacted the relationship they have with their colleagues. This professional relationship is seen as independent of a change of principal. Notwithstanding, it is noteworthy that one teacher from Campus B expanded on this lack of impact, clarifying that due to the high principal turnover in the last years, this had strengthened collegial relationships. Another teacher from the same campus did perceive, however, that staff appeared more enthusiastic since Lisa's arrival.

The best thing about the staff here is because we've had so many leadership changes and some leaders didn't show an interest, we've always just sailed the ship ourselves...I think at [Campus B] we're all, not tight, but we're all quite supportive of each other and we always have been. (2/T10)

I think people are a bit more excited. (2/T11)

5.4.3.2 Teacher – student relationships

In a similar vein, not one teacher from the entire sample felt the relationship they have with their students has been impacted in by the presence of a new principal. As one teacher explained:

The relationship with your students is what you build with your students. (2/T12).

5.5 Teacher support during principal succession

Finally, as with the first case study, teachers from Summerhill College were invited to reflect and share how they could be supported during a change of principal. Table 5.9 provides five leadership practices that emerged from the data collected.

Eight out of the 12 teachers consider building relationships as the most importance leadership practice of a new principal. Reflecting on past and current experiences of principal succession, teachers commented that having a principal that made a concerted effort to know their staff eased the process as the comments below explain.

Get to know your staff, get to know the students as well as you can...don't make it too superficial because relationships and trust and knowing your staff and your students is one of the most important things...visibility all round is really important and not just be tucked away having meetings with management. (2/T8)

I think you can always get a good feel about that yourself and not surrounding yourself with three or four people that feed information...be accessible to staff, all staff, students and parents, and that's something that [Lisa] has also done. (2/T10)

Table 5.9: (SC) Leadership practices for supporting teachers during principal succession

Leadership practices	2/T1	2/T2	2/T3	2/T4	2/T5	2/T6	2/T7	2/T8	2/T9	2/T10	2/T11	2/T12	TOTAL
Building relationships	3		1		1	2		2		3	3	1	16
No immediate changes			1						1	1		2	5
Frequent communication				1		1			1	1			4
Fostering teacher voice		1			1								2
Reassurance				1									1

Other important practices include a principal that does not bring in changes hastily, is communicative and encourages teacher voice.

The times when teachers become disheartened or negative, I think it often happens when they feel that they don't know what's going on or they're being kept in the dark. So, I think it's really important to be open and honest. (2/T9)

They have to learn everything right from the start before they can actually start putting their plans in...throwing it out there looking at positives and negatives and then we could adapt from that. So, we're not going to go in and delete everything that's been done. (2/T12)

I think it is important to have a principal who would be prepared to listen at least for the first three to six months, something like that. (2/T2)

5.6 Chapter summary

Chapter Five has presented the second case study that comprises this thesis. Summerhill College is an independent, multi-campus school that had already experienced four principals over the eight years before Lisa's appointment. As an external appointment, Lisa held a number of leadership roles

in previous schools. This is Lisa's first principalship. She is familiar with the independent sector, and for a number of years has been an active member of the educational leadership scenario, committed to the promotion and development of school leaders both nationally and locally. Lisa is perceived as a visible, authentic and passionate person and her leadership is perceived as visionary and consultative. She is seen as a principal who values teachers and is committed to their professional development and empowerment. She has a strong sense of self and her vision for the school is clearly guided by her own set of beliefs. Lisa's arrival to the school has impacted on different aspects of teachers' school life, including their well-being and professional development. The majority of teachers sampled were content with Lisa as their principal and the initiatives and structural changes that she is introducing. For almost half of the study sample, however, there has been a negative shift in teacher morale. These teachers commented on how the pace, rather than the nature of these changes are having an impact on their school life, which manifests in feelings of anxiety and work overload.

For around half of the teachers interviewed, Lisa's principalship increase feelings of connectedness and sense of belonging. With regards to professional development and classroom practice, all staff agreed that Lisa has improved their professional development, be it through the creation of leadership positions that steered this development, facilitating teacher involvement in decision-making or by injecting innovative ideas and evidence-based research in pedagogy. Having said that, it was surprising that only four out of those 12 teachers feel that their classroom practice has been impacted (positively) as a result of Lisa's arrival. The data suggest that the principal is having an impact on staff, but not at a classroom level. In terms of professional relationships, the arrival of a new principal has had no impact on teacher-student relationships and only one teacher alluded to a positive impact on her relationship with colleagues. Finally, a change of leadership can be unsettling, and teachers value, above all, a new principal who is committed to building relationships, engaging in ongoing communication and is cognisant of the importance of pace when introducing change.

CHAPTER SIX: CASE STUDY THREE - ST FRANCES COLLEGE

6.1 Introduction

Chapter six is the third and final case study of this thesis. Its structure follows that of Chapters Four and Five. All names, including that of the school, have been removed and replaced with pseudonyms (Table 6.2).

6.1.1 School sample

The school sample for St Frances College (SFC), comprises 12 teachers and the principal (Jane). As with previous case studies, some of the teacher participants also held a leadership role at the time of the interviews. Contrary to Kingston and Summerhill, St Frances College is comprised of one campus. Table 6.1 outlines the observations undertaken at SFC and Table 6.2 describes the demographic characteristics of each participant. In addition, Table 6.3, provides a list of the school documents that were consulted to support the data collected during interviews and school observations.

Table 6.1: (SFC) School Observations

Observation	Date	Hours	Description
3/Ob1	Jul-18	1.5	School tour
3/Ob2	Jul-18	1.5	Executive team meeting
3/Ob3	Jul-18	.25	Staff briefing
3/Ob4	Jul-18	.25	Staff briefing
3/Ob5	Aug-18	2	Professional learning session
3/Ob6	Aug-18	1.5	Staff briefing
3/Ob7	Aug-18	.5	Morning Tea presentation
3/Ob8	Jan-19	1.5	Executive team meeting
3/Ob9	Jan-19	2	Staff Day
3/Ob10	Jan-19	.25	Staff briefing

Table 6.2: (SFC) School interviews

Participant	Pseudonym	Gender	Age group	Years in the profession	Years at the school	Date
Principal	Jane	F	45-54	26+	N/A	Jul-18 / Aug-18
Teacher*	3/T1	F	45-54	26+	21-25	Jul-18
Teacher*	3/T2	F	35-44	16-20	2-5	Jul-18
Teacher	3/T3	F	55-64	26+	26+	Jul-18
Teacher	3/T4	F	25-34	2-5	2-5	Jul-18
Teacher*	3/T5	F	55-64	16-20	16-20	Jul-18
Teacher	3/T6	F	45-54	2-5	2-5	Jul-18
Teacher*	3/T7	F	55-64	26+	6-10	Aug-18
Teacher	3/T8	F	55-64	26+	11-15	Aug-18
Teacher*	3/T9	F	45-54	21-25	16-20	Jul-18
Teacher	3/T10	M	55-64	26+	26+	Aug-18
Teacher	3/T11	F	35-44	16-20	2-5	Aug-18
Teacher*	3/T12	M	35-44	21-25	6-10	Aug-18
Non-teaching staff	3/NT1	F	55-64	N/A	6-10	Jul-18

* Teacher also held a leadership role at the time of the interview.

Table 6.3: (SFC) School documents sighted

Document No.	Document Name	Format
3/D1	Homepage	Website
3/D2	New Principal Announcement	PDF
3/D3	Educational philosophy	Website
3/D4	Learning & Teaching Charter	PDF
3/D5	College Newsletters (fortnightly)	PDF
3/D6	Annual Report (2016)	PDF
3/D7	Annual Report (2017)	PDF
3/D8	Annual report (2018)	PDF

6.2 School profile

St Frances College is a Catholic girls' secondary school from Years 7-12. The school is located in south-west Metropolitan Melbourne. SFC was established just over 50 years ago as a school belonging to a religious order whose beginnings date back to the 18th century in Ireland (3/D1). The Catholic education system differs from the independent system with regards to funding and governance structures, as well as in the roles and responsibilities of its principals. As the second largest school system in Australia, the percentage of enrolments in Catholic schools (primary and secondary) has remained steady for the last five years, which in 2018 stood at 19.7% (ABS, 2018). In terms of funding, on average, 25% is provided from private sources (mainly tuition fees) and 75% from public sources (MCEETYA, 2004). Notwithstanding, The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) policy formula makes provisions for lower SES (socio-economic status) schools to receive more funding than higher SES schools coupled with providing additional financial assistance for each HCC (Health Care Card) student. This enables them to offer fee remissions (CEM, 2019). Catholic schools are governed under a model provided by a religious body (Diocese or religious order) and an Advisory Board, which in the case of SFC is comprised of one representative from each nearby parish, a representative of the Canonical Administrators (usually a parish priest), a staff representative, accountant and secretary (3/D1). The principal has been entrusted with all the management and operational duties for the school. In 2018, the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) for SFC was 1094, with 40% of its population identified in the top quarter and 54% in its lower and upper middle quarters in total. (Figure 6.1).

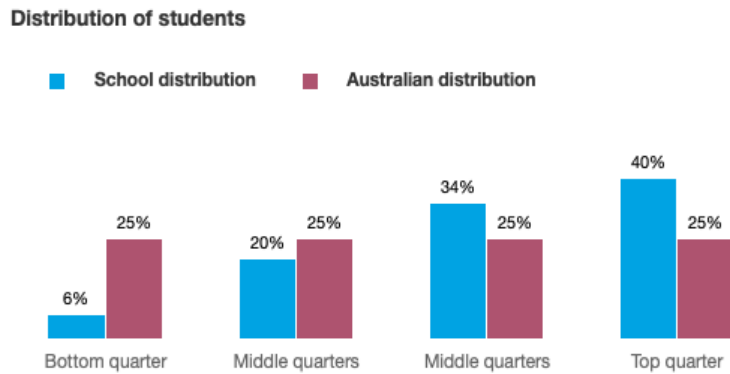


Figure 6.1: (SFC) ICSEA distribution, 2018.

(ACARA, 2019)

Since 2013, St Frances has seen a steady decline in enrolments, and in 2018, recorded its lowest student population in ten years (1043 students). In the same year, the staff included 95 teachers, from which 82% were employed as full-time staff (ACARA, 2019).

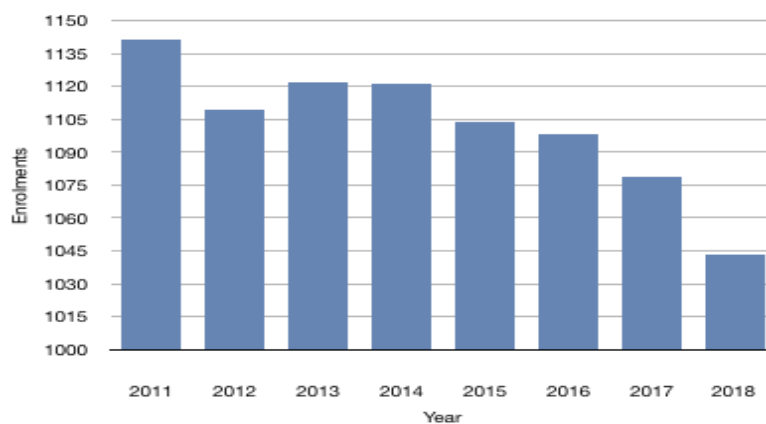


Figure 6.2: (SFC) Student enrolments 2010 – 2017.

(ACARA, 2019)

According to the school's philosophy, mission and values, St Frances College offers the finest Catholic education for girls combining academic achievement and spiritual development. SFC is committed in providing its students a comprehensive curriculum and promoting a strong sense of belonging within the school and with the wider parent and local community (3/D1, 3/D3, 3/D4).

6.2.1 The appointment

St Frances College has had nine principals in its 50-year history, with three of those in the last 12 years. One principal left at the end of 2015 and in 2016, an acting principal was designated until Jane (current principal) took over the principalship in early 2017. During the selection process, the Advisory Board kept the staff informed of the process and also created an opportunity for teachers to express their opinion with regards to the type of principal SFC needed.

There was a session where we could say what we thought the school needed in a principal...it was a round-table discussion and then at the end a person from CEM collated the information and said that they would use some of that to help inform their selection process...CEM coming and asking us what we did want in a new principal reassured a lot of people that it wasn't just going to be some blanket appointment. (3/T1)

We were aware that there was an acting principal in that time, and we were given fairly specific timelines about how the process was going. (3/T6)

We got the information that the ad was going out and "this is what we're looking for". (3/T9)

With four principals (including the acting principal) in the last 12 years, SFC can be regarded be regarded as a school which has experienced high principal turnover. This context has had a significant impact on staff. It was evident teachers has been impacted strongly and negatively by the leadership changes. As a result, the staff had been insistent on the school needing a principal that would bring stability, unity and goodwill.

[SFC] needed someone who was intelligent, understood education for girls, but with good social/emotional intelligence and could work to do some healing with the staff... The place had become very demoralised. (3/T7)

I suppose you don't know what you're going to get [with a new principal], but I think anyone would have been better than what we had. I'm not being awful, but that's how it was. (3/T5)

We had been through a rough patch and we were kind of in limbo. (3/T9)

I know a lot of people did leave at that time and went to other schools or sought other careers, but I just kept hanging in there and thinking things will turn and everything will be good. (3/T10)

One of the things that was a problem before the new principal arrived was the fact that there had been shifts and changes made in the culture of the place, which was being forced and that was a bit of a worry. (3/T12)

She [former principal] seemed lovely and I still maintain I didn't have any major drama with her, but the feedback that you were getting from everyone made for quite a negative working environment, which has changed, and it changed the minute she left. (3/T6)

There was also a strong conviction from seven out of 12 teachers, that an external appointment was the only way forward for the school, as suggested by the following quotes.

That excited me [an external appointment] and probably the feel at the grassroots level here was that the organisation was stuck in a bit of a rut and we needed to have fresh eyes, fresh ears to move us into the 21st-century education. (3/T2)

The whole idea of getting someone new with principal experience, that was exciting. It's partly relief, but also there's an expectation that now we can start to move forward. (3/T12)

6.2.2 The principal

Jane is an experienced educator and principal (3/D1, 3/D5, 3/Ob1, 3/Ob2, 3/Ob9). She holds a number of degrees, including a Doctor of Education (3/D2). She is the ninth principal at SFC, commencing in April 2017, although appointed in November of the previous year. This is her second principalship. In her previous school, also a Catholic secondary girls' school, Jane had been employed as Director of Curriculum and some years after that, she became deputy principal. It was at this time that the principalship became vacant and she opted to apply as an internal candidate. Jane remained principal at that school for six years. She describes her career progression to the principalship as a combination of offered opportunities and a commitment to engaging formally in educational research.

I was happily a deputy principal...and I got talked into doing a program that Catholic Education Melbourne were piloting called the Aspiring Principal Program...I signed up for that program and I found it interesting because it involved discussion about what leadership is, what principal leadership is, it involved primaries and secondaries, which I found fascinating because all of my experience was in secondary [education]...also, part of the program involved shadowing a principal. (Jane)

When asked to elaborate what prompted her to apply for the principal role at St Frances College, Jane was honest in saying she wasn't necessarily looking for another job, instead the job needed to be interesting enough to entice her to apply. She was aware of the difficult climate at SFC at the time and, as an experienced principal, knew that she would have the knowledge and experience with which to lead a new chapter for the school. In addition, she was aware of the reputation of SFC and the challenging situation in which it had found itself in the last few years.

I wasn't willing to jump for anything. It needed to be a job in a school where I could say, "that's interesting". My sentiment was, I'm not running away from where I'm at, I need to be going to something that gives me a different opportunity to see things differently. (Jane)

I felt like in that interview I was having a conversation and saying, "this is what's important to me and if that's not important to you that's okay, then I'm not the right pick". (Jane)

I was aware that there were some complexities in what was happening at the school. [SFC] has always had a very good reputation in the Catholic school world community, in terms of staffing...always had a reputation for being focussed on what's good for girls. (Jane)

All 12 teachers interviewed commented convincingly on how well Jane's appointment was received by the overwhelming majority of the teaching and non-teaching staff. Indeed, from the data collected, staff saw this appointment as the start of a new and better beginning in the history of St Frances College.

There was a real buzz in the air and, a high sense of anticipation about what that would bring to us as a community and how that might change our culture here...one might argue would that have happened anyway because staff morale was so low, maybe, but I think what helped was [Jane's] diverse nature, her ability to connect with staff very quickly and her humour. (3/T2)

[Jane] came in fresh, which was exactly what they needed. She came so completely away from the other drama and was new and was different and started and it was good, it was what people needed it. (3/T6)

The very first day, we may have had an assembly, I can't remember exactly. It was a bit of a Festivus! (3/T5)

I felt that there was immediate sort of relief like this is going to be good. (3/T11)

6.3 Teacher perceptions of the new principal

Following the same procedure as for the previous two case studies, each of the 12 teachers that took part in the study were interviewed individually, following the methodology guideline outlined in Chapter Three. Similarly, the principal (Jane) was interviewed on two occasions. One and one non-teaching member of staff was also interviewed. Following the data analysis, a total of 26 themes emerged. 17 of the themes referred to the principal's personal qualities and nine to the principal's leadership qualities. Again, only themes that were mentioned by six or more participants have been included in the discussion, given their weight and frequency. Tables 6.4 and 6.5, respectively, display

the aforementioned themes along with the strength of response represented by the frequency of comments for each teacher. In the same manner, Tables 6.7 and 6.8 outline the emerging themes (personal and leadership qualities) that surfaced from the data analysis from the principal interviews.

