RELATIONSHIP STRATEGIES THAT SUPPORT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SCHOOL-WIDE GOALS
Case Studies of Two Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Educational leaders frequently face leadership dilemmas as they seek to achieve school goals while also supporting the relational needs of staff. When dilemmas remain unresolved, the school’s ability to implement goals related to quality teaching and learning may be compromised. While this process can be challenging, the alignment of organisational and human needs is crucial towards creating and maintaining a positive work ethic and a willingness to support the change process. Previous studies on relationships, organisational goals, and approaches towards managing staff relationships are researched in isolation, and therefore appear to be unrelated to each other. This research has used a more holistic approach to draw on the findings from previously isolated studies and current leadership practice to establish a connection between school-wide goals and relationship practices, and inform a range of possible effective relationship strategies that emerged from this study.

A humanistic paradigm and associated qualitative approach was adopted involving the case studies of two secondary schools to gain an in depth understanding of the nature of dilemmas that arise and the leader’s attempts to address these challenges. Two methods of data collection were used to gather information. Firstly, documentary analysis helped develop a comprehensive understanding of the vision and goals of each school and the systems put in place to support this. Secondly, interviews of four staff at different levels of leadership in each school provided multiple perspectives on the link between school-wide goals and individual practice, leadership dilemmas, and the relationship strategies used by educational leaders.

For my analysis, I used a framework made up of the three components of organisational, interpersonal, and intrapersonal to understand the data at three different levels. Applying these frames revealed a range of relationship strategies and leadership qualities that participants considered important as leaders attempted to merge organisational and relational needs. Mutuality, collaborative processes, professional development, and building trusting relationships was found to have a profound impact on achieving school-wide goals and preventing the emergence of ‘leadership dilemmas’. Research findings also highlighted a range of interpersonal
and intrapersonal leadership strategies perceived to have the greatest influence on creating trust, while the absence of, or demonstrating the opposite often led to a breakdown in relations. A new conceptualisation of employee dilemmas emerged, where a teacher’s ability to perform may be inhibited by leaders who exhibited negative behaviours. Therefore, provisions need to be made for leadership programmes targeted towards the prevention and resolution of dilemmas through challenging thinking, encouraging critique of practice, and addressing mind-sets and theorising.
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<tr>
<td>BES</td>
<td>Best Evidence Synthesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOT</td>
<td>Board of Trustees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Deputy Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOD</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERO</td>
<td>Education Review Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCEA</td>
<td>National Certificate of Educational Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLT</td>
<td>Senior Leadership Team</td>
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<td>SSC</td>
<td>State Services Commission</td>
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Educational leaders regularly encounter challenges as they strive to balance the achievement of organisational goals against supporting the relational needs of staff (Cardno, 2012; Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009). Because organisational goals can only be achieved by dealing with people and through people these ‘people problems’ tend to recur, which may subsequently lead to complex leadership dilemmas that potentially obstruct school improvement (Dimmock, 1999b). As a result, meeting organisational goals is ultimately determined by the choices leaders make as they attempt to balance “the needs and interests of the organisation and the people it employs” (Rudman, 2002, p. 14). For leaders to be effective emphasis must be placed not only upon the educational purpose of learning and teaching for student improvement, but also on constructing trusting relationships with the teachers who deliver the learning (Robinson et al., 2009). This research concerns itself with firstly, understanding the nature of leadership dilemmas that arise in the specific context of implementing and achieving school-wide goals, and secondly, the practices educational leaders use to mesh organisation needs with maintaining positive staff relationships in order to implement changes that may result in improvements in the quality of learning and teaching.

This chapter begins by examining the significance of school-wide goals in a decentralised educational system, its link to collegial relationships, and implications for potential leadership dilemmas. Following the rationale for the research is an outline of the aim, objectives, and questions that have guided the research process. The final section provides a brief summary of the thesis structure.