Table 6.4: (SFC) Teacher comments attributed to principal perception (personal qualities)

	Themes	3/T1	3/T2	3/T3	3/T4	3/T5	3/T6	3/T7	3/T8	3/T9	3/T10	3/T11	3/T12	Obs.	TOTAL
Personal qualities	Visible	8	3	2	6	5	6	4	4	2	9	3	5	✓	57
	People person	4	3	2	3	4	4	2	1	3	4	4	4	✓	38
	Approachable	7		2	4	5	4		1	4	5		3	✓	35
	Inclusive	2	4	3	1		2			4	4	1	4	✓	25
	Confident	1		3	2	1	2	6			2	3	3	✓	23
	Energetic/passionate	7	5	1	2			2		1			2	✓	20
	Knowledgeable		1	2	1	2		5	7		1		1	✓	20
	Supportive	4	2	1	2	4		1			3	1	1	✓	19
	Good communicator		4	1			1		1	4		1	2	✓	14
	Humorous	1	2	1		2	3				2		2	✓	13
	Authentic	1	2				1			6			3	✓	13
	Trustworthy		2		1	2	2			1					8
	Self-regulating		2		2				1	1			1	✓	7
	Casual	3					1			3				✓	7
	Accessible		2				1						2	✓	5
	Hard working		1		1						1	2		✓	5
	Inspiring				2								1	✓	3

Table 6.5: (SFC) Teacher comments attributed to principal perception (leadership qualities)

Leadership qualities	Themes	3/T1	3T2	3/T3	3/T4	3/T5	3/T6	3/T7	3/T8	3/T9	3/T10	3/T11	3/T12	Obs.	TOTAL
	Student-centred	2	3	1		2	1	2	1	1	3	3	3	✓	22
	Ethical	4	3	3		2	1	1	2		1		2	✓	19
	Consultative	1	4		2		1	2	1	2	4	1		✓	18
	Values teachers		3		3	1			3	2	1		2	✓	15
	Goal driven	1	2			2				1	2			✓	8
	Collaborative		1						1	4		1		✓	7
	Open-minded		1		1					1	1	2		✓	6
	Visionary	2	1								3			✓	6
	Empowering		1				1	1	3					✓	6

Table 6.6: (SFC) Principal comments attributed to self-perception (personal qualities)

	Themes	Principal	Obs.
Personal qualities	Visible	7	✓
	Authentic	7	✓
	People person	6	✓
	Reflective	5	✓
	Confident	5	✓
	Goal driven	2	✓
	Approachable	2	✓
	Humorous	2	✓
	Trustworthy	1	
	Knowledgeable	1	✓

Table 6.7: (SFC) Principal comments attributed to self-perception (leadership qualities)

	Themes	Principal	Obs.
Leadership qualities	Collaborative	9	✓
	Values teachers	6	✓
	Inclusive	5	✓
	Consultative	4	✓
	Empowering	4	✓
	Student-centred	4	✓
	Self-regulating	2	✓
	Open-minded	1	✓
	Visionary	1	✓
	Ethical	1	✓

6.3.1 Personal qualities

6.3.1.1 *Visible*

The new principal's visibility appears to have had a profound and lasting impact on all 12 teachers. One of the contributing factors for this impact can be attributed to the contrast in leadership style between previous and new principal. According to those interviewed, this has been noted by teachers and students alike.

I think coming from a principal who we hardly saw, this new person was immersing herself amongst the people and definitely those kinds of actions speak volumes about what kind of person you're dealing with. (3/T6)

I think she wanted to be visible... visibility was really important, but not just visibility and "these are our new rules", it was visibility and friendliness...she was conscious that was a criticism of the previous principal. (3/T7)

She has the most visible presence, which clearly the students like. It's such a nice thing for the students, even if they just move around the collective spaces, [she's] got a sense of what's going on, they're just part of that energy...I don't feel like she's checking up on me, I don't mind. It's just nice. (3/T11)

The fact that she was up wandering through the Year-12 area is, with Jane, not unusual, but with my experience with principals in the past, highly unusual. Usually principals are found in their office. (3/T12)

She does morning tea with the Year 12s and the Year 7s...she comes and visits [classrooms]...it's a good way to suss out what's happening in the school and also the kids feel valued. (3/T1)

She walked in and she just introduced herself and said hello to everyone and then she walked out and one girl said, "Well, it's official, I've now seen more of the current principal than I have of the previous principal" and the previous principal had been here for five or six years! (3/T10)

I cannot tell you how many kids said, "Oh, we never saw the other principal". The comparison was so obvious that it stood out. (3/T5)

Jane's presence in the school is observed in a number of settings (3/Ob1, 3/Ob3, 3/Ob5, 3/Ob7, 3/Ob9, 3/Ob10). As seen above, she appears to be "part of the school", as a normal member of the community, walking around the corridors, greeting everyone with whom she comes in contact (3/Ob1). At the same time, her visibility is also appreciated within the classrooms as, in what some teachers describe, a non-threatening manner. It appears that Jane's intentions for "popping in" are

informal and specifically targeted at developing student interactions and focussed around their learning.

I think it's [Jane] showing the girls that she's connected and she's part of the community and she'll come into your classroom and talk to you. It's a little unnerving when you're teaching and she's there...you just always wonder how you're coming across, but I'm relatively confident with that, so it doesn't intimidate me. (3/T6)

She pops in and says hi at least for five minutes and asks the girls, "what are you doing?", she doesn't really observe the lesson, but I think especially for the Year 7s, they get to see her face, so she's a real presence. (3/T4)

The teachers were a little bit, "Oh, my goodness", but they like it because she'd come in and chat and make a few funny jokes, but it's good for the teachers to build their rapport. (3/T5)

Being visible is also of the utmost importance to Jane (3/Ob1, 3/Ob3, 3/Ob5). She not only sees the benefits of being seen, but also recognises that given the cultural context she inherited, visibility needs to be a protagonist of her leadership. Jane also recognises that visibility is the most effective way to build relationships.

My job, without a doubt and in this order was, last year PR, this year HR and strategy underlying all of that. It needed to be PR last year, relentlessly; out there in the community, out there outside of this office, literally seen kids, being in the staff room. (Jane)

One of my major strategies is to walk around with a bowl of lollies [saying], "Hi, how are you going, lolly?" and even if the person is a no-lolly person, I can say, "Oh, what are you working on?". I do that in the staffroom a lot...It's not about the lollies, it's about the conversations...people want to feel the love and they want to believe that the person who they see is leading them. (Jane)

People just telling me it's great that you're out and about, that's great, but if I can get them to understand what I'm trying to do, why I'm trying to do it and what role they play in, because it's not about me, it's actually about our kids. (Jane)

The overwhelming majority of people would say my visibility around the place is positive and they like that. I love to wander in classrooms...you have to be with people and be honest with people. (Jane)

Furthermore, when Jane moved into the principal's office, she noticed that the furniture was arranged in such a way that it was impossible to see the principal from the hallway. Immediately, she corrected this as the comment below explains.

There was a couch along there and the principal's desk was there so, you had your back to that door and people walked in blind, not knowing if you were in your office or not...completely the opposite of how I operate, completely non-visible. (Jane)

6.3.1.2 People person

In her personal life and in her role as principal, nothing could be more important for Jane than people (3/D5, 3/Ob1). Building relationships is consistently her starting point, whether it is building a sense of community within the teaching staff, students or the wider school community. It would appear that this focus on others has developed as a result of innate character paired with some professional experiences throughout her working life.

I have a personality that is suited to it (principalship) and when you were asking me about where did that come from, I worked for eight and a half years in retail customer service, [you] smile at people and say, "Hi, how are you going?" ...I'm very relational. (Jane)

It's all about the people, if it's not about the people, what are you doing in a school? It's a community! People matter! People matter way more than everything else. (Jane)

Even from her first day in the role, her personable nature has been quickly identified by many.

The first thing she did was introduce herself to all the ladies in the office and wandered through that way...she didn't say she was the new principal. She said, "Hi, I'm [Jane]", and that did stick with me, so that is one very noticeable thing. (3/T12)

I think the first impression she gives, is it, because she is convivial, I think people respond really well to that. (3/T11)

One of the first things Jane did when she started in her role, was to organise a 15-minute meeting with each teacher. The rationale for this was twofold. Firstly, to get to know everyone individually, even if only for 15 minutes, and secondly, to provide each teacher with the opportunity to share with her what they thought needed to be kept, improved or changed in the school. For some teachers this came as a surprise, given they had not experienced this type of consultative leadership before. Above all, all 12 teachers commented on the positive impact this aspect of her personality had on themselves and students alike.

She was very personable, she said she wanted to meet all of us individually and set up times to meet to see what we wanted to do...it was very different to what I thought a principal should be. (3/T4)

A totally new approach to doing things, very much of a people person that is transparent in what's happening in the school that shows that they value the staff and the students and the whole community...lot of the time she touches base with you without her needing to, just knowing about your family or your kids or whatever and she doesn't need to do that. (3/T9)

She leads mindful that she's working in a human environment and the impact of her decisions on people. (3/T7)

In her tone, in her manner, in her humour, she's very much of the people. (3/T6)

6.3.1.3 Approachable and inclusive

It would also seem a logical sequence that if Jane is being perceived as visible and a people person, that these qualities would also give way to being perceived as approachable and inclusive (3/Ob7). Nine out of 12 teachers perceive Jane as such, making these personal qualities the second and third most commented trait respectively. It was clear to see that teachers' lived experiences with their former principal were still vivid in their minds as they often compared Jane' personal traits to those that came before her as the following comments reveal.

Before [Jane] was principal I would have been very hesitant about approaching anyone to talk about a personal issue, whereas these days, I would have no qualms whatsoever about knocking on [Jane's] door. (3/T10)

Previously you couldn't get to the principal, often there would be a three-week delay. Now, if it's urgent, I could get in and [if] she's out of the office, I know I could catch her on the hop...you can go to [Jane] directly, she's like that. (3/T1)

She's approachable and around and that was very different to the style before her. (3/T6)

I feel like I can talk to her about pretty much anything...whatever the case might be, I could talk to her. (3/T9)

For one teacher, in particular, having a principal with whom one could discuss one's future career plans was of particular importance.

it's nice having [Jane] as somebody you can talk to about where you want to go in three, five, how many years. (3/T4)

Jane's approachable nature meant that she was also perceived as an inclusive leader, one who listened attentively and was cognisant of not excluding anyone as she steered the school. This

perception led teachers to dig deeper and share examples of Jane as empathic and thoughtful as suggested below.

She's very open and listens. It's very different to what I've been used to because she has that approach that we work as a team, that everyone is important in the decision making. (3/T9)

She's very approachable and even if you have an idea for something and she's not going to take it forward, you'll still have the discussion and you understand maybe why the decision went a different way or at the very least, you know you've been heard. (3/T12)

She's not hierarchical...she leads from the people. (3/T6)

It's less "us" and "them", I think. (3/T1)

Notwithstanding, adapting to a new principal whom in their eyes behaves so very differently, does not necessarily equate to a quick and easy transition. Two teachers in particular, commented on how this transition will take time given the past leadership history of the school.

It took me a while, but I thought, yes, that's a very good management style. (3/T8)

I think it's going to take some time before we see the full extent of that because it's very new to a lot of our staff and not the way that things have been done...some people are still going to be a little bit cynical because maybe it's too good to be true... it will take a little bit of time before you get staff going, "Okay, this is the way that we do things here". (3/T9)

Jane's focus on public relations as one of her first priorities, as noted earlier in this chapter, speaks about the importance placed by this principal on building community. The need to be inclusive and be perceived as such is indispensable for Jane. This is displayed not only with the entire school community, but also in within smaller groups, such as her executive team (3/Ob2, 3/Ob9, 3/D8).

I do take the view that I'm not the principal Lone Ranger in this gig...we are an executive team leading the school and I happen to be the principal...ultimately, I take the blame and the glory and I might have to make a decision which is contrary to some of the other views, but we need to be operating on the same page and we need to be doing it together, regardless of what your portfolio might be. (Jane)

My vision for the school is that it's not my vision; it must be our vision for our school and that must be students, staff and parents collectively... it's a really good leadership model and it just means that everybody is on board and taking ownership of what's happening in the school. (Jane)

6.3.1.4 Confident

As an experienced principal, Jane is aware of what it is like to be a new principal, albeit her first principalship was an internal appointment. Moreover, she had fulfilled this role for six years in which she had received very positive formal and informal feedback. She was aware of her strengths and limitations and this reflective nature together with an understanding of the culture at SFC, means she is confident in leading the school forward (3/Ob1, 3/Ob2, 3/Ob4, 3/Ob9) as the following comments suggest.

(during her previous principalship) I had also found really valuable that 360 feedback. So, my feedback was: people thought I was generally high/very high performing, which is great. (Jane)

I was doing this gig for the second time, so I had enough self-confidence to know I don't need to do everything on the first day... I'm reasonably confident about what my strengths are and I know what I need support in. (Jane)

Confidence was another theme that emerged from the teacher data with nine out of 12 teachers commenting on this quality. For these teachers, what they once understood by confident leader, was being re-defined by the way in which Jane manifests this quality. Teachers see in their new principal a woman who displays strength and conviction, but not at the expense of kindness and respect as the following comments explain.

She can also be pretty straightforward. I think if she needs to say something, she says it, she doesn't try and beat around the bush and if she needs you to do something, she needs you to do it. So, she still has the authority, but not in a negative way, only when required. (3/T4)

I do think she enjoys her position and who she is, and I don't think there's anything wrong with that...she definitely takes control. (3/T6)

[I was excited] by the fact that she wouldn't stand for any nonsense. wouldn't be pushed around by anyone, that she would be able to make her own decisions. she's such a strong woman, but she does it with a smile. I perceive her as a smart, savvy woman who knows her own mind, but will consult. (3/T7)

I am really happy to see strong leadership that demonstrates compassion and empathy. (3/T11)

6.3.1.5 Energetic

During school observations, it is always possible to know if Jane is in the vicinity. Her optimistic voice and laughter cast aside any doubt (3/Ob1, 3/Ob3, 3/Ob5, 3/Ob7, 3/Ob10). This aspect of her

personality makes a positive impact on teachers, where seven out of the 12 teachers explicitly share their views regarding this quality as seen below.

She was bright, bubbly when we first met her...I thought, oh my God, this woman has too much energy! Does she ever stop? (3/T1)

She's very busy because how she goes talking to everybody, I don't know how she does it. (3/T4)

I think I've had the passion for teaching rekindled by having someone who is clearly so passionate and a bit nuts... It's also the freedom to be yourself and not have to conform, which I think [Jane's] bringing into the school as well because clearly, she is just being herself. (3/T12)

Out of the seven teachers that reported on this theme, for three of them, this impulsive energy is not always a positive sign. These teachers allude to how this energy can sometimes make them feel overwhelmed.

She probably speaks way too quickly for me, as an auditory learner, I'm probably a sentence behind where she is already at and that's something that [Jane] identifies as her default. that dynamic can be a very intense way of being and sometimes that appears to be a bit manic, that everything is happening at once. (3/T2)

Because she is so energetic and she is always quite bubbly, for some staff that's hard to cope with and it's taken them a while to get used to it and to accept that that's what she's like. (3/T9)

Whilst her energy is interpreted as a sign of enthusiasm and commitment, one teacher in particular, shows concern on the effect this might have on the principal's well-being as the following examples show. On the other hand, Jane displays an awareness for the need to manage the demands of the role.

It's a frenetic pace and I just don't know how she does it, but she obviously manages that. (3/T2)

She has incredible energy and I worry about how sustainable it is... because I've seen so many burnouts in the role over the years. and I think it's getting more and more challenging. The landscape is becoming harder. (3/T7)

No one else can manage my health and well-being other than me. (Jane)

6.3.1.6 Knowledgeable

One of the themes that stood out and which had not appeared in the previous case studies was the emphasis that teachers placed on having a principal who had a higher degree in education. For some teachers, having a principal that had attained a doctorate was a significant factor in their positive response to her appointment and the impact this might signify not only for the public image of the school, but also for those people working within its walls. It would appear that having a doctoral degree has increased her acceptance into the school community, as the comments below explain.

Putting her title, Dr out in front was also very important to say this is a good academic institution. (3/T7)

I like the fact that she has a doctorate. I think that's important, that we have a sense of academia...[SFC] is an academic institution. (3/T8)

(What excited me about getting a new principal] the fact that she had that higher level of education as well, having a doctorate and business management background, as well as a lot of different teaching areas too. (3/T2)

She's done the postgraduate studies [and] I think there's some sort of a rule book for management and that's what she's following. (3/T3)

She studied very hard. (3/T4)

6.3.1.7 Supportive

From the data gathered, it would appear that for teachers, one of the most longed for qualities in a principal is support; having a principal that shows empathy and understands not only their work, but also their professional and sometimes even personal context. Early in her tenure, the school community lived through a traumatic experience, a time when unity and compassion was most needed. The situation proved most challenging for all, and Jane was able to provide that support, particularly to teachers, as the comments below reveal.

She went slowly and she supported staff amazingly through a [difficult period] ...she's compassionate and kind. (3/T1)

We're so glad for us that we had someone to look out for us...a lot of us felt we were being looked after by someone who actually cared about us, individually and as staff members, through a really tough time. Many of us made comparisons because we were glad to have her, that's what a lot of people were saying... she has certainly really looked out for staff that are struggling and kids that are struggling. (3/T5)

According to nine out of 12 teachers interviewed, Jane continues to provide support to staff in different aspects of their lives and through her actions, she reassures them that if the need arose, they can count on her for support.

[Middle leaders], all know that [Jane] is there to support us as well and that's regardless of where we are located, that's just geographical now...I think that mindset has dramatically shifted... I feel supported and I feel that every other person is doing the same thing on the same page. (3/T2)

(In light of some criticism) It was nice of her to step in and say, "No, you are doing the right thing, keep going". Everyone works really hard here. (3/T4)

I feel that if there was an instance where I needed to talk to her I certainly would and empathy was a word I used before, so I think that she would put herself in the situation of people in the school and perhaps the struggles and the difficulties that they're going through. (3/T10)

As a Catholic school, it is no surprise that most of the teachers at SFC are members of this faith or are at least supportive of its values of the school. Whilst words like 'religious', 'Catholic' were not mentioned when describing Jane's personal qualities, there were teachers who did express the importance of having a woman of faith as the principal and the impact this might have on staff, students and the subject offerings in the school (3/D3, 3/Ob1). In addition, for one teacher, being inclusive and supportive was certainly a way in which Jane practised and modelled her faith as the following examples show.

I think she is certainly someone who shows she is a woman of faith. She is generally concerned for the staff and the students. (3/T5)

Catholic ethos is really important to me. I think we are returning to that. I actually feel [RE] subject has been promoted, which wouldn't have happened under the previous administration and to me, that commitment to church and the Catholic ethos is really important in promoting RE. I think it's really important ... so, she's done that. (3/T3)

She's at a Catholic school, she's not at a high school, so that means there's a whole Catholic identity that is important. (3/T8)

[Jane] always says, "We've got a cross on the wall, so we need to be mindful, what would Jesus do in this circumstance", there's that [Christian] influence. (3/T1)

6.3.1.8 Good communicator

Seven out of 12 teachers describe Jane as a good communicator and from the analysis of the data, it was clear to see that this theme manifests itself mainly in relation to the tenor of this communication. Whether Jane is communicating a message to the whole staff or having an individual conversation with one teacher, she takes in consideration the relationship within those exchanges, never losing sight of the reception they might have and the importance of communicating transparency (3/Ob2, 3/Ob7, 3/Ob6, 3/D5) as the following examples explain.

If she's got a decision that's already in her mind that needs to be made, she has the capacity to actually reference why...she can put forward a rationale, which I might not have been thinking about. (3/T2)

Before [Jane] was principal, it was very difficult to even get to talk to the previous principal. There was a fair barrier there, but even when you did, you didn't bring up anything negative, whereas with [Jane], you can just be blunt and she'll be blunt in return, but it's not rude and it's not aggressive, there's no competition. There's nothing personal about it. (3/T12)

[Jane] did go through what her goals were and her reflections on her leadership style. (3/T11)

She presents very well as a spokesperson for the school because to me a PR role is a very large part of a principal. (3/T8)

In addition, teachers commented on how she consistently keeps everyone informed of the decisions and initiatives that are taking place at the school (3/Ob3, 3/Ob4, 3/Ob6, 3/D5, 3/D6, 3/D7, 3/D8, 3/Ob10).

She's very good at passing on information and she kept everyone informed. (3/T6)

Everyone knows what the landscape is like from the very beginning and then just having that inclusive approach an open-loop feedback for staff to feedback in. (3/T2)

Whatever we're discussing, staff are then told about what's happened or what the outcome is. Coming from the history where that hasn't been the case, and that's something that staff definitely want, yes. Before, we used to always feel that we were on tenterhooks about the school and you never knew what was going to happen, how it was going to happen or the reason behind it, whereas now, it's so transparent and we're all on the same page. (3/T9)

6.3.1.9 Humorous

For Jane, humour not only plays a pivotal role in the pursuit for lifting the morale of the school, but it is also one of Jane's most distinguished features (3/Ob1, 3/Ob2, 3/Ob4, 3/Ob6, 3/Ob7, 3/Ob9). For Jane, leading doesn't necessarily have to be a serious thing.

The principal dressing up in a stupid costume for the 100 days of Year 7, for some people that would be completely unacceptable because that wouldn't be seen to be priority for whatever reasons and that's fine with me, [but] that's not the school I want to work at. (Jane)

Some people love that I wander into class and occasionally I get away with something silly like saying to the kids don't tell the teacher I'm here and I sneak in. (Jane)

It's okay to have a bit of fun. (Jane)

Seven out of 12 teachers also recognise this personal quality in Jane. Again, it is that intention behind the humour that resonates with these teachers, in other words, when and how she uses this humour and for what purposes. Given the comments below, Jane uses humour as a tool for building relationships and establishing a positive school culture. She uses it to break barriers and build bridges.

(On reflecting on Jane's first day) ...her ability to connect with staff very quickly and her humour...she's funny, witty. (3/T2)

Sometimes she uses humour to deflect a little bit sometimes when things are a bit serious, To get people on side for some changes, she often uses jokes and for a long time she said, "I'm still new here". That wore thin because after a while people were saying, come on. (3/T5)

She's got a quirky sense of humour. So, I think that helps her to get people onside rather than have them offside and that seems to be the way in which she goes about her business, which is good. (3/T10)

[her humour] engages and it makes her more approachable...it lightens the situations depending on whatever it is. (3/T12)

6.3.2 Leadership qualities

6.3.2.1 Student-centred

As the interviews progressed, so did the perceptions teachers had formulated on the leadership qualities that, in their view, define their new principal. The most commented theme, both in number of teachers and frequency (Table 6.5) was the way in which Jane places the students at the core of

her leadership (3/D6, 3/Ob1, 3/Ob2, 3/Ob5, 3/Ob9). Whether it was through decision making or consultation, Jane elevates their presence and indeed, their voice as the following comments reveal.

She's got the kids at heart [and] if you've got the kids at the centre, which is what the role of a school is, I might not agree with everything she does, but I think her main focus is that the kids get the best experience possible and I'm happy with that. (3/T1)

She values student voice...they [students] love to know that the principal has got a vested interest in them. (3/T2)

[Jane's] really big on student voice. There was also some mention of students being on interview panels for normal staff. (3/T5)

She's inviting groups of kids to meet her...so that's giving the kids a sense of belonging. (3/T8)

There have been some decisions made, where I know that [Jane] has liaised and consulted with student representatives, and as a result of that, there have been some significant changes...student voice has come to the fore. (3/T10)

I see the way [Jane] speaks to students, the way she interacts with them...she doesn't create conversations where they are disempowered...she listens to what they've got to say. (3/T11)

The way in which these teachers (11/12) described Jane's leadership as student-centred, clearly echoes with Jane's own self-perception in this regard. As she explains below, student-centred, and student-empowered leadership is one of her basic leadership principles.

The kids who are academically the strongest and the kids who are academically the weakest and all the ones in between have got opportunities here and we keep on generating more opportunities. (Jane)

I think we're doing good things here, how do I know that? Because you see kids smiling, because you see their achievements. (Jane)

6.3.2.2 Ethical

As observed earlier in this case study, it appears that before Jane's arrival, transparency around decision making was not always evident. It caused some teachers to mistrust the principalship, at times leaving them wondering how and why some decisions were made. Once Jane arrived and exercised her leadership style for everyone to see and take part in, teachers became privy to the rationale behind decisions and initiatives coming out of the principal's office. Whilst this does not necessarily mean that they agree with every decision, it appears they have come to understand that decisions are being made with integrity and an ethical framework.

Because of the transparency in what she does, I think it makes it quite easy to feel confident in whatever decision she makes, that she's making it for the right reasons. (3/T9)

It is a tough job, so to take on that and move into a school where there's probably structural problems, you're bound to step on some people's toes, but to do that in a way that is linked to the greater good, rather than about personal ambition, that is a real strength. (3/T3)

She seems very ethical. (3/T8)

In terms of how she interacts with students and with staff, it could be as simple as setting the baseline for the code of conduct. She is absolutely always doing the right thing and clearly and obviously the right thing. (3/T12)

She wants the best for the girls and also for the staff. (3/T4)

These comments align with Jane's own view of her leadership as seen below.

My basic principles of leadership are; to be collaborative, to be consultative and to be transparent. It's based on a moral premise of trusting people and believing that all of the people that I encounter whether they be staff, students or parents are motivated by the same thing, which is what's in the best interests of students and are supportive of our values as a Catholic school. (Jane)

6.3.2.3 Consultative

Whilst nine out of 12 teachers consider Jane to be a consultative principal, the mode and nature of the consultations triggered some interesting responses from staff. On the one hand, teachers were pleasantly surprised by having a principal that is interested in their opinions (3/Ob2, 3/Ob5, 3/Ob8), but adhering to this leadership practice has not been immediate given they were unaccustomed to this leadership style. Three teachers appeared at first confused and not entirely certain as to why the principal might want to consult with them on school matters.

She asked me when we had a [15-minute] meeting, "tell me, what am I doing well, what am I not doing well". I said, "I'm not going to fall for that". I know she meant it, but you could never answer that question properly to the head. (3/T6)

That's probably one thing that I hate doing because she'll ask for it and I've never really done that. She did that really early, probably after one or two meetings where she said, "well, I've been here x amount of time so, what's working well and what should I be doing better?"...and I said, "I don't know" and she said, "no, you can't say that, you have to give me at least one". I found that really hard and I still find that hard. (3/T9)

It was a bit strange because management had never done that before and it was relatively early on, but at the same time it was sort of open and direct. Beforehand I wasn't comfortable with it, but it was fine and I actually think it was quite a good thing to do and she did ask for feedback in those sessions, about how we think, and what she's doing. (3/T12)

This response puzzled Jane, but the reaction also informed her of the changes and approaches she needed to make and take to convince teachers their opinion mattered to her and the school.

For some people it was terrifyingly scary. It didn't matter what I did; cup of tea, glass of water...but some people were just a bit terrified in that conversation every time I said, "so, do you have any feedback for me"? (Jane)

With our school review, which was last term, part of the task is a self-reflection report, which I think is a fantastic opportunity to say, "What are we doing well, wouldn't it be great if we could do some things better?"... it's actually a celebration and a forward-looking thing. So, people got consulted on writing this and that. (Jane)

[Jane] has strategically made sure that information went out to all staff under principal matters so they could feedback. So, we're not making a decision without consultation... we have a really open feedback loop and every professional learning gathering, is [an] opportunity for staff to feedback into the that with all of our data. (3/T2)

6.3.2.4 Values teachers

One of the ways through which Jane builds public relations is by gaining a deeper understanding of the cultural context at SFC and what it will take for the teaching staff to regain confidence in herself as much as in the principalship. She wants to show them she knows and understands them and that she values their work (3/Ob2, 3/Ob3, 3/Ob4, 3/Ob5, 3/Ob7, 3/D3, 3/D4).

I really respect the setting here and I respect the people I work with. I think I'm gaining their respect and trust and I think we're doing good things. (Jane)

I think teachers are fantastic people who overwhelmingly have the very best interest of kids at heart and who overwhelmingly work really hard all the time. (Jane)

At the beginning of the year, when we have Year 7s start, we say to our Year 7 parents, "come in, don't just drop your kids off, come and have a cup of tea", but if we've got [teachers] ourselves whose kids are going into Year 7, we should be offering the same flexibility [to teachers] that we're saying to those parents. (Jane)

From the data analysis, it was clear to see that at least seven out of 12 teachers were quick to point out that Jane makes them feel respected and valued individually and collectively. These teachers elaborated on how this is done through formal avenues, such as making the time to have one-on-

one conversations, but also through informal avenues, where a simple word of encouragement has a positive and lasting impact.

The first thing [Jane] was considering was how do I change staff perception of leadership and bring them to a point where they feel valued, acknowledged and respected and I think that's what [she's] been able to do, and that was a slow and systemic approach...staff leave her office feeling listened to, that she's able to walk in their shoes and that even if they're no solution that they've been heard and acknowledged... (3/T2)

[Teachers] felt like they were being heard more...they hadn't been happy before, and they had felt fairly put down and then all of a sudden, they felt like they could put their opinion forward...I think she wanted to make sure that all staff are included. (3/T4)

The tone wasn't optimal before...now people feel valued...there's not the same degree of micromanagement that there was. (3/T8)

You get the occasional "thanks for that, well done", which is something I don't look for, I actually think it's a bit weird to be thanked for doing your job. Again, not a big deal, but just walking past and saying thank you. (3/T12)

I do [feel valued], and I have since she's walked in the school. (3/T10)

6.4 Impact of perception of principal on teachers' work environment

Following the same structure as with the previous case studies, teachers were invited to share if and how the perception they had formulated of their new principal had impacted on their work environment. Table 6.8 displays teachers' responses for each sub-area. If teachers mentioned more than one impact, this is reflected by a split cell.

Table 6.8: (SFC) Impact of new principal on teachers' work environment³

	Sub-areas	3/T1	3/T2	3/T3	3/T4	3/T5	3/T6	3/T7	3/T8	3/T9	3/T10	3/T11	3/T12
Teacher well-being	Teacher morale	PI	PI	PI	PI	PI	PI	0	PI	PI	PI	PI	PI
	School connectedness	0	PI	PI	0	PI	PI	0	PI	0	0	PI	PI
Teacher capacity	Professional development	0	0 PI	0	PI	PI	0	PI	0 PI	0 PI	PI	PI	PI
	Teaching Practice	PI	PI	0	0	0	0	0	0	PI	0	0	PI
Professional relationships	Teacher – Teacher relationships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	PI	PI	0	0	PI
	Teacher – Student relationships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	PI	0	0	0	0

³ PI = Positive impact, NI = Negative impact, 0 = No impact

6.4.1 Teacher well-being

6.4.1.1 Teacher morale

For the overwhelming majority of teachers (11 out of 12), Jane's arrival as their new principal has impacted positively on their individual and collective morale. More than half of the teachers commented on how the morale of the staff was very low when Jane commenced as principal. It was not uncommon to hear of teachers that had left the school as a result of the low morale, and other who were contemplating a move.

We lost a lot of staff, long-term staff, young potential-leading staff in a very short period time. (3/T5)

The school had become a bit toxic and having worked in a school that was a bit toxic, I didn't want to go through that again and I had decided I'd get out. I distanced myself purposely and now that the negativity is virtually gone...it's just more of a positive environment. I was waiting to see who this new principal was before I really committed to staying here and I'm very glad that I stayed. (3/T12)

She definitely makes it look like you can stay, because you hear about how low the retention rate is and it can be really exhausting. (3/T4)

Before [Jane] was principal, I was feeling very concerned for the future of [SFC] and now that she's principal I'm much more optimistic. (3/T7)

These teachers commented on how this shift in morale has also increased their motivation, lowered stress levels and how the positive atmosphere around the school, whilst intangible, it is felt by many. According to the following comments, the feeling is that the school has once again become a cheerful work environment.

People are more positive...so, it's helped that kind of talk in the staff room because everyone's now prepared to give it a go. (3/T6)

Before, the leadership style had a result where people were more stressed and when there is a level of stress that's when your performance can't be as good. (3/T8)

There's an atmosphere, the culture of the school is much better, staff morale is much better. (3/T10)

The change in the atmosphere of the school will have to have had a change. [her presence] has impacted positively, the culture, the sense of optimism, that sense that we're moving forward, we're going to improve every year... (3/T1)

Whilst acknowledging the positive impact, one teacher did comment on how the process of rebuilding hope and trust in the principalship is a slow one, a process which cannot be done in haste.

We're still recovering and [Jane] is aware of that, but it is slowly building up...there are still some people that have been burnt, they'll take a while to come back. There's still some people who feel that there's a way to go... It's really hard to rebuild once you lose it and we existed on a lot of goodwill. It's a really nice place to work and I'm confident that the goodwill will rebuild. (3/T5)

6.4.1.2 School connectedness

Another aspect of teacher well-being that was explored in this study was the impact that a new principal may have on teachers' sense of connection with their school. For seven of the 12 teachers interviewed, Jane's arrival has impacted positively on their sense of belonging to SFC. These teachers talked about feeling happy to come to work and wanting to be part of the positive change they now see approaching.

Just seeing everybody happier, it felt easier coming to work. There wasn't so much whispering on what was going on...just being in the staff room, that whole perception changed, the morale lifted, I noticed. (3/T4)

People are feeling happy to come to work. (3/T5)

It makes it much easier to go to school in the morning. I feel much freer to just focus on teaching rather than be involved in pastoral care of people who are wandering around looking upset. Before [Jane], I was thinking about whether I'd look for another job somewhere else and whether [SFC] did have a future and now I'm hoping that I can stay here for a little bit longer and I do think [SFC] has a future. (3/T3)

[SFC] has had a very strong sense of belonging and [Jane's] bringing a sense of belonging back, which is really great. (3/T8)

One teacher, however, for whom that sense of belonging had not necessarily changed, did say how on hearing the wider community speak about Jane as the principal of St Frances College, has ignited a sense of pride.

I don't think [my sense of belonging] has changed the way I relate to it, but I think the way people perceive things that the school has changed... so, it's really nice to hear when you go down to the local primary school and people say, "your principal is so wonderful" or "we've heard that she did this". (3/T9)

6.4.2 Teacher capacity

6.4.2.1 Teacher Professional development

The data on professional development produced mixed results, with six teachers confirming a positive impact in this sub-area. Teachers were quick to mention how the level of autonomy that Jane has granted them in choosing their own professional challenges assists them in this venture. In addition, there is an explicit push towards professional collaboration as the preferred means for improvement.

There's been more of a freedom with professional development, picking your own path rather than being pushed into different directions, which was the trend for a long time and that's only been since Jane's been here that that's opened up...allowing people to make choices and there's been a definite support for professional development opportunities in general, in terms of the finances available and the opportunities. That's definitely increased also. (3/T12)

She's empowering [teachers] to carry out their job, helping them to understand what it is they're doing and strategically making suggestions and leading. She's empowering people to be innovative. She doesn't just rubber stamp things, she does empower people and sets high expectations. (3/T7)

She's impacting by allowing for time...and that is something people did ask for. (3/T11)

She has emphasised very frequently the need to be thinking about improving what we're doing and that's been at the forefront a lot more than it ever has been over the last couple of years. (3/T10)

It seems to me that she values a team approach, that she wants staff to be working together...she is encouraging that. that a positive shift in leadership, bubbles down to staff changing and developing different things. (3/T11)

Jane has a clear picture in her mind that in order to impact on teaching and learning and classroom practice, first she must ensure there is consensus around what is understood by professional development and overall purpose.

I'm trying to influence the cultural learning and teaching of the school so that learning is visible and that everybody knows what they're trying to learn, not what they're doing for the lesson...Making sure people understand the importance of that, building a culture of feedback where feedback is normal and usual and helpful and it's not about judging, and continuing to influence people, just taking little risks and changing what they're doing. (Jane)

I'm talking about it a lot; around visible learning and we will continue to shape staff professional learning around that...we use the language of learning intentions a lot... If everyone in the school isn't learning, then we shouldn't call ourselves an educational institution. (Jane)

If I can get that culture going, then building on the learning intention stuff then has a good impact on students, which we know is a very positive thing. So, most people see that as positive. (Jane)

6.4.2.2 Teaching practice

In terms of classroom practice, the data produced some similar results as with the previous two case studies, inasmuch as whilst there is a majority of teachers who perceive a positive impact on professional development, it is not relative to the perceived impact on teacher's pedagogical practice in the classroom. Additionally, for three of the four teachers that did report a positive impact on their practice as a result of Jane's arrival, they did not record a convincing positive impact on professional development (3/T1, 3/T2, 3/T9). For all four teachers, however, this impact manifests itself through the perceived improvement in school culture and Jane's own passion for education as the following comments suggest.