School-wide Goals and Relationships

The decision by the New Zealand Government to implement substantial educational reform in the late 1980s and early 1990s by decentralising education, devolving responsibility to local schools and increasing community control significantly
changed the face of New Zealand schooling (Openshaw, 2009). One of the elements of ‘Tomorrow’s Schools’ policy (Government of New Zealand, 1988) and subsequent Education Act (Government of New Zealand, 1989) was to increase community involvement by establishing a local governing body called the Board of Trustees (BOT) for each school (Youngs, Cardno, Smith, & France, 2007). Governmental legislative mandates stipulate the BOT focus on big picture strategy and policy, one of their tasks being the creation of a charter to articulate a vision for the future direction of the school and community through the achievement of strategic goals (Ministry of Education, 2013).

These changes also had major implications for the roles of school leaders, especially those of principals as the central figure in deciphering government policy, determining what is appropriate for their school, and the best way to implement the modifications necessary to improve school function (Bennett, 1994). Expert educational practitioners needed to develop new skill-bases in order to become effective leaders and managers who could think strategically, communicate a vision, understand and manage change, manage and develop organisational learning cultures, and successfully resolve tensions that arose between implementing school-wide goals while attempting to maintain trusting relationships with staff. One of the major ways principals, in conjunction with the BOT, set the educational direction for their organisation is in the development of school-wide strategic goals that are linked to pedagogical, philosophical, and moral purposes (Cardno, 2012; Robinson et al., 2009).

Because school goals can only be achieved with and through the efforts of individual teachers, Robinson et al. (2009) emphasise the importance of developing trusting relationships with staff in order to support these goals, and to engender and sustain quality learning and teaching for student improvement. They claim trust is built accumulatively by establishing norms of respect through actions such as displaying personal regard for staff, “demonstrating competence and integrity through modelling” (p. 47), following through expectations, ‘walking the talk’, “and challenging dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours” (p. 47). The Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) that analysed links between effective school leadership practices and student outcomes found leaders who showed respect and regard for others were perceived
as competent, having integrity, and to be trusted (Robinson et al., 2009). This meant they were able to foster “the levels of inquiry, risk-taking, and collaborative effort that school improvement requires” (p. 47). In contrast, although leaders may be strong educational practitioners and problem-solvers their capacity to instigate change and improvement in teaching and learning is restricted when there is a breakdown in relationships. A lack of expertise in the area of interpersonal relations can result in ‘leadership dilemmas’, seemingly unsolvable problems that obstruct school improvement and inhibit the achievement of school-wide goals due to ‘people problems’.

Moreover, educational stakeholders are increasingly aware of the time spent by principals in dealing with ‘people problems’, and the necessity for further training and support in this area (Hodgen & Wylie, 2005). Wylie’s (2013) recent report on New Zealand secondary schools indicated a need for increased professional dialogue about firstly, the work of school principals, and secondly, reducing the demands of human resource management by more effective relationship practice.

**Rationale for this research**

My interest in relationship practices that support the achievement of school-wide goals has stemmed from an observation of educational leaders and the impact of their interactions with staff that result in sustainable trusting relationships, or alternatively a breakdown in relations. Research shows leaders regularly encounter ‘leadership dilemmas’ as they attempt to merge the implementation of school-wide goals, with supporting the relational needs of their staff (Cardno, 2012). Moreover, there is moral pressure to do what is best for the teachers who deliver the learning and help achieve the school’s espoused goals as well as what is perceived to be best for the organisation (Cardno & Reynolds, 2009). The school leadership BES stresses that “no matter how sound a leader’s pedagogical knowledge and problem solving ability may be, their impact will be limited if relationships within the school are characterised by an absence of trust” (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 47). This means the potential to achieve organisational objectives can either be enhanced or hampered by the relationship practices a leader choses to use when walking the tightrope
between fulfilling the needs and interests of the organisation, and the staff it employs to carry out its core business (Rudman, 2002).

A ‘leadership dilemma’ exists when a complex problem is created by tensions arising during a leader’s attempts to serve organisation needs while continuing to satisfy relational needs of staff (Cardno, 2012). In an educational context this means there is a heightened “degree of conflict and incompatibility” (Dimmock, 1999b, p. 448) between the dilemma’s resolution and attainment and the desired achievement of school-wide goals. Anecdotal conversations with school leaders suggest that when dilemmas remain unresolved principals may encounter resistance from staff when implementing school initiatives, meaning the school’s ability to implement goals related to quality teaching and learning can be compromised.

The educational problem here is that these problems are not isolated, but are encountered by leaders at middle and senior management level in the primary, secondary, and tertiary sector. It becomes increasingly problematic under the assumption that leaders who undertake management roles have the ability to weave organisation needs with maintaining positive staff relationships, while implementing the changes that result in quality learning and teaching. However, training is required in order to develop these skills (Cardno, 1999). Cardno (2012) and Piggot-Irvine (2003a) highlight the importance of firstly, building strong relationships with staff so productive dilemma management can take place, and secondly, providing the necessary training to develop the specific skills required to effectively resolve leadership problems that obstruct school improvement and educational quality. In a similar vein, Robinson et al. (2009) state leaders require training to develop the ability to engage in open-to-learning conversations and use skills and values that “make it possible for them to respectfully give and receive the tough messages that are an inevitable part of the process of improving teaching and learning” (p. 47), and which result in the achievement of school goals. While this process can be challenging, the alignment of organisational and human needs is crucial towards creating and maintaining a positive work ethic and willingness to support the change process (Bolman & Deal, 2008).
Although there is substantial literature individually on either meeting organisational goals or the importance of relationships as an area of effective leadership, there is a paucity surrounding how to manage staff relationships effectively in order to meet these ends. Researchers as a whole appear to have historically overlooked the difficulties educational leaders face in merging the two agendas of building trusting relationships and achieving school objectives (Piggot-Irvine, 2003a). This study investigated the links between managing relationships successfully and achieving school-wide goals by exploring an educational leader’s perceptions around the challenges they encountered during this process, and the relationship strategies they chose to use.

Furthermore, my review of research in this area highlighted that studies on relationships, organisational goals, and approaches towards managing staff relationships are researched in isolation, and therefore unconnected to each other. This research uses a more holistic approach, drawing on the findings from previously isolated studies to current leadership practice to inform a range of possible effective relationship strategies that emerged from this study. This in turn has implications for the future leadership development of principals, and senior and middle managers in relation to implementing school-wide goals and maintaining trusting relationships.

Research aims

The overall aim of this study was to understand the nature of leadership dilemmas that arise in the specific context of implementing school-wide goals and maintaining trusting relationships with staff, and a leader’s attempts to address these. Because educational leaders often use a range of strategies when attempting to mesh organisation needs with maintaining positive staff relationships it was worthwhile to explore multiple perspectives in order to identify which particular relationship practices were more likely to produce successful outcomes. The following objectives and questions were developed in order to achieve these broad aims and guide the research.
**Research objectives**

1. To understand and explicate the particular nature of dilemmas that arise for leaders challenged by a need to meet school goals and maintain positive relationships.
2. To explore perspectives of attempts to address relationship challenges and goal achievement simultaneously in the context of these specific dilemmas.

**Research questions**

1. Why do dilemmas arise for leaders challenged by a need to meet school goals and maintain positive relationships?
2. What perceptions do leaders and their staff have of their experiences around dilemmas that arise when meeting school-wide goals and maintaining positive relationships?
3. What strategies do leaders use to address relationship challenges and goal achievement simultaneously in the context of these specific dilemmas?

**Outline of the thesis**

This thesis is organised into six chapters. Succeeding chapters are outlined below:

The literature review in Chapter Two examines educational reform in New Zealand in the context of its influence on current practice, thereby providing a backdrop for the environment in which this research is located. Merging the two elements of school-wide goals and relationships is examined in a setting that supports organisational learning, where dilemmas are acknowledged, and a leader’s attempts at resolution explored.