When you're going into the classroom the kids are settled. I think kids pick up if there's tension in what's happening and that may come out in your teaching, in the class. (3/T9)

We're going to improve every year; I'll have better resources [and] this will have come through in my teaching. (3/T1)

Yes, I'd say that it has [has a positive impact] because [Jane], with her background in multiple key-learning areas and working closely with the [deputy principals], looking at learning intentions and our goals, it certainly has...It has made me sharpen up what I do because I feel supported and I feel that every other person is doing the same thing on the same page. (3/T2)

Kids are happier and that's probably the biggest thing... staff are happier, so staff stress levels have dropped a bit and that impacts back on the kids...I think I've had the passion for teaching rekindled by having someone who is clearly so passionate. It's also the freedom to be yourself and not have to conform, which I think [Jane's] bringing into the school. (3/T12)

6.4.3 Professional relationships

6.4.3.1 Teacher – Teacher relationships

Although most teachers expressed no change to their relationship with their colleagues, they did, however, notice that teachers are happier and less stressed, leading them to reflect on whether this may have an impact on their collegial relationships.

Oh yes, people aren't stressed people were physically ill...very, very stressed. (3/T8)

it's always been collegial because I still work closely with the same people I used to, but it's more so now...it's just more of a positive environment. (3/T12)

6.4.3.2 Teacher – student relationships

From the sample of 12 teachers, only one expressed an improvement in the relationship with students. As per the comment below, this is attributed to the happier and more convivial current culture of the school.

The level of stress in the school was not good. It's just a happier place. If kids feel happy and secure and their stress level is down, they're going to be in a more conducive place to learn. (3/T8)

6.5 Teacher support during and after a change of principal

As per previous case studies, teachers articulated which are some of the leadership practices they consider necessary as a way of assisting teachers through the process of adaptation (Table 6.9). Whilst six practices were identified, the difference in ranking between the first and subsequent practices was more than double in number of comments. Having a principal that valued relationships and who dedicated time building them is of utmost importance as the following comments reveal.

Table 6.9: (SFC) Leadership practices for supporting teachers during principal succession.

Leadership practices	3/T1	3/T2	3/T3	3/T4	3/T5	3/T6	3/T7	3/T8	3/T9	3/T10	3/T11	3/T12	TOTAL
Building relationships				2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	12
No immediate changes	1						2	3					6
Empowering teachers			1	1				1	1				4
Frequent communication							2			1			3
Fostering teacher voice	1						1						2
Reassurance	1												1

I think probably a lot of things that [Jane] did were really positive; so, coming and being at school, talking to each staff member. (3/T5)

I think what [Jane] did was pretty good...she did organise that we all had a one-on-one with her and that was good. I think that's really important, that you feel like you know your staff and that you're approachable to your staff and [Jane] certainly succeeded in that. (3/T6)

Just be visible...It doesn't matter whether people agree or disagree with what you're doing, but if you're out there and you're seeing and you're mixing and you're talking and communicating and you're inclusive, then people will accept whatever you decide. (3/T10)

Don't get locked away in an office. Spend as much time with students and teachers and parents as you possibly can. (3/T12)

I see in any style of leadership that engagement with the people you're working with is key. So, I would say, you have to get to know the people you're working with, but at the same time, you have to still be able to establish yourself as a leader. There still needs to be a bit of a delineation between that role. (3/T11)

In addition, teachers also commented on how being informed and consulted by the school board on the principal selection process increased their trust in the process, as explained below.

I think coming and asking us what we wanted in a new principal reassured a lot of people that it wasn't just going to be some blanket appointment. (3/T1)

We had [members of the board] come out to talk about that process. So, that was transparent. (3/T2)

6.6 Chapter summary

Chapter Six presents the third and last case study for this thesis. St Frances College is a Catholic Girls' High School in Melbourne which appointed a new principal (Jane) following five years of leadership changes, which some teachers labelled as toxic. Jane, an external appointment and experienced principal, has had the challenging task of shifting the perception the overall teaching staff on both the principalship and the principal role. Based on the data analysis, it can be seen that she has achieved this convincingly. Jane is perceived as a visible, approachable and inclusive human being who sees professional relationships as a fundamental pillar of the school. Her energetic and supportive nature is regarded by the vast majority of the teachers interviewed as a sign of unity and collaboration. Her leadership is perceived as student-centred, ethical and consultative and her relentless commitment to include teachers in decision making has made teachers feel valued and cared for.

The perception teachers have formulated of Jane has not differed greatly from Jane's own self-perception, as she also describes herself as visible, a people person and authentic. In addition, for a number of teachers, Jane displays the characteristics of a faithful member of Christianity, which for many is a significant and much needed change. The impact that Jane has on the teachers interviewed is noticeable, particularly with regards to teacher morale, where a positive impact was recorded by almost every teacher and where more than half of the sample recognises a positive impact on school connectedness. Teachers commented on how the culture of the school had changed for the better, making SFC a welcoming and inclusive workplace as a result of Jane's arrival. With regards to teacher professional development and classroom practice, half of the sample perceived a positive impact on how Jane, indirectly through instructional leadership practices and initiatives, has impacted positively on teachers' professional development. This positive impact, however, does not always transcend the classroom, where only three teachers see a positive relationship between Jane and their classroom practice, whilst the remaining nine teachers report no impact at all. In terms of professional relationships, four teachers reported their relationship with colleagues have improved since Jane's arrival, however, a positive impact on teacher-student relationships was only recorded by one teacher. No negative impact was identified in any of the three work environments. (Table 6.8). Finally, having a new principal that invests in building relationships, does not rush change and empowers teachers, are three of the most desired leadership practices that, according to participants, assist in ensuring a less traumatic principal transition.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

7. 1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comparative analysis of the three case studies. Its structure is guided by the three research questions and provides an overview of the commonalities and differences amongst the three case studies.

7. 2 School profile

Table 7.1 provides a summary of the key characteristics of the schools. All are middle-to-high fee non-government schools serving educationally advantaged communities. All schools have affiliations to Christian faiths.

Table 7.1: School profiles

Schools	School system and type	ICSEA	Enrolment	Campus
Kingston College (KC)	Independent ELC – Year 12 Co-educational	1148	1913	Two
Summerhill College (SC)	Independent ELC – Year 12 Co-educational	1135	764	Two
St Frances College (SFC)	Catholic Year 7 – 12 Girls only	1094	1043	One

All three schools experienced a decline in student enrolments during the time of the change of principal, however, all have reported an increase in student numbers after the first year of the new principal taking on the role.

Kingston and Summerhill share very similar governance structures as a result of a common model employed by independent schools, with a school board that oversees all school activities as well as compliance and governance requirements. St Frances, on the other hand, follows the Catholic governance structure, which comprises a religious body (Diocese or religious order) and an Advisory Board which, in the case of St Frances, is formed by one representative per each nearby parish, a

representative of the Canonical Administrators (usually a parish priest), a staff representative, accountant and secretary. Both models (independent and Catholic) entrust all management and operational responsibilities to the principal. These bodies also have the responsibility of undertaking as well as determining principal appointments and terminations.

7.2.1 Principalship history

The leadership history of each school varies significantly. In terms of principal longevity, Kingston has only recorded eight principals in its more than one-hundred-year history. Prior to Peter's appointment, his predecessor had been principal for almost 20 years. Peter's appointment comes as the first internal appointment in the school's history. Both Summerhill and St Frances, however, present a less stable leadership history (Table 7.2). Lisa was appointed as the eleventh principal in 91 years, however, but the fourth in the last eight years. Similarly, St Frances appointed Jane as principal after three short-tenure principals. As a result, both Summerhill and St Frances can be regarded as schools which have experienced high principal turnover in the last 10 years.

Table 7.2: Schools' Principalship history

School	Number of principals in the last ten years (including the current principal)
Kingston College (KC)	2
Summerhill College (SC)	4
St Frances College (SFC)	4

In terms of employment of the current principal, all three schools advertised the position externally, thus inviting internal and external candidates to apply. As explained, each school board had the responsibility of managing the selection process. In each case, school boards kept the school community informed of the process, including timelines. At Summerhill, however, staff were also invited to share their thoughts on the type of leader they believed the school needed.

7.3 The new principal

Whilst all three leaders are defined as new principals, they bring to their school an array of different backgrounds and experiences, which have shaped their principalship distinctively.

7.3.1 New principal trajectory and preparation

All three principals felt they had been well prepared for the role. Peter is an internal candidate and a novice principal, yet familiar with the demands of leading a school having served as Head of campus and deputy principal prior to his appointment. His preparation for the principal role was a combination of theoretical knowledge obtained through a master's degree coupled with an "apprentice" model attained through his leadership roles within the school. Lisa, also a novice principal, had had good preparation through her involvement in a number of school leadership associations and her previous work as a deputy principal and various middle management roles in other schools. Jane is the only new principal who is not new to the role. Prior to starting at St Frances, Jane had been principal at another Catholic school in Melbourne for seven years. During this time, she had also attained a Doctor of Education degree, equipping herself with ample theoretical expertise for her second principalship, in addition to her practical experience.

7.3.2 Perception of self

Principals' self-perception did not differ greatly from one another. There were overlaps in the way they each described their personal and leadership qualities (Figure 7.1). All three, for example, included visibility and authenticity in their top four personal qualities. In particular, in both multi-campus schools (Kingston and Summerhill), being a visible principal was of utmost importance. At the same time, all three principals described their leadership as one that values teachers and that is consultative. Other qualities found in more than one principal included being a people person, reflective, and inclusive.

7.3.3 Challenges

During interviews, principals shared the challenges they encountered as new principals. Both novice principals (Peter and Lisa) made reference to the isolating nature of the principal role. It was also the novice principals who alluded to the sense of responsibility that comes with the role, and within that, the importance placed on having all the necessary knowledge in order to make difficult decisions. For Peter, managing others was considered a significant challenge. All three principals made reference to the demanding nature of the role and the importance of seeking external support, such as critical friends, mentors. Principals also commented on the importance and challenges of maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Unanimously, teachers recognised the

complexities of the principal role and recognised how hard their principals worked. For some teachers, this perceived reality dissuaded them from considering a principal role in the future.

7.3.4 School improvement plans

As the new principals began to map out their school improvement plans, it became clear that these were informed by the needs of each school as well as each principals' own priorities. In particular, Lisa and Jane, shaped their school improvement plans with explicit consultation from teachers. Overall, the nature of these plans included improvements in teaching and learning and student well-being, as well as changes to the structure of the organisation. In the case of Summerhill and St Frances, both high principal-turnover schools, changes in school culture were also considered a priority.

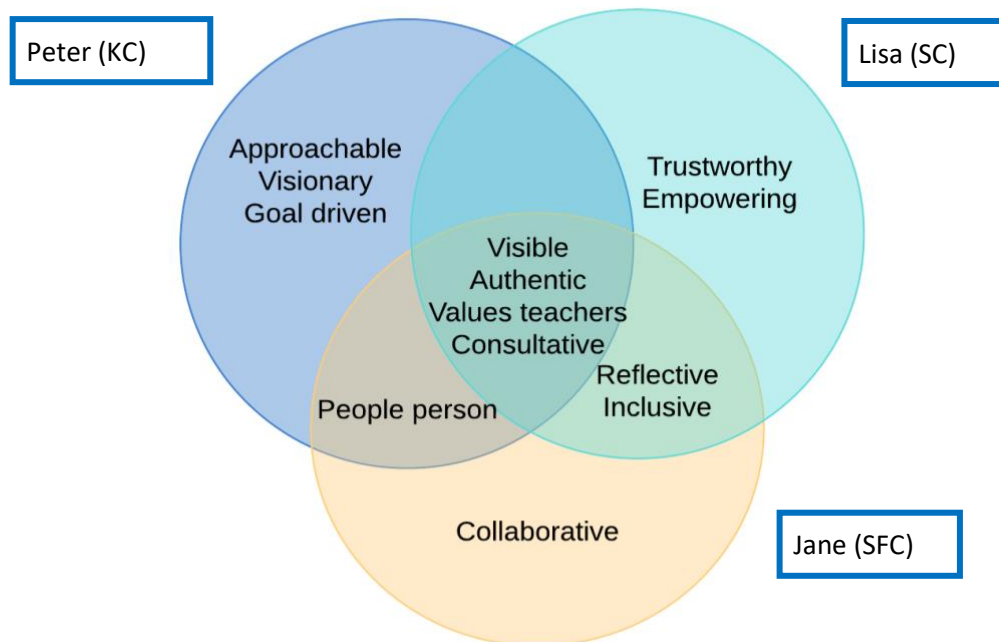


Figure 7.1: Principal self-perceptions (personal and leadership qualities).

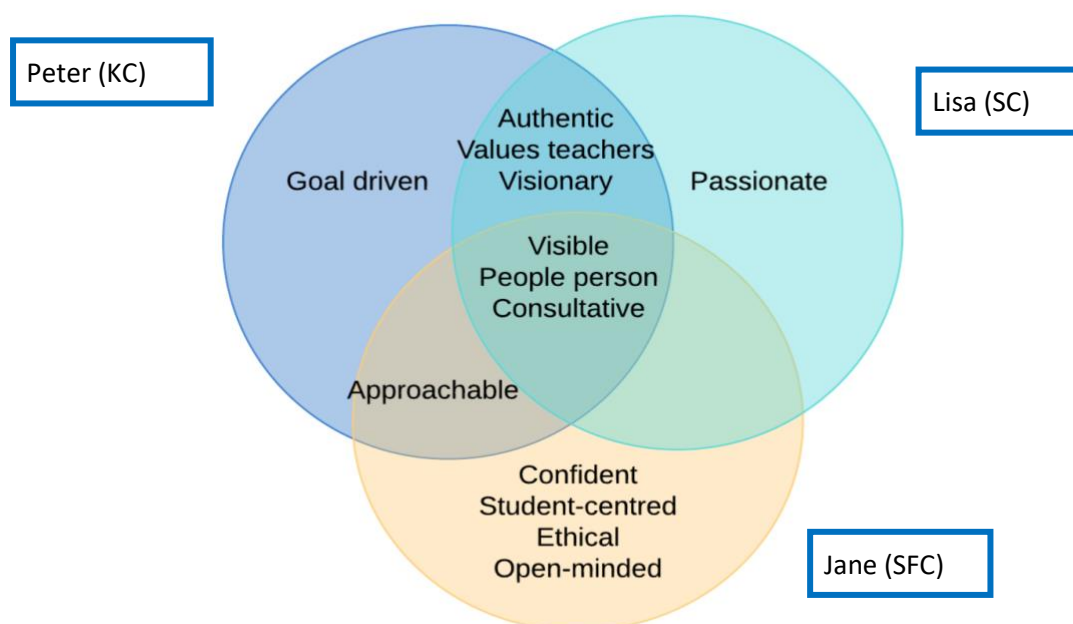


Figure 7.2: Teacher perceptions of new principals (personal and leadership qualities).

7.4 Teacher perceptions of new principal

In the process of formulating their perception of the new principal, teachers drew on the principal's personal and leadership qualities. These in return, were informed by a number of factors, such as school leadership history, teacher expectations of the principal and the new principal's intentions for change.

7.4.1 Personal themes

Teachers from each school used a number of personal and leadership qualities to communicate how they perceive their new principal. Across the three case studies, commonalities as well as differences were noted, (Figure 7.2). The four most commented personal qualities were visibility and being a people person. Considering that both Kingston and Summerhill are multi-campus schools, Peter and Lisa respectively, were perceived as being consistently seen around the campus, engaging with staff and students, as well as with other members of the school community. Being authentic was also a frequently reported trait of these two principals.

7.4.2 Leadership themes

In terms of their leadership qualities, being consultative was the only leadership quality common to the three principals. Peter and Lisa's leadership was also perceived as being visionary. Other top leadership qualities that teachers used to describe Jane were not shared by the two other principals. Teachers' perceptions of their principal against the principals' perception of self (See Figure 7.1 and Figure 7.2) demonstrated a high level of congruency across all case studies. In all schools, there is at least one personal and at least one leadership quality that is identified by teachers and their respective principal. In the case of Peter, the only internally-appointed principal, both the personal and leadership qualities are identical. Whilst for Lisa and Jane, there are similarities as well as some differences.

7.5 Principal impact on teachers' work environment

According to the data, the arrival of the new principal impacted on teachers' work environment in a number of domains and sub-domains, which are represented in Tables 7.3 and Table 7.4. Table 7.3 displays a numerical visualisation of this impact across the three schools. Using the same colouring as in Figures 4.8, 5.8 and 6.8, pink represents a positive impact, blue, a negative impact and grey, no impact. The number within each cell signifies the number of teachers associated with each type of impact. Table 7.4, on the other hand, offers a language visualisation of some of the most salient themes within each domain.

Table 7.3: Principal impact on teachers' work environment – No. of comments

	Kingston College								Summerhill College								St Frances College			
Teacher well-being	Campus A Interviews (6)				Campus B Interviews (6)				Campus A Interviews (6)				Campus B Interviews (6)				Main campus Interviews (12)			
	NI	0	PI	Split NI-PI	NI	0	PI	Split	NI	0	PI	Split NI-PI	NI	0	PI	Split NI-PI	NI	0	PI	Split
Teacher morale	4			2	1		5		1	1	2	2	1	2	2	1		1	11	
Teacher sense of belonging	2	3	1			4	2			3	3			4	2			5	7	
Teaching capacity	Campus A Interviews				Campus B Interviews				Campus A Interviews				Campus B Interviews				Main campus Interviews			
	NI	0	PI	Split NI-PI	NI	0	PI	Split	NI	0	PI	Split O-PI	NI	0	PI	Split	NI	0	PI	Split O-PI
Teacher Professional development		2	3	1			6				6				6			3	6	3
Teaching practice		4	2			6				3	3			5	1			8	4	
Professional relationships	Campus A Interviews				Campus B Interviews				Campus A Interviews				Campus B Interviews				Main campus Interviews			
	NI	0	PI	Split NI-PI	NI	0	PI	Split	NI	0	PI	Split O-PI	NI	0	PI	Split O-PI	NI	0	PI	Split
Teacher - teacher relationships		6				6				6				5		1		9	3	
Teacher – Student relationships		5	1			6				6				6				11	1	

PI = Positive impact, NI = Negative impact, 0 = No impact

Table 7.4: Principal impact on teacher' work environment- themes

	Kingston College		Summerhill College		St Frances College
	Campus A	Campus B	Campus A	Campus B	Main campus
Teacher well-being	Low teacher morale Sense of loss No closure Withdrawal symptoms Feelings of abandonment Decrease in school connection	Strong sense of being known Strong sense of being valued Increased sense of community	Strong sense of being valued Overwhelming pace of change Some increase in organisational commitment	Increased sense of purpose Strong sense of being valued Increased teacher voice Overwhelming pace of change Some insecurity over leadership roles Minimal impact on organisational commitment	Overwhelming boost in teacher morale Significant Increase in organisational commitment Slow rebuilding of principal trust Low levels of stress and anxiety Increased sense of pride
Teacher professional development	Increase in professional development opportunities and resources High collective teacher-efficacy Increase in leadership opportunities	Increase in professional development opportunities and resources Increase in leadership opportunities	Recognition of the importance of having an instructional leader High collective teacher-efficacy	Recognition of the importance of having an instructional leader	Increase in professional development opportunities and resources Recognition of the importance of having an instructional leader High collective teacher-efficacy
Teaching practice	Minimal impact Teacher's responsibility Strong teacher self-efficacy	No impact Teacher's responsibility Strong teacher self-efficacy	Some positive impact Teacher's responsibility Strong teacher self-efficacy	Minimal impact Teacher's responsibility Strong teacher self-efficacy	Some positive impact Teacher's responsibility Strong teacher self-efficacy
Professional relationships	Teacher-teacher relationship No impact Teacher-student relationships Minimal impact	Teacher-teacher relationships No impact Teacher-student relationships No impact	Teacher-teacher relationships No impact Teacher-student relationships No impact	Teacher-teacher relationships Minimal impact Teacher-student relationships No impact	Teacher-teacher relationships Minimal impact Teacher-student relationships Minimal impact

7.5.1 Teacher well-being

Teacher well-being proved to be one of the domains in which the impact of a new principal was mostly felt and, within that, teacher morale is where it was mostly evident. This result is based upon how many of the total of 36 teachers (the 12 from each school) reported either a positive or a negative impact in each sub-domain (Table 7.5).

Table 7.5: Total number of teachers reporting an impact

Total number of teachers reporting an impact (positive and negative)						
	Teacher well-being		Teacher capacity		Professional relationships	
	Teacher morale	Teacher sense of belonging	Teacher professional development	Teaching practice	T-T relationships	T-S relationships
Kingston College	12	5	10	2	0	1
Summerhill College	9	5	12	4	1	0
St Frances College	11	7	9	4	3	1
Total	32/36	17/36	31/36	10/36	4/36	2/36

At Kingston, for example, all 12 teachers across both campuses reported some form of impact. When explored in more detail (Table 7.3), the vast majority of negative impact was reported from Campus A, whilst most of the positive impact originated from Campus B. This difference can be attributed to Peter's insider characteristic. The contradiction here lies in that whilst teachers at campus A are pleased with Peter's appointment as their new principal, they, nonetheless, experienced a sense of loss and low morale. They miss him as their Head of campus and learning to work with his replacement has been challenging. For Campus B, on the other hand, having a principal who showed an interest in them impacted positively on these teachers, thereby increasing their sense of community and of being valued. The impact on teacher well-being was also high at Summerhill and distributed quite evenly between both campuses (Table 7.3). Teachers from both Summerhill campuses reported a strong sense of being valued and some increase in school connectedness, particularly from Campus A. Campus B teachers also reported an increase in teacher voice and sense of purpose and motivation. Teachers from Campus B who reported a negative impact accredited this to feeling overwhelmed by the pace of change, rather than by change itself,

which also included some feelings of insecurity regarding decisions concerning organisational structures.

At St Frances the results were similar with a very high proportion of teachers reporting some kind of impact. These teachers experienced a very tangible positive impact, which included low levels of anxiety, high teacher morale and an increased sense of pride in the school and its future. Notwithstanding, teachers also acknowledged that whilst they were learning to trust the principal, this was a slow and complex process. One contextual factor that could explain this is the frequency with which they had experienced a change of principal.

7.5.2 Teacher capacity

Within teacher capacity, teacher professional development and teaching practice were two sub-areas that displayed high levels of impact, although not necessary of the same kind. The vast majority of teachers across schools spoke about a positive impact on their professional development with a small number of teachers recording no impact at all. Emergent themes from this data reveal teachers' appreciation of enjoying more time and resources for collaborative and individual professional development activities, together with more middle leadership opportunities. This positive impact was more pronounced at Summerhill where teachers were more explicit in describing their principal as instructional with a strong interest in improving student outcomes. Kingston and St Frances, on the other hand, revealed a more varied result, including both positive impact and no impact in this area.

When it came to teaching practice, however, this positive impact was not necessarily sustained. Moreover, more than 70% of teachers across schools identified no impact on their classroom practice since the arrival of the new principal. Interestingly, this was even more palpable at Campus B of both Kingston and Summerhill where more than 90% of teachers from these locations identified no impact on their classroom practice. The dominating themes around this result attest to teachers' sense of self-efficacy and a unique sense of individual responsibility towards improving pedagogy. Whilst the figures for St Frances lean heavily towards no impact, four teachers did comment that as a result of a positive improvement on teacher well-being and school culture, their classroom practice was seen as having improved given that the school was a "happier place".

7.5.3 Professional relationships

Across all three schools, teachers reported minimal or no changes in their relationships with their colleagues or students due to the presence of a new principal. The overall majority of teachers considered the role and presence of the principal as independent of how they developed their collegial relationships and in the case of teacher-student relationships, teachers regarded this practice as their sole responsibility.

7.6 Teacher support during principal succession

Across the schools, teachers highlighted six leadership practices that they believed should be undertaken by the new principal and which would assist them during the principal transition process (Table 7.6).

Table 7.6: Leadership practices recommended by teachers during principal succession

Leadership Practices	Kingston College	Summerhill College	St Frances College
Building relationships	X	X	X
Frequent communication	X	X	X
No immediate changes	X	X	X
Fostering teacher voice	X	X	X
Empowering teachers	X		X
Staff reassurance		X	X

Four of these leadership practices were mentioned by teachers from all three schools. Teachers believe that a new principal who is committed to building relationships, who communicates frequently, does not make immediate changes and fosters teacher voice can assist in making the principal succession process less stressful for teachers.

7.7 Chapter summary

This chapter displays the commonalities and differences between cases. Overall, teachers drew on the principal's personal and leadership qualities to formulate a perception of the new leader. Teachers across schools identified their principal, above all, as visible and committed to developing relationships, as well as consultative and as someone who values teachers. All cases revealed some level of accordance between the qualities identified by teachers and those self-identified by principals. This was noticeably stronger at Kingston where the top four qualities were identical and where the principal was an internal appointment. Teacher perceptions of their new principal appear to have impacted (negatively or positively) in three domains within teachers' work environment: teacher well-being, teacher capacity and professional relationships. Teacher well-being is identified as the domain with the greatest impact. In particular, a strong negative impact was identified at Kingston Campus A, where the principal had previously held the role of Head of campus, whilst in Campus B as well as at Summerhill and St Frances, well-being was impacted positively. Professional relationships, on the other hand, showed to be the domain with the least impact. Across schools, a strong positive impact on teacher professional development, surprisingly, did not result in any significant impact on teaching practice. In addition, teachers across schools agreed that having a new principal who prioritised the building of relationships, who communicated frequently and who did not make changes immediately make them feel supported during principal transition.

CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION

8. 1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the three research questions that have guided this study and to show how they contribute to a greater understanding of principal succession and the arrival of new principals.

1. How do teachers perceive their new principal?
2. How does this perception impact on teachers' work environment?
3. How can teachers be supported during a change of principal?

Each of the research questions is answered based on the findings reported in Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven and discussed in conjunction with the relevant literature. This is followed by a discussion on the reflections made by each new principal. In addition to a summary of the contributions of this study, a new conceptual model is presented to assist greater understanding of the problems posed, together with some implications for further research and practice.

8.2 How do teachers perceive their new principal?

For the teachers in this study, the arrival of the new principal did not go unnoticed (Hargreaves et al., 2003). In spite of the idiosyncratic and contextual nature of each of the schools, teachers experienced the succession process through feelings of expectation, trepidation and hope (Fauske & Ogawa, 1987). Unanimously, teachers believed that this event had the potential to impact strongly on their professional life and the life of the school. From the new principal's first day, teachers follow very closely the new leader's actions and behaviours and begin to assess the implications of this change (Gordon & Rosen, 1981; Meyer, Macmillan & Northfield, 2011; Oplatka & Ben Or, 2019). This close examination of the new leader, however, was distinctly characterised in each school. Ogawa (1991) reminds us, however, that although perceptions of succession events vary because of individual experiences, they are all subject to common organisational norms and contextual factors.

The same applies to new school leaders. Despite the individual nature of each teacher perceptions, they appear to have been informed ultimately by the personal and leadership qualities and behaviours of the new principal. Teachers, however, arrived at these qualities based on three contextual and converging factors. These are represented in Figure 8.1.

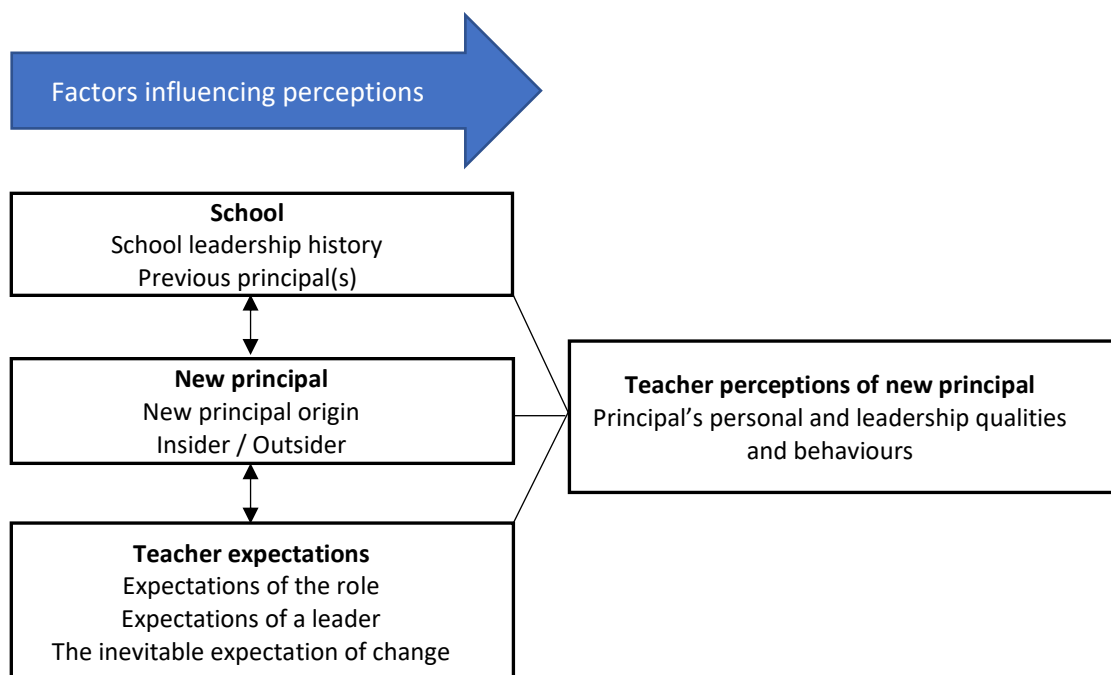


Figure 8.1: Factors that influence teacher perceptions of new principal.

The above three factors, whilst each originating from the different contexts (school, new principal and teachers), come together to influence teachers' perceptions of their new principal. At the same time, the findings of this study suggest that these factors are intertwined and can influence each other. For example, teachers' expectations of the new principal are influenced by the leadership history of the school. This model also highlights concordances with earlier research. For example, these contextual factors, can be identified as pre-arrival or pre-succession factors found in stage-based conceptual frameworks (Fauske & Ogawa, 1987; Gordon & Rosen, 1981; Hart, 1985, 1993; Johnson & Licata, 1995; Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985; Ogawa, 1991). The model shown in Fig. 8.1, however, differs in that each of these factors stems from three independent contexts: the school, the new principal and teachers and confirms that teacher perceptions of the principal begin much earlier than on their first encounter. The way these three factors influenced teachers in making sense of the personal and leadership qualities of the new principal is discussed further below.

8.2.1 School leadership history

The results of this study mirror and extend earlier research findings on how new principals are confronted by the "ghost" of the school's leadership history (Draper & McMichael, 2000; Rooney,

2000; Weindling & Dimmock, 2006). Comparison of the former principal and new principal was consistent and present in every teacher interview, congruent with previous research (Daresh & Playko, 1995; Oplatka & Ben Or, 2019).

In keeping with the findings from Oplatka and Ben Or (2019), every teacher from each school drew on their experience with their former principal. This current study, however, highlights a particular distinction. In the two schools identified as having experienced high principal turnover (Summerhill and St Frances), it was not only perceptions of the former principal that prevailed, but rather the entire gamut of leaders who had occupied the principal office in a relatively short time. Even when the outgoing principal had been described as “toxic” and “unethical”, findings suggest that the number of principals coming in and out was more significant than simply the image of the previous principal (Macmillan & Meyer, 2003). Furthermore, this notion was exacerbated when teachers perceived those past principals negatively. Especially in the case of St Francis, teachers reported being left scarred emotionally, and sometimes physiologically, by the behaviours and actions of these former principals. Blase and Blase (2003) also found this in their study on principals’ mistreatment of teachers, concluding that such types of abuse can have a lasting detrimental effect on teachers’ personal and professional lives. In addition, at least one teacher from Summerhill and St Frances spoke retrospectively of how these negative experiences with the former principal had influenced their decision to contemplate leaving the school, a decision later revoked following the arrival of the new principal. In the case of Kingston, however, links to previous principals, other than the immediate past principal, were incidental. At Kingston, the image of the immediate past principal prevailed above all others. This difference in the frequency of principal turnover accentuates the lasting and accumulative impact that frequent principal succession can have on teachers’ perceptions of current and possibly future principals. Oplatka and Ben Or (2019) also found that when the perception of the former principal was positive, the teachers tended to place high expectations on the new principal, however, when the perception of the former principal was perceived as negative, teachers experienced first suspicion and then happiness towards the new principal. These experiences concur, to a certain extent, with those lived by teachers from Summerhill and St Frances. In both schools, the perception teachers held of their former principal was negative and teachers were immediately pleased with their new leader. Despite this initial stage of jubilation, teachers soon realised that adapting to new leadership was not going to be easy and that the change for which they longed would not materialise immediately. This is consistent with the study by Draper and McMichael (2000) where teachers responded positively to the new principal notwithstanding a period of adjustment.

At Kingston, on the other hand, teachers held an overall positive perception of the former principal; however, there appeared to be a significant difference in how teachers compared the former and current principal depending on the campus at which they taught. At Campus A where the office of the principal is located, teachers were accustomed to seeing the former principal around the campus, whereas teachers at Campus B, commented on how rare it was to see the principal on the campus grounds. So, when Peter made the conscious effort to spend more time at this campus, teachers responded positively. In this respect, Peter himself reinforced his need to be visible and approachable in order to get to know the staff and to use these encounters as a method of socialisation (Crow, 2007). At St Frances, having a visible and personable principal was so distant from teachers' previous experiences, that a large number of them responded with surprise at having a new leader interested in their personal lives, their future aspirations or, simply, who knew their names. This insight concurs with earlier findings, claiming that image of former principals can remain in the minds of teachers well after their departure (Oplatka & Ben Or, 2019).

In all three cases, the data strongly claim that comparisons between former and current principal(s) were substantial in teacher perceptions of their new leader, thus validating prior findings from the literature and also highlighting how these comparisons differ in schools that have experienced high principal turnover (Fink & Brayman, 2006; Meyer et al., 2009a; Northfield, Macmillan & Meyer, 2006).

8.2.2 New principal origin

The second influential factor on teachers' perceptions of the new principal, involved the origin of the new leader, that is, whether he or she was an insider or an outsider. Gordon and Rosen (1981) posit the importance of this factor given that it is the group's (teachers) perceptions that really determine the definition of insider or outsider. Carlson (1961, p. 213) found that "if the administration of the school system is perceived as satisfactory, the appointment will go either to an insider or outsider [yet] If the school board perceives the administration as unsatisfactory, the appointment will go to an outsider.". These succession options mirror those found in this study. Kingston had enjoyed a history of stable leadership, filling a vacancy caused by the principal's retirement, whilst at Summerhill and St Frances the former principals had left before the end of their tenure and in less than favourable circumstances. Teachers at Kingston, irrespective of campus, did not appear to mind whether the principal was an insider or an outsider, coinciding with the findings of Whitlock-Pope (2010). At Summerhill and St Frances, however, participants were insistent on the appointment of an outsider, maintaining the need for a principal with "fresh eyes"

and “new ideas”. Moreover, teachers at St Frances expressed their desire for an external appointee who could lift school morale, improve school culture and set the school on a new path, away from its tumultuous leadership past. This view resonates with Hart’s (1993, p. 71) assertion that outsiders “have been found to effectively suspend the social system of interest groups and cliques, giving greater flexibility and latitude in ameliorating internal conflict to everyone involved”.

As previously observed in Chapter Four, Peter’s appointment at Kingston was perceived as positive by teachers at both campuses, yet his appointment as an insider was lived quite differently in each campus. At Campus A, he was a familiar face. He knew the people and understood the organisational structure and culture that defined it (Carlson, 1961; Gabarro, 1987; Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985; Normore, 2004). Peter was an insider principal in the eyes of Campus A teachers. These teachers compared Peter the principal more with Peter the Head of campus than by comparing him with his predecessor. The focus on the origin of the principal played a pivotal role in teachers’ perception, where they used phrases, such as “he is still the same”, “he hasn’t changed” to support their views. This assertion resonates with Rivera-McCutchen’s (2014) study which concluded that teachers’ point of departure for formulating their perceptions depended significantly on their memory of new principals in their previous role. Contrary to her observations, the overwhelming majority of teachers from Campus A did not feel that Peter’s personal and leadership practices had changed as a result of his promotion. For more than half the teachers from Campus B, however, Peter was an outsider. Research suggests that when an internal appointment carries a change of environment within the organisation, this can also be considered as an external appointment (LeGore & Parker, 1997). Carlson (1961, p. 227) explains this dichotomy:

It is not necessary to leave a firm, government agency, army, or labor union to become an outsider. An outsider is simply a "stranger" in Georg Simmel's use of the term: a man unacquainted with the social realities of the particular setting.

8.2.3 Teacher expectations of new principal

Teacher expectations on the new leader is the third and last influential factor affecting teachers’ perceptions of their new principal. Every teacher in this study, without exception, articulated views on the weight that expectations play when there is a change of principal, in line with prior findings that expectations are a fundamental element and linked to the process of forming an impression of the personal and leadership qualities and behaviours of the newcomer (Fauske & Ogawa, 1987). Three types of expectations dominated teachers’ comments: expectation of the role, expectation of the leader and the inevitable expectation of change (Figure 8.1).

Even in schools that displayed effective distributed leadership practices, every teacher in this study recognised the role of the principal as the most important source of leadership (Day et al., 2010) as well as the face of the school and, as such, expected the new principal to be articulate, knowledgeable and assertive. Teachers placed greater importance in welcoming a principal who had accumulated general leadership experience than on a reputable principal alone (Fauske & Ogawa, 1987; Gordon & Rosen, 1981; Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985; Ogawa, 1991). Lisa's years of experience in leadership roles in schools as well as her involvement in professional leadership associations were held in high esteem by teachers. They also valued her current pursuit of a higher-degree research in education. Similarly, Jane's doctorate represented respect and credibility in a principal with expert knowledge in leading a school. To a lesser degree, Peter was also recognised as knowledgeable and with leadership expertise, but as an insider. This is consistent with the literature suggesting that principals benefit greatly from leadership experiences prior to their commencement as principals as these assist them in dealing with the challenges associated with the principal transition (Armstrong, 2014). At St Frances, the fact that Jane was an experienced principal did not appear to be a salient characteristic. Instead, what stood out for them was that Jane was an external appointment.

One role expectation that stood out in the data concerned teachers' expectations of a private school principal. Several teachers from Kingston and Summerhill expected the new principal to be well spoken and formal, particularly when it came to public speaking when addressing parents. In this regard, and in the eyes of some teachers, Peter did not fit the mould. In contrast, at St Frances there was no indication of a particular trait or quality that teachers expected specifically for a Catholic school principal other than the obvious feature of being Catholic. Role expectations may also be understood as the early stages of the development of trust, similar to what Macmillan et al. (2005b) identified as Role Trust (see Chapter Two). Unlike the findings of Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000), who found that internally-appointed principals may be perceived with suspicion, there was no evidence in the data to indicate that this was felt by teachers from Campus A.

In terms of the expectations of a leader, the clear majority of teachers expected their new principal to be visionary, visible and approachable, all qualities associated with successful school principals (Day & Gurr, 2014; Day et al., 2010; Gurr, 2015). Some of these qualities have also emerged in the literature on principal succession. For example, Fauske and Ogawa (1987, p. 37) found that the teachers in their study expected three qualities from their new principal: "a willingness to support teachers, friendliness, and the ability to develop a sense of unity". In a later study, teachers also expected their principal to be personable and show support for teachers (Ogawa, 1991). Similarly, Oplatka and Ben Or (2019, p. 501) found teachers expecting their new principals "to express positive

emotions towards them from the first moment they meet and particularly to listen to them empathically.” This was especially resonant at St Frances, where teachers longed for a leader who showed empathy for its community and who would bring much needed structural and cultural change. This is particularly important in the early stages of principal succession considering the findings from a Spanish study concluding that “teacher motivation may improve when they are led by principals with less experience in the role, but a more positive attitude toward potential changes and challenges” (Campos-García & Zúñiga-Vicente, 2019, p. 132). In the two schools that had experienced high principal turnover, more than half of teachers expected stability. Teachers hoped for a principal that would bring stability and who would remain in the role longer. The leader expectations at Kingston, on the other hand, varied depending on the campus. For teachers from Campus A, their hope was that Peter would remain the same once he took on the principalship, consistent with Rivera-McCutchen’s study (2014). At Campus B, on the other hand, teachers expected a principal who would make them feel more valued and one who was committed to creating a greater sense of unity (Ogawa, 1991).

The third type of expectation that emerged was the inevitable expectation of change. In 1991, Ogawa (1991, p. 58) questioned “[u]nder what conditions do teachers expect or not expect a principal succession to produce changes in a school?”. His findings concluded that teachers expect principals to make changes “by virtue of their position” (Ogawa, 1991, p. 57). Similarly, Weindling and Earley (1987) also found change to be one of the first concerns for teachers during principal succession, coinciding with the current findings. In this study, almost the totality of teachers expected some sort of change as a direct result of a new principal. These changes were heavily contextualised. Teachers from both Kingston campuses hoped for structural changes, as well as a principal who would improve staff development and lift academic results. At Summerhill, the expected changes also included structural changes as well as more opportunities for teacher involvement in decision-making. At St Frances, in contrast, teachers most expected a caring and empathetic leader who would lift the morale of the school and assist them in regaining trust in the principalship, similar to the building of spiritual capacity referred to by Caldwell and Spinks (2013, p. 39). Irrespective of context teachers were most concerned, however, with the nature of change, whether it would impact on their teaching autonomy (Hallett, 2010; Johnson & Licata, 1995), the pace of change and how it would be communicated to staff. Paramount from this study is that principal turnover is strongly associated with change, hence, its inevitability. In this context, principal origin was irrelevant and irrespective of whether the principal was an insider or an outsider, change was coming.

8.2.4 Principals' personal and leadership qualities and behaviours

Above all, all three principals were perceived as visible, approachable and authentic. According to teachers, they also displayed commitment to building relationships, valuing teachers and they also held a strong vision for the school going forward, all characteristics of successful principals (Day et al., 2010; Gurr, 2015; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Visibility, for example, was consistently viewed by teachers as a purposeful and a required characteristic of a successful principal. The adjective *visible*, was the most commented personal quality for all three principals. Teachers enjoyed seeing their principal around the school. At Kingston, for example, Peter continued to be visible around Campus A, and his increased visibility at Campus B was welcomed. In a similar vein, teachers from Summerhill and St Frances also highlighted the importance of having a new principal who was visible and who displayed commitment in getting to know teachers. Teachers from all three schools valued highly a principal who showed an interest not only in what they did, but more importantly, in who they were. The teachers from Kingston's Campus B, for example, identified small gestures by Peter during the very first of informal conversations (Oplatka & Ben Or, 2019). At Summerhill, the perception was similar, where teachers enjoyed seeing Lisa in the staffroom discussing her weekend plans in a relaxed atmosphere. At St Frances, Jane's outgoing personality was very well received, although it was a personal trait they had not experienced in a long time, which did take some by surprise. These individual encounters between principals and teachers are important for the impact they can have on how teachers respond initially to the arrival of a new principal (Oplatka & Ben Or, 2019). The importance of early visibility is also supported by a large report by Burkhauser et al. (2012) that found principal classroom visibility was a behaviour that achieved high levels of teacher buy-ins. Although the above strategy referred to principals' visibility in the classroom, this study suggests that principal visibility should extend beyond the classroom to include a variety of places and times within the school day.

From a different perspective, a recent study in the USA that explored the "dark side" of ethical leadership through the eyes of those who experience it (teachers), found administration absenteeism to be one of the leadership practices associated with unethical school leaders (Sam, 2020), logically implying that visibility amongst principals is of paramount importance. According to Pollock (2013, p. 329), there are different factors that determine how success is defined and manifested in different schools, and its study is important given that the way success is perceived by teachers and principals "influences how they engage in their work, and this has implications for current and future policy initiatives". This initial assessment of teachers' perceptions found in this current study aligns with Ogawa's (1991) first post succession stage of enchantment, where

teachers initially accepted and approved their new leader who displayed a commitment to teachers and the school. In addition, the personal and leadership qualities that allowed for the teachers in Ogawa's (1991) study to reach this perception are very similar to those identified by this study: a personable nature, consultative, visionary, supportive of teachers and committed to their development and the improvement of the school.

When comparing the personal and leadership qualities that teachers attributed to their principals and the personal and leadership qualities principals attributed to themselves, the similarities were compelling. In other studies this has not always been the case (Clarke & Stevens, 2006; Duncan & Seguin, 2002; Rivera-McCutchen, 2014). When interviewed, all three principals engaged in self-reflection and had a strong sense of their strengths and weaknesses and showed no hesitation in communicating them. At Kingston, Peter was perceived in the same manner in which he wanted to be perceived, suggesting a high level of transparency. At St Frances, teachers also found Jane to be visible, people-oriented and consultative, attributes she also assigned to herself, along with being collaborative and someone who valued teachers. In the case of Summerhill, Lisa wanted to be perceived as visible, consultative as well as trustworthy, and although teachers attested to these qualities, they identified being in the early stages of developing principal trust (Macmillan et al., 2005b).

The findings regarding teacher perception of principals discussed in this section suggest that the participating teachers perceive their new principal in an overwhelmingly positive manner. In communicating their perceptions, teachers pointed to the principals' personal and leadership qualities and behaviours, which in turn, appear to have been informed by three factors that were common to each school, namely the history of the school leadership, whether the new principal was internally or externally appointed and the expectations associated with the arrival of a new leader. Other factors, such as gender and age group of new principals and teachers, did not emerge as significant in teachers' perceptions of their new leader. In all three case studies, the difference between the type of principal teachers believed their school needed (expectation) and the principal teachers believed they received (reality) was generally congruent. Peter, Lisa and Jane, turned out to be precisely what teachers expected and hoped for in a new principal.

8.3 How does this perception impact on teachers' work environment?

Teacher perceptions of the new principal appear to have had major impacts on teachers' well-being and professional development, and surprisingly to a lesser extent, on teaching practice and professional relationships. The concept of impact or influence is one that is commonly employed in

qualitative inquiry and frequently demonstrated in the literature with regard to the relationship between school leaders and their community (Ärlestig et al., 2016b). Figure 8.2 extends from Figure 8.1 to reflect the second part that forms a new conceptual model, which will be explained further below.

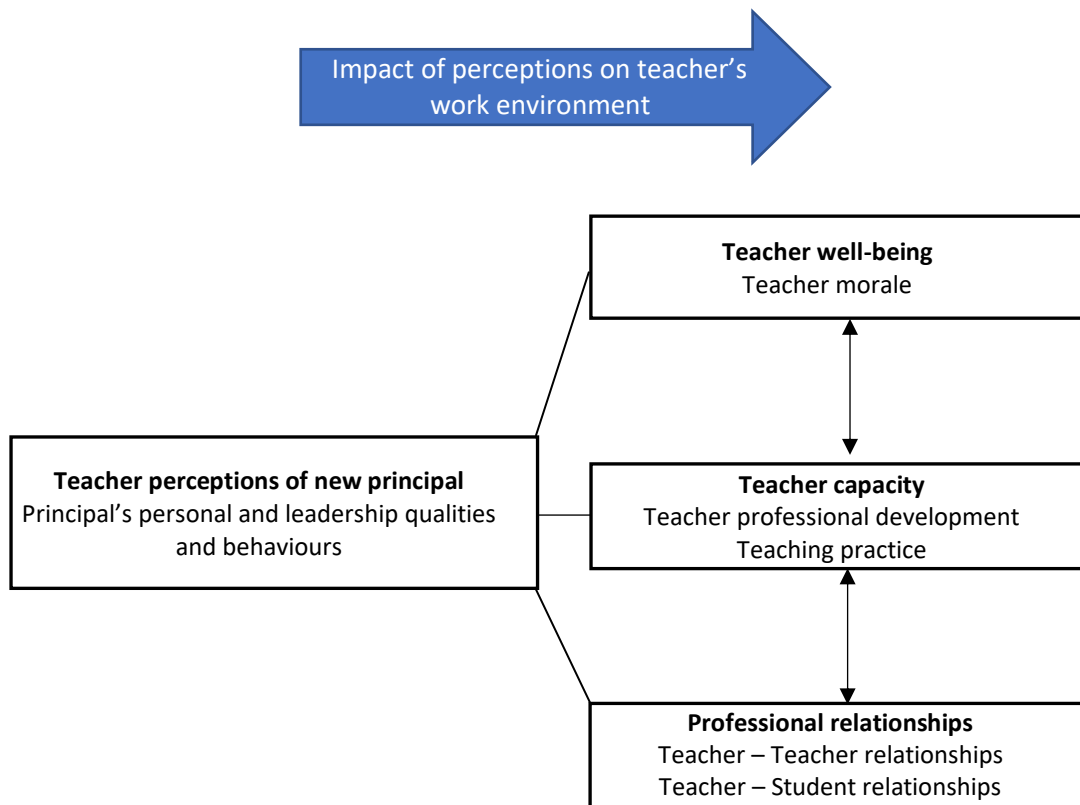


Figure 8.2: Impact of new principal perception on teachers' work environment.

8.3.1 Teacher well-being

Whilst the literature on teacher well-being alludes to a lack of consensus concerning its definition, the research points to the personal, relational and contextual factors impacting on aspects of teachers' professional lives such as satisfaction, happiness, self-efficacy as well as a sense of connectedness and belonging (Acton & Glasgow, 2015; Pillay, Goddard & Wilss, 2005; Soini, Pyhältö & Pietarinen, 2010). Teacher well-being is of paramount importance given its significant mediating role between school leadership and student achievement (Leithwood & Beatty, 2008; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2019; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005; Seashore Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson, 2010; Sun & Leithwood, 2017). Similarly, there is also significant evidence

suggesting that principals' behaviours associated with internal relations are linked to high levels of teacher well-being (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019). In this study, teacher perceptions of the new principal as discussed in the previous section, impacted on teachers' well-being, with a particular focus on teacher morale.

8.3.1.1 Teacher morale

School and teacher morale have been previously identified in the literature as having the potential to be affected during principal succession (Mascall & Leithwood, 2010; Meyer et al., 2009a; Meyer, Macmillan & Northfield, 2011; Meyer, Macmillan, Northfield, et al., 2011). Meyer et al. (2009a, p. 173) define teacher morale as:

a construct that describes the relative mental/emotional valence of positive or negative energy of an individual or of a group of individuals (as in a school staff). It is the result of the perceptions and interpretations of contextually influenced experiences.

The above definition is especially relevant to this current study given two of its foci, the use of positive and negative valences and the emphasis on perceptions. In the case of this thesis, each school, including Kingston, which is not classified as high principal turnover, experienced to some degree a variation in teacher morale. At Kingston, the way teacher morale was impacted was significantly distinct between campuses. Teachers from Campus A experienced a dichotomy of emotions comprised of a simultaneous sense of happiness and sense of loss. Most teachers from this campus displayed joy in having Peter as their new principal. Their perception of his personal and leadership qualities reaffirmed their validation for a principal that showed transparency, visibility and a commitment to valuing and developing teachers, yet this positive impact also resulted in low morale, manifested as a strong sense of loss, a loss experienced by all six teachers from Campus A with some degree of variation. In this regard, the findings of this study resemble those found in earlier research, where teacher responses whilst aimed at the newcomer, in reality, were not personal, but rather reactions towards the succession process itself (Daresh & Playko, 1995). These teachers had gained a good principal, but they had also lost a much loved Head of campus. This sentiment of loss and abandonment is comparable to that felt by teachers upon the departure of a much-loved principal found in an earlier study (Oplatka & Ben Or, 2019). Rivera-McCutchen (2014) found that before assuming the principal role, teachers perceived the internal successor as possessing positive personal and leadership qualities, and whilst these did not change once the insider assumed her role as principal, teachers' perceptions did change, resulting in strong criticism in her ability to be effective. The findings of this study coincide with the latter, inasmuch

as Peter did not change his personal or leadership qualities once he became principal, however, they differ in that teachers from Campus A continued to perceive him in the same manner as before the appointment. The fact that Peter did not change in his behaviour made it only more difficult for teachers to move on. In addition, this void was exacerbated by the appointment of Peter's replacement as Head of campus, which was not what teachers expected. In a less than favourable tone, a teacher commented: "[The new Head of campus] is very different to Peter".

This finding warrants special attention. When the principal position is filled by an internal candidate, another position becomes vacant; the one left behind by the new principal. This finding suggests that teachers who experience the arrival of an internally-appointed principal, in reality experience two transitions and go through two processes of adaptation, which have the potential to intensify and even aggravate the adaptation process, resulting in changes to teacher morale. In contrast to earlier findings (Ganz & Hoy, 1977), which found no significant differences between insider and outsider principal appointments in terms of teachers' job satisfaction and morale, the findings from this study strongly suggest that an internally-appointed principal can impact negatively on teacher morale, even in a school which had not experienced high principal turnover (Meyer et al., 2009a). So far, the literature on insider principal's appointments is significantly tilted towards the new position being filled (Buckman et al., 2017; Chalstrom, 2007; Gabarro, 1987; Ganz & Hoy, 1977; Johnson & Licata, 1995; Jordan, 2012; LeGore & Parker, 1997; Marshall, 2018; Rivera-McCutchen, 2014; Whitlock-Pope, 2010), and practically no attention to the position being left vacant. This study suggests that those responsible for appointing internal candidates to the role, must consider the implications of this finding in order to avoid a negative impact of teachers' well-being and teacher morale, in particular. In addition, and in light of this, careful consideration should also be paid to the personal and leadership qualities of the new principal's replacement, as it is likely to play a critical role in the ripple effect of the succession process. In addition, half of the teachers from Campus A commented on how they missed going to Peter for professional advice as they had done in the past when he was still Head of campus. A recent study on work-tie dissolutions in schools, concluded that when one of the individuals (the one sought for advice) loses a leadership position, it was an important predictor of a tie dissolution around matters of instruction (Spillane & Shirrell, 2017). In the case of Campus A, however, Peter also gained a new position. In this regard, there is reason to suggest that when a member of the staff moves *out* of a former leadership position (Head of campus) and moves *into* a new and hierarchically higher formal leadership position (principal), this it may also have the potential to disrupt and dissolve work-ties among colleagues and potentially hinder the creation of a new work tie with the person who has now come to replace the new principal.

Teacher morale on Campus B, on the other hand, emerged in almost complete contrast to that of its counterpart. For all but one of these teachers, Peter's personal and leadership qualities and behaviour impacted positively on their morale. At an individual level, teachers commented on feeling acknowledged, known and valued for who they are, consistent with earlier findings where new principal transitions resulted in positive responses from teachers resulting in smoother transitions (Marshall, 2018; Oplatka, 2004). Collectively, teachers felt that Campus B was finally being elevated to the same rank as Campus A. Peter's efforts in spending more time in this location, getting to know its staff and prioritising cross-campus collaboration had not gone unnoticed, and in the eyes of these teachers, it was working. This dichotomous impact from one campus to another, posits an interesting situation and an avenue for further research. Two converging factors meet to produce very different outcomes: the origin of the new principal (insider/outsider) and the multi-campus context. Whilst the perception of the new principal from both campuses was consistent, the way in which this perception impacted on teacher morale was not. At Summerhill and St Frances, comments referencing teacher morale were similar and significantly directed towards a positive valence. In both cases, having a new principal that was visible, personable and committed to building relationships and developing teachers boosted their morale and instilled in them a sense of a new and better beginning also found in an earlier study (Oplatka, 2004). Being able to sustain this high level of teacher morale is important given its capacity to increase staff commitment, satisfaction and performance (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002; Price, 2012).

Morale can manifest itself in several emotions, including feelings of belonging towards an organisation as well as the nature of the relationships that are formed within it (Evans, 2003; Fineman, 1999; Meyer et al., 2009a). A significant shift in teacher well-being was also noted through some participants' discussion around teachers' sense of belonging toward their school. Whilst all three schools reported mostly a positive shift towards greater sense of school belonging, not surprisingly, the only two teachers that acknowledged a negative impact on sense of belonging also indicated a negative impact on their morale. In addition, both schools that had experienced high principal turnover (Summerhill and St Frances) appeared to have recorded the overall majority of a positive change in this area. For one teacher from Summerhill, this feeling was summarised in the following manner: Before [Lisa] it was like, 'this will be a nice retirement job, to just come here till I retire and scoot out the door', whereas now it's like, "Oh, something's happening!". This strong sense of new beginnings concurs with teachers' sense of self-renewal found in an earlier study on teachers' experience during principal turnover (Oplatka, 2004). Similarly, principals like Peter, Lisa and Jane who display transformational leadership practices influence significantly teachers' sense of cohesion and organisational commitment (Dou, Devos & Valcke, 2017; Price, 2012), as well as an

increase in teachers' willingness to invest in change (Moolenaar, Daly & Slegers, 2010). In the case of the two multi-campus schools, more than half of teachers from each of these second campuses, recognised their respective new principals' intentional leadership practices aimed at increasing whole-school cohesion.

The evidence on teacher morale discussed above also surfaced some notions around principal trust. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2017) define trust as a multifaceted concept where an individual or individuals are willing to expose vulnerability as a result of the perceived behaviours shown by another party. These behaviours are manifested through different facets, such as openness, benevolence, authenticity, competence and reliability (Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2017). Unlike previous research (Macmillan & Meyer, 2003), trust in the principal did not result in one of the most prevalent themes throughout teachers' responses.

It is important to remember that perceiving the new principal as trustworthy was one of the least commented qualities (see Chapter Seven). For some teachers from Kingston's Campus A, for example, trust in the principal was a consequence of trust in their former Head of campus. In this sense, trust had been transferred from one role to the next and the fact that he was perceived by teachers as remaining true to his values, assisted in the transfer and re-cultivation of this trust (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2017). In discussing the multi-faceted nature of trust, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000, p. 563) suggest that "[a] teacher who is promoted to principal often maintains the trust of colleagues on a personal level but engenders suspicion in his or her professional role". The data in this study suggest that although teachers were intrigued by the changes that Peter would bring, it did not result in feelings of suspicion. For the teachers from Campus B, where trust had not previously been developed with Peter, there were, nonetheless, already indications that trust in the new principal was developing fast, as a result of the perceived personal and leadership qualities of the newcomer (Karasel, Altınay, Altınay & Dagli, 2018; Northfield, 2014).

The research on principal succession posits that in schools where principal turnover has been high, the impact of this process can be very negative, particularly for teachers (Macmillan et al., 2005a; Meyer et al., 2009a; Northfield et al., 2011). The two case studies that fit this profile, Summerhill and St Frances, add to this knowledge base, affirming the significant impact that high principal turnover can have on teachers, particularly with regards to teacher morale and the development of trust (Macmillan & Meyer, 2003; Macmillan et al., 2005a; Meyer et al., 2009a; Meyer, Macmillan, Northfield, et al., 2011; Northfield, 2014; Northfield et al., 2006, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2017). In both schools, the frequency with which principals had come and gone had left teachers longing for stability. Despite the almost unanimous positive perception of their respective new

leaders, the reoccurring nature of trusting yet another principal proved to be a slow and reflective process. This reticent lens with which teachers viewed the process of rebuilding trust also resonates with that experienced by teachers in a previous study, especially if the previous principal had been deemed as unsuccessful (Oplatka & Ben Or, 2019).

Whilst for new principals, developing trust must be considered a priority (Northfield et al., 2011) in schools like St Frances, where stability was mostly and more urgently needed, teachers also showed a desire in rebuilding relational trust in the *principalship* as much as in the *principal*. In terms of the continuum of trust model discussed in Chapter Two, whilst the move from Role Trust to Practice Trust and Integrative Trust was relatively quick, the transition from Integrative Trust to Correlative Trust appeared to move at a much slower pace, or in some instances not at all (Northfield et al., 2011). This evidence suggests that the amount of time teachers spend on each of the four stages of the continuum is influenced by the contextual nature of each school and the principal succession process itself, where despite a positive perception of the new principal, teachers' development of principal trust is a staged and complex process.

For only four teachers, however, teacher morale did not shift at all. Three of these came from Summerhill where teachers attributed this lack of movement to well-established organisational structures in the school, which appear to have acted as buffers to the potential disruption caused by a change of principal. This finding resonates with those found in the literature on distributed leadership and principal turnover suggesting that effective distributed leadership practices put in motion by the outgoing principal have the potential to mitigate the negative effects of principal turnover on school morale (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Mascall & Leithwood, 2010). Further exploration into this lack of impact is warranted given that many other teachers from that same school, working under those same distributed practices, did experience an impact to their morale. The combination of evidence-based successful leadership practices in conjunction with a detailed understanding of the school culture and history that is inherited, should be the basis for establishing best practice for newly-appointed principals. Drawing from the data collected and analysed in this study, visibility, approachability and a commitment to developing teacher capacity were essential ingredients for sustaining teacher well-being manifested by high levels of teacher morale, teachers' sense of belonging and the (re)building of trust in the principal.

8.3.2 Teacher capacity

Principals, at every stage of their professional trajectory, play a crucial role in driving the improvement outcomes of their schools, teachers and students (Day et al., 2010; Day et al., 2011;

Hallinger, 2011; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hattie, 2009; Liebowitz & Porter, 2019; Marzano et al., 2005; Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009; Spillane, 2017). In particular, principal practices and behaviours associated with instructional leadership emerge as the most significant in improving these outcomes (Robinson, 2007). Furthermore, successful principals improve teacher capacity by providing a range of professional learning opportunities to their staff with the aim of enhancing student outcomes (Gurr, 2015; Sun & Leithwood, 2012). Successful principals do this by building the confidence and competence of staff and strengthening the school and its culture. Within the Australian context, of the five practices that principals are expected to undertake, the top two include (1) leading teaching and learning and (2) developing self and others (AITSL, 2014). As well as teacher well-being, teacher capacity surfaced as the second domain within teachers' work environment to have been impacted as a result of teachers' perceptions of their new principal. Within teacher capacity, two sub-domains were identified: teacher professional development and teaching practice.

8.3.2.1 Teacher Professional development

The three new principals in this study placed an importance in leading a learning community and in particular, in developing their staff in different ways, responding to the nature of their school context and idiosyncratic style of leadership (Pietsch, Tulowitzki & Koch, 2019). In this study, more than 75 percent of participants from all three schools identified teacher professional development as having been impacted positively because of the arrival of the new principal.

By the time Peter began his principalship, Kingston had already in place well-established organisational structures, procedures and practices, that supported and advanced teacher professional development, that included leadership opportunities for teachers. Peter took advantage of these structures by continuing them and using them as starting points for future changes (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018; Mascall, Moore, Jantzi, Walker & Sacks, 2011; Spillane et al., 2015). A structure of this nature is referred to by Leithwood, Mascall and Strauss (2009) as a pattern of distributed leadership coined *planful alignment*, where principals' tasks and practices occur as a "result from prior, planful thought by organizational members, and [where] functions are rationally distributed" (Mascall & Leithwood, 2010, p. 372). This organisational context created a certain level of stability, which has demonstrated to have a mitigating impact on the disruption that can be a change of principal (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Peter maximised on the existing and effective distributed model to drive two of his most important school improvement goals: developing a learning community for all and bringing together both campuses as one united school. As expressed in Peter's own words: "As a school, if we want kids to be the best version of themselves

we need to ensure every teacher can be the best version of themselves”. After his first year, Peter introduced a number of cross-campus new leadership positions, which created avenues for an increase in professional collaboration and, particularly for Campus B teachers, this allowed them to experience a greater sense of belonging and increase collective teacher self-efficacy and collegial trust (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu & Easton, 2010; Spillane & Shirrell, 2017; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015), having the potential to be a mediating factor between leadership and teacher retention (Qadach, Schechter & Da’as, 2020). Teachers from both campuses welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues from the other campus, albeit, recognising that one of the greatest challenges in this venture would be the differences in existing cultures. This insight agrees with Mascall and Leithwood (2010, p. 380) who found that in schools with strong “autonomous teacher cultures”, resistance towards collaboration and leadership distribution initiatives are less likely to succeed. Further exploration in this area would be needed to ascertain how exactly differences in campus culture impacted on teacher collaboration and what strategies were employed moving forward.

Dissimilar to research suggesting that leaders should adopt a sense of urgency when implementing change (Kotter, 1995), instead, Peter instilled a sense of importance rather urgency and began communicating very early on the changes that would come and how these would result in improving teacher expertise and student outcomes. Teachers welcomed this strategic way of introducing change, valuing in particular elements of change, such as the pace and the clarity and frequency with which these were communicated (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). This response also mirrors the research stating that “behavior change happens in highly successful situations mostly by speaking to people’s feelings” (Kotter & Cohen, 2002, p. 2).

A similar experience was lived at Summerhill where the entirety of participants acknowledged a positive impact in this domain as a result of Lisa’s arrival. There appeared to be a unanimous endorsement from teachers on two changes introduced by the new principal: shifting a school-wide focus on teaching and learning as well as an organisational shift towards a more distributed leadership model. Despite being a novice principal with a strong ultimate sense of responsibility (Spillane & Lee, 2014), this sentiment did not constrain her decision to adopt a distributed leadership approach unlike some of the novice principals found in other studies (Spillane et al., 2015). With regards to developing teacher professional development, one of the most important leadership practices that predominantly stood out for teachers and thus, impacted positively on them, was seeing the principal actively participating with them in the professional learning structures she had introduced. Whilst this came at a time cost for Lisa, it did, however, result in higher participation from teachers (Kirby & Bogotch, 1996). This is consistent with the research

stating that the effects of leadership on student outcomes are greater when school leaders are directly involved and participate in teaching and learning initiatives, which “go well beyond the organizing and resourcing the professional development program” (Robinson, 2011, p. 104).

Lisa spoke of democratising Summerhill by taking an inclusive approach to school improvement and decision making (Hargreaves, 2005). Teachers’ response to these initiatives, whilst well received, also produced angst in some teachers, a feeling also present in the teachers from an earlier study (Draper & McMichael, 2000), as they were faced with what they described as sheer volume of research-evidence resources with which they were expected to be familiar. This impacted on their workload and made them question the need for such changes. On reflection, however, they recognised how having a principal who spent time listening to their concerns and who took the time to explain why these initiatives were important mitigated the anxiety even if they still did not agree with their introduction (Northfield et al., 2011; Weindling & Earley, 1987). Hollingworth, Olsen, Asikin-Garmager and Winn (2017, p. 15) found that “when teachers are presented with evidence and clear reasoning behind the change initiatives, they are more likely to embrace the initiatives”, which in turn, is likely to impact on the culture of the school (Levin & Fullan, 2008; Slater, 2008). Examples like this one provide a clear link between how teachers’ perceptions of their new principal based on personal and leadership qualities impact on teachers’ work environment. This response from teachers connects with the inevitable expectation of change discussed earlier. All teachers knew change was coming, yet how they would experience that change needed to be communicated.

In the case of St Frances, the reported impact on professional development revealed a less one-sided portrait, where fifty percent of participants acknowledged a positive impact and the remaining half either reported no impact or a combination of both. To a certain extent, this is not surprising when analysed alongside Jane’s school improvement plans. As reiterated (see Chapter Six), Jane’s first and foremost priority involved lifting teacher and school morale and rekindling a sense of unity. By focussing on being visible, approachable and respectful of the leadership history of the school and how it had shaped teachers’ perceptions of leadership, she first needed to build a strong relational pillar that would be used to support future subsequent school improvement plans. Jane’s strategy resonates very closely with the findings exposed by Burkhauser et al. (2012) who found that new principals who begin to work quickly on attaining school cohesion have a probability of achieving their goals. Those teachers for whom professional development had been impacted positively, reported experiencing greater levels of autonomy and freedom in choosing their pathways for developing their own teacher expertise (Blase & Blase, 2000), as well as welcoming new leadership opportunities. One of those teachers for whom a positive impact was

perceived spoke about Jane's efforts in encouraging reflective practice: "She has emphasised very frequently the need to be thinking about improving what we're doing and that's been at the forefront a lot more than it ever has been over the last couple of years". These teachers also recognised Jane's push for more professional collaboration, which they welcomed as another vehicle for achieving that cohesion. In this sense, not only did raising teacher morale increase these teachers' willingness to collaborate, but the collaboration efforts and structures also increased teachers' well-being (Leithwood et al., 2019; Liebowitz & Porter, 2019). In similar fashion, Northfield et al. (2011) also found that in schools where teacher morale had increased following a change a principal, teachers were happy to engage in professional collaboration even if it resulted in an increase in workload.

The evidence provided suggests that each principal introduced changes within teacher professional development not only to re-focus the importance of developing teacher expertise individually and collectively, but also to be used as a catalyst for sustaining high levels of teacher well-being and whole-school improvement, despite some shortcomings (Beverborg, Slegers, Endedijk & van Veen, 2017). These principals achieved this through the creation or redesigning of structures conducive to enhancing teacher expertise as well as creating a whole-school learning environment in which teaching and learning was integrated in the daily conversations (Gaikhorst, März, du Pré & Geijssels, 2019).

8.3.2.2 Teaching practice

The overall findings in this area revealed minimal impact on teaching practice, as perceived by teachers. In their view, changes to their practice are considered something for which only they have responsibility. Additionally, it is as if their classroom practice was disconnected from and not affected by the arrival of a new principal. These findings mirror previous results, which despite methodological differences, found that teaching quality and practice appeared to be shielded from principal turnover (Mascall & Leithwood, 2010; Pietsch, Tulowitzki & Hartig, 2019). The vast majority of teachers commented on how this aspect of their work environment depended on teachers' individual sense of self-efficacy and motivation and saw no link (direct or indirect) between a new principal and their teaching practice. Within this group, a small number of teachers displayed a territorial-like attitude resembling that of teachers in Hallett's (2010) case study, where the new principal generated a dramatic shift in practice instigated by an increase in accountability. Those teachers that did notice a positive impact on their teaching, however, attributed this to the overall improvement in school morale as a result of a more highly regarded principal. This was certainly the case at St Frances.

It was surprising that teachers for whom professional development had had a positive impact, did not see this favourable impact also reflected on their practice in the classroom. This disjunction could be regarded as a double instructional paradox. Firstly, if this is happening in schools where principals are investing highly in professional development resources and teachers are not recognising improvement in their practice, understanding this broken link would warrant a closer examination. Secondly, if the aim of teacher professional development is to improve student outcomes (Timperley et al., 2007), the best way for this to be realised is through the improvement of teachers' instructional practices, which raises another point. The fact that the majority of teachers in this study did not perceive an impact on their practice, does not necessarily mean that it has not occurred. This insight posits perhaps different ways for measuring teaching practice, particularly in light of recent meta-analysis claiming a size effect of 0.35 between "principals' instructional management efforts and the quality of teachers' instructional practices" (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019, p. 805).

8.3.3 Professional relationships

8.3.3.1 Teacher-Teacher relationships

Teacher-teacher relationships refers to the "qualities of cooperation, support, and trust in the teacher community" (Hanselman et al., 2016, p. 2). The findings of this thesis suggest strongly that at least during the first two years of a new principal, teachers did not perceive that a change in leadership had impacted on teacher's relationship with their colleagues. In the case of Kingston, for example, not one teacher identified a change. Moreover, the overarching comment was that a change of leadership shouldn't impact on their professional relationships. It is likely, however, that these comments only referred to teacher's collegial relationships with their campus and, therefore, may not include their relationship with teachers from the second campus, even though this is what Peter wanted to achieve; developing and strengthening social capital. According to Spillane and Shirrell (2017, p. 617):

As external standards and accountability pressures have increased, school leaders have become even more important determinants of the work-related ties among school staff, with school leaders using organizational routines to "recouple" the work of schools to the demands of the broader educational system, shaping patterns of interaction among teachers and other staff.

It would be interesting to re-visit Kingston and assess whether collegial relationships across campuses have improved and resulted in improved student outcomes given that "[t]he social

capital that resides in the relations or ties among school staff...is critical for instructional improvement” (Spillane & Shirrell, 2017, p. 617).

The findings were similar at Summerhill with only one teacher identifying a positive impact. Notwithstanding, one teacher from Campus B made the insightful comment that the instability of high principal turnover, had brought the staff closer and had made them stronger. This is consistent with the findings from an earlier study, suggesting that a school’s “social resources [the structure and qualities of relationships among staff members that provide resources for instructional practice and improvement], play a role in the consequences of staff turnover” (Hanselman et al., 2016, p. 27). The downside to this strength, however, is that it may result in collective staff resistance during times of change (Macmillan, 2001; Mascall & Leithwood, 2010). Only three teachers from St Frances reported a positive impact on their relationship with their colleagues and even then, their comments were affirmed by acknowledging that the school was now a happier and warmer work environment. Teacher trust in the principal has been found to be related to teachers’ perception of collegial professionalism, where teachers who showed trust in their principal tended to perceive their colleagues to be more committed to their students as well as engaging in more collaborative and supportive practices (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015).

8.3.3.2 Teacher-Student relationships

Teacher-student relationships (TSR) are considered an essential element in student learning, one which is also conducive of an effective learning environment and classroom cohesion (Hattie, 2009; Marzano, 2003). The link between school leadership and TSR has also been investigated within the research on the link between school leadership and school climate (Leithwood et al., 2019; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005; Sun & Leithwood, 2017). In each case study, records of any impact on TSR as a consequence of a new principal was almost non-existent, with only 2 out of 36 teachers identifying a positive impact. For one of them, the positive impact was indirect and attributed as a consequence to one of Peter’s structural changes within the school’s pastoral program. According to the second teacher, this was because there was less stress around the school and students looked happier, which increased students’ disposition to learning. Finally, there was a sentiment by a large number of teachers from all three schools that the responsibility of establishing and sustaining healthy TSR lay on them and their students alone.

8.4 How can teachers be supported during a change of principal?

The third and last research question guiding this study sought to explore and understand how teachers believe they could be supported during a change of principal. The data analysed identified two stages for support: (1) pre-appointment stage and (2) post-commencement stage. During the first stage, teachers showed a strong inclination towards being active participants of a consultation process to determine the type of principal the school needed. From the evidence provided, staff consultation only occurred at St Frances in the form of an after-school round-table discussion. This was a voluntary activity, which was highly valued by those who engaged in the consultation. These findings are consistent with those found in the literature (albeit scarce) on teacher involvement in principal selection processes, confirming that teacher consultation during principal appointment is uncommon (Bennett, 2017; Meyer et al., 2009a), yet in schools that do apply this practice, teachers felt a sense of empowerment and instilled confidence in the new principal (Jones & Webber, 2001). In the post-commencement stage, teachers relied heavily on the personal and leadership practices of the new principals in searching for support during this transition. The three most commented supportive practices of new principals in the eyes of teachers, included: (1) new principals' efforts in getting to know their staff, individually and collectively, (2) new principals' clear and frequent communication with staff, and (3) new principals' approach to the nature, pace and implementation of changes, three practices clearly linked to teachers' expectations of a new principal. It is worth noting that from a total of 36 teachers, only one commented on how teachers themselves must also be pro-active in achieving that support through individual and collective teacher efforts in getting to know the new principal, showing engagement in new initiatives, thus contributing to a smooth transition.

8.5 Reflections from new principals

Whilst the focus of this study is on teacher experiences of and responses to new principals, data were also recorded on the new principals themselves and how they adjusted to their new role. The data are useful in their own right, as they can be positioned within the existing literature on beginning principals, but also provide a useful second lens for understanding and contextualising the findings discussed earlier in this chapter.

New principals to a school (novice and experienced) face an array of complexities, organisational and personal dilemmas and expectations associated with the role. These include an initial sense of shock, a strong sense of responsibility, and feelings of loneliness and isolation, managing people,

managing their workload together with growing accountability pressures (Bush, 2018; Dor-Haim & Oplatka, 2020; Earley et al., 2013; Hallett, 2010; Marshall, 2018; Montecinos et al., 2018; Oplatka, 2004; Oplatka & Ben Or, 2019; Oplatka & Lapidot, 2018; Spillane & Anderson, 2014; Spillane & Lee, 2014; Tahir et al., 2017; Walker & Qian, 2006; Weindling, 1999; Weindling & Earley, 1987; Weinstein, Cuéllar, Hernández & Fernández, 2016). In addition, new principals must learn to develop their principal identity through different methods and sources of socialisation (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Crow, 2007; Crow & Møller, 2017; Steyn, 2013).

In retrospect, all three principals in this study expressed feeling ready and excited for the job ahead. Determining factors were identified as having been instrumental in this preparation, such as leadership opportunities in and out of school settings, mentoring, and in the case of both external appointments, an early familiarisation with the school context (Armstrong, 2014; Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Bush, 2018; Draper & McMichael, 2000, 2003). Once in the role, these principals exhibited characteristics of life-long learners by continuing their leadership development and seeking support within and outside their communities, reaffirming the established evidence on the close connection between successful principal succession and the professional development of leaders (Parylo & Zepeda, 2015).

Despite the commonalities of their experiences, their transitions were also contextually unique. Peter was an insider and a novice who had been groomed for the job and whose level of familiarity with the school community provided him with a clear advantage (Spillane & Lee, 2014), a process identified in the research as anticipatory socialisation, an ongoing process where aspiring principals begin to project themselves in a future role by means of observing others in the principal role (Brody, Vissa & Weathers, 2010; Kramer, 2010; Spillane & Anderson, 2014). Lisa, on the other hand, was also a novice, but externally appointed. She had held a number of leadership roles in the past, she had an active role in professional associations and was highly regarded in educational circles. Finally, Jane was also an outsider, however, this was her second principalship. She had successfully led a similar school for the last seven years before appointed to St Frances. She was very experienced and held a doctoral degree in educational leadership. All three principals evaluated their transitions as positive and based on the data, attributed this to a number of factors. Firstly, schools factors, such as knowledgeable individuals and already-effective structures facilitated their job (Armstrong, 2014; Marshall, 2018). Jane and Lisa, in particular, commented on the importance of relying on their deputies and other members of the leadership team who openly shared information with them and guided them in their first year. Secondly, all three principals also acknowledged the benefits of arriving in a school where effective structures and processes were already in place, which have the potential to ease principal transitions (Mascall & Leithwood, 2010;

Spillane et al., 2015). Thirdly, and consistent with previous findings, Peter, Lisa and Jane also attributed their positive transition to their own personal and leadership qualities as important drivers of a positive start to the principalship (Armstrong, 2014). Their intentional visibility, approachability and one-one meetings with members of staff, all played a pivotal role in their own organisational socialisation process as much as that of staff (Draper & McMichael, 2000; Tahir et al., 2018; Walker & Qian, 2006). Fourthly, and in preparation for taking on the role, all three principals had formulated a very clear picture of the context they were inheriting and how this knowledge would inform their leadership in achieving future school improvement plans.

Research on effective and successful school leaders posits that successful principals employ the same basic leadership strategies, yet cognisant of how context impacts of their enactment and decisions (Day et al., 2010; Garza, Drysdale, Gurr, Jacobson & Merchant, 2014; Gurr, 2014, 2015; Hopkins, 2001; Pashiardis & Johansson, 2016). Similarly, Gurr (2017) asserts that successful principals are sensitive to the context in which they operate, however, without letting it drive their decisions. He explains: “[S]uccessful school leaders fine tune their responses to the context and culture in which they lead to optimise school success” (Gurr, 2017, p. 20). So too in this study, the personal and leadership qualities of Peter, Lisa and Jane manifested themselves in different ways and for the purpose of achieving their unique school improvement plans.

At St Frances, Jane responded to the inherited context by choosing to lead firstly and mostly with teachers’ emotions in mind given their negative experiences as a result of high principal turnover. The literature on the emotional labour of school leadership is explicit in identifying that this labour not only occurs within leaders themselves, but also between leaders and those around them, motioning principals to modify and regulate their emotions in ways that acknowledge the emotions of others (Beatty, 2009; Leithwood & Beatty, 2008; Oplatka, 2017). Ultimately, Jane knew that unless she was perceived by teachers as being responsive to their past leadership experiences, trust in the principal and the principalship would be very difficult to achieve. She explains:

People gain trust from seeing and observing and feeling, but if their previous experience is still sitting with them, which it always will to some extent..., the only way I can have them have a different impression of that is for them to live it through my principalship, and that just takes time. (Jane)

Jane’s profound understanding of how frequent principal succession had impacted on teachers, drove her to mould her leadership practices in ways that would respond to such inherited context. Therefore, it was imperative for her to understand the culture that existed when she became principal in order to improve it as a prerequisite for enacting change (Hollingworth et al., 2017).

The new principals in this study, like their already-established counterparts, are cognisant of the pressures associated with their role as leaders of change (Fullan, 2016; Hargreaves & Fink, 2004). Their awareness of context and their own priorities clearly informed how these new principals initiated change (Galdames, Montecinos, Campos, Ahumada & Leiva, 2017; Hopkins, 2001; Meyer, Sinnema & Patuawa, 2019). Peter initiated change slowly and with ample opportunities for staff input, so that when changes would eventually be implemented they would not feel new anymore, hence helping to decrease teacher anxiety as a result of change. Lisa, on the other hand, introduced change quickly, a pace that was not always perceived by teachers as adequate, nor to Lisa on self-reflection. Whilst for Jane, the primary focus was on healing wounds, providing stability and rekindling faith and trust in the principalship, feelings which for many teachers had been eroded as a result of high principal turnover. If she was to be successful, she would need to invest in building trust if she was to be a catalyst for change (Benaim & Humphreys, 1997). Peter, Lisa and Jane can be regarded as successful principals who have had the “ability to respond to their context and to recognise, acknowledge, understand and attend to the needs and motivations of others” (Day et al., 2010, p. 8).

8.6 Conclusion

This study found that new principals’ personal and leadership qualities and behaviours informed how teachers formed a perception of these individuals. This study identified three contextual factors that informed how teachers assigned value to these personal and leadership qualities: (1) school leadership history, (2) new principal origin, and (3) teacher expectations. The above factors not only influenced teachers’ perceptions independently, but they also revealed how they influence each other. These perceptions impacted in three main domains within teachers’ work environment: (1) teacher well-being, (2) teacher capacity, and (3) teacher professional relationships. Teacher well-being and teacher professional development proved to be the areas with the most significant degree of impact. Teacher well-being, in particular, revealed to be the most disperse, not only from one school to the next, but in some cases within school, especially in schools with more than one campus. The evidence also suggests that in a school with an internal appointment, a positive perception on the principal can result in a negative impact on teacher well-being as teachers not only have to deal with a new principal, but also the new person who will fill the position left vacant by the now new principal. A positive perception of the new principal also surfaced as indicative of having a significant positive impact on professional development, yet paradoxically, many of these teachers did not report any impact (positive or negative) on their classroom practice, signalling a

broken link between professional development and teaching practice. Finally, professional relationships among teachers and between teachers and students did not appear to be impacted significantly by the arrival of a new principal. In addition, teacher well-being showed the potential to act as a mediating factor between perceptions and other domains. For example, the impact (negative or positive) on teacher well-being can influence the impact on teacher professional development and teaching practice. Finally, teachers expressed a need to be supported during two stages of principal succession. During pre-appointment stage, teachers value being consulted, individually and collectively, in designing the principal profile that would best suit their school context. Whilst during post-commencement stages, teachers welcome the support of a new principal who focusses on building relationships, who communicates frequently and clearly, a leader who is cognisant of the nature, pace and implementation of change initiatives and how these impact on teachers' work environment.

8.6.1 A conceptual model for understanding teacher perceptions of new principals and their impact on teachers' work environment

As a result of the findings, a conceptual framework for understanding how teachers' perceptions of a new principal impact on teachers work environment has been developed (Figure 8.3). This model begins (from left to right) by displaying the three contextual factors (school leadership history, new principal origin and teacher expectations) that influence how teachers perceive the personal and leadership qualities and behaviours of the new principal. This perception has the potential to impact negatively or positively in three distinct domains within teachers' work environment: teacher well-being, teacher capacity and professional relationships. Of these three domains, teacher well-being appeared to be the one where the impact was most strongly felt throughout all three schools.

In addition, when well-being had been impacted positively, it had the potential to act as a mediator between teachers' perception of the new principal and teacher professional development, and to a much lesser degree, towards teaching practice and professional relationships. In the framework, this is represented by the blue arrow linking teacher perceptions to teacher capacity and professional relationships via teacher well-being. The black double-headed arrows in the model represent the existence of a reciprocal impact. In the case of the one-headed arrow between teacher capacity and professional relationships, this represents the impact, albeit weak, that teacher capacity can have on professional relationships, which did not appear to be reciprocal. Finally, it is important to recognise the cyclical nature of this framework, represented by the double-headed elliptical arrow, which explains how once the impact of perceptions is cemented in these

three domains, this overall impact has the capacity to evolve into new contextual factors of future principal transitions. Whilst this model does not imply a cause-effect relationship, it does, however, offer a new conceptual visualisation of how teachers live and experience the arrival of a new principal even before the new principal has begun in the role. Understanding how teachers perceive their new leader and how this perception impacts on their work environment, can assist in supporting teachers before, during and after the principal succession process.

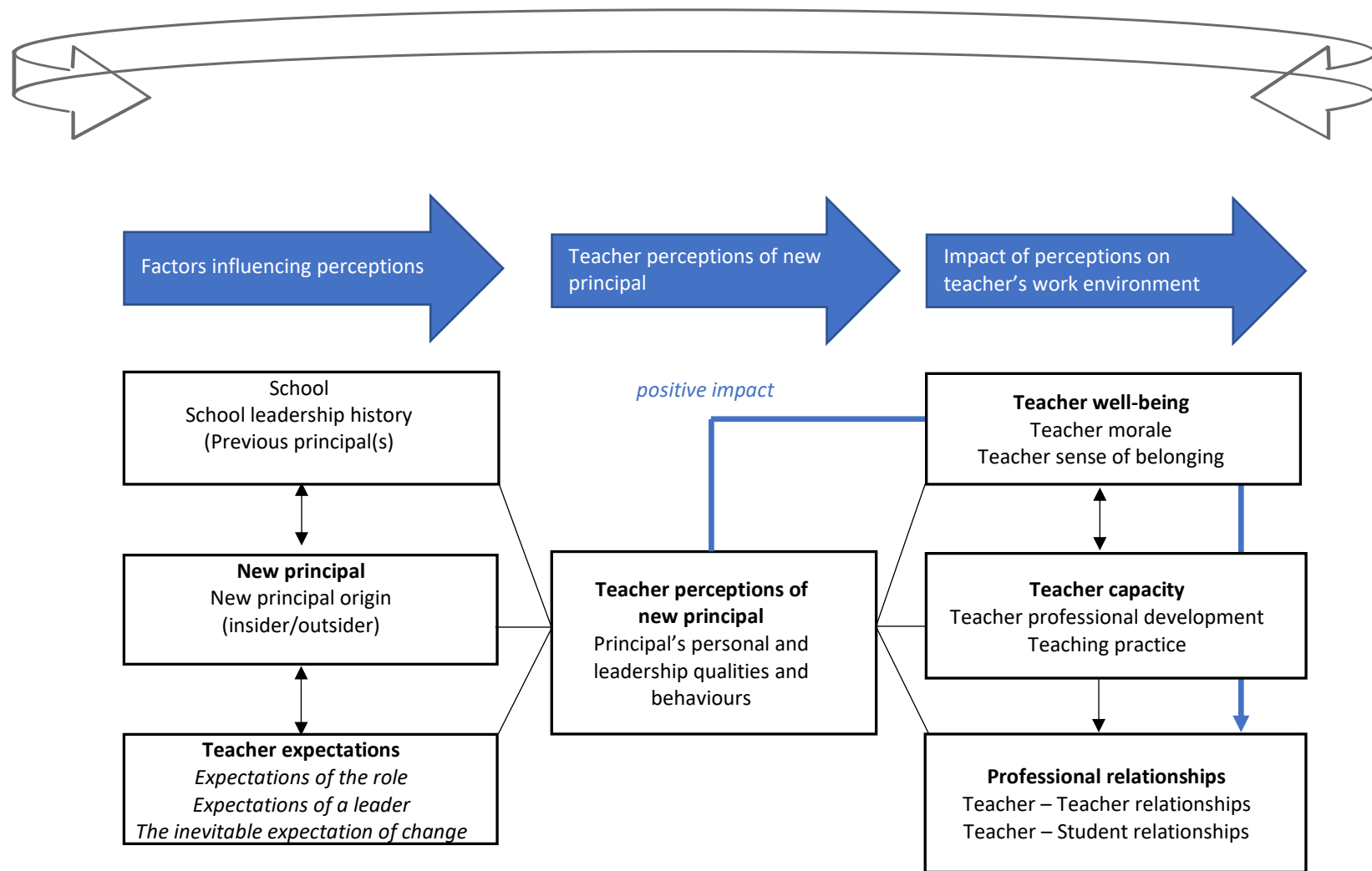


Figure 8.3: Conceptual framework for understanding teacher perceptions of new principals and their impact on teachers' work environment.

8.6.2 Implications for further research

The aim of this study was to explore teacher perceptions of new principals and how these perceptions impact on teachers' work environment. This study is limited to the context of each of these educational systems and schools, so extending the sample would be beneficial. This sample could be extended to include other school voices, such as that of students, parents and non-teaching staff. At the same time, an exploration of this topic within school systems would also be advisable (e.g. within the Catholic system only) in order to establish any systemic trends. In particular, two pieces of evidence warrant special attention, and therefore, more research.

Firstly, the weak relationship identified between positive principal impact on teacher professional development and teaching practice needs to be explored in more detail, and whilst this has been recently undertaken within one national context (Pietsch, Tulowitzki & Hartig, 2019), a more methodologically extensive exploration of this relationship is likely to reveal answers richer in breadth and depth. Secondly, the noticeable negative impact on teacher well-being as a result of an internal appointment is an important finding, confirming that it is not only in schools that have experienced high principal turnover where this can occur. If the literature on principal succession planning advocates for the development and grooming of future school leaders, then more insights into how an internal appointment impacts on the professional lives of teachers is needed. Finally, a follow-up study of these three case studies would enable the opportunity to study how these teachers have adapted to their principal, whether there have been shifts in perception of their principals, as well as gaining a better understanding of how these new principals have continued to lead in now familiar terrain.

8.6.3 Implications for practice

The appointment of a new principal is one of the most important changes in a school's life, a change that is unlikely to go away, which is why appointing an individual who displays the necessary personal and leadership qualities and is the right "fit" for the school is essential. The findings from this study emphasise the importance of involving teaching staff in the consultation process, given that, as socially constructed organisations, schools rely on the perceptions of those within the schools for a better understanding of how leadership impacts its organisational reality (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a). For schools thinking about appointing principals internally, careful attention should be placed on how teachers will respond to this internal shift in responsibilities and in addition, particular care should be taken when deciding who will replace the now newly-appointed principal as this change has the potential to destabilise teacher well-being.

8.6.4 Concluding remarks

The presence of a new principal on school grounds as much as on school letterhead has a profound impact on a school. The cyclical nature of principal succession indicates that as soon as new principals begin their tenure, their actions and behaviours begin to shape the expectations of those who will follow them. This study has demonstrated, unequivocally, that principal succession does not have to be a negative process for those who experience the new arrival. A successful change of principal brings optimism and opportunities for transformative change. It is not only dependent on the new leaders' actions, but just as importantly, on how these actions are perceived and the way they influence the actions and behaviours of others. Principal succession needs to be a shared responsibility involving all members of the school community. It is by paying special attention to these experiences that principal succession can be enhanced to promote positive organisational outcomes that benefit everyone in the school community.

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