In Chapter Three, the ethnological positioning, choice of methodological framework, methods of data collection and sample selection are explained. An account of data analysis for the interviews and documentary analysis is outlined followed by an elucidation on issues of reliability, validity, and ethical considerations.
Chapter Four is formatted into three parts. The findings from each case study are presented separately, followed by an analysis of the collective findings in order to gain greater insight into the strategies used by leaders when merging the two elements of organisational goals and relational needs, and to allow for a more cohesive synthesis between the two perspectives. The school charter and school-wide goals, relationship strategies and dilemma management, and professional development are the three headings for the themes that structure each section. A framework was developed in order to analyse and help understand the data at three different levels using the frames of organisational, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.

Chapter Five compares and contrasts each case study, and critiques these findings through the lens of the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The discussion deliberates on commonalities of relationship strategies and leadership skills using the three-part framework used in Chapter Four, before considering dilemma management and explicating on the emergence of ‘employee dilemmas’.

In the last chapter, conclusions are drawn around the themes of school-wide goals, relationship strategies, and dilemma management. Taking into consideration the nature of qualitative research, the implications of these findings are presented, limitations of the study outlined, and recommendations for leadership professional development and further research offered.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The current policy environment and the New Zealand Government’s desire to raise student achievement has led to emphasis being placed on the setting, implementing and achieving school-wide goals. However, in order to successfully implement change and improve teaching and learning educational leaders need to develop effective relationship practices that build trust, and gain staff consensus and commitment towards reaching school objectives. This chapter begins with an outline of educational reform in New Zealand in the context of its impact on current practice to provide a backdrop for the environment in which this research is situated. School-wide goals and their importance in a policy environment are then examined in relation to the school charter, mutuality between organisational and individual staff goals, performance management, and the potential for subsequent dilemmas to emerge. Parallel to this, the literature highlights the significance of building trusting relationships with staff and its link to effective leadership, change, and raising student achievement.

The concept of organisational learning through a theory of action approach helps understand why tensions arise as leaders attempt to merge relational and organisational needs. In the final section, the two concepts of single-loop and double loop learning are discussed at some length to illuminate a range of action strategies that have the potential to either inhibit or facilitate organisational learning.

History of educational reform in New Zealand

New Zealand’s decision in the late 1980s and early 1990s to follow England’s lead in educational reform and decentralise education by “delegating responsibility and increasing community control” has had a significant influence upon our current education system (Openshaw, 2009). These reforms were predated by a decade of growing educational disenchantment, both the public and Department of Education initiatives raising concerns around the quality of the education system, embedded
inequities and discrimination, low state schooling attainment, and weaknesses observed in administration, structure, and management practices (Court & O'Neill, 2011; Gordon, 1992; Openshaw, 2009). The Treasury and State Services Commission (SSC) developed two distinctive education policy solutions based on “market liberal mechanisms of responsiveness, choice, and competition” (Court & O'Neill, 2011, p. 130), and market managerial mechanisms centred on efficiency to bring state sectors in line with an agency system of management and privatisation (Gordon, 1995). The 1988 Picot Report was an attempt to reconcile the competing demands for increased parental involvement, improved student outcomes and school accountability while at the same time satisfying SSC and Treasury agendas (Picot, 1988). The ensuring recommendations for restructuring the old education system and increasing provider accountability and parental participation formed the foundation of ‘Tomorrow’s Schools’ policy (Government of New Zealand, 1988) and subsequent Education Act (Government of New Zealand, 1989).

These reforms were underpinned by principles of neo-liberal public sector theory and endorsed the devolution of school management, indirect state control retained through managerialist policies and accountability processes, and a separation of policy from operations (Gordon, 1995). Furthermore, according to Gordon (1995) tenets of agency theory, a subfield of public sector theory, framed the national policies that shaped and controlled the educational reforms by binding the interests of teachers to the principal, school and ultimately the government through mutuality, and implementing accountability processes such as performance appraisal to monitor quality. Concurrently, the SSC reshaped educational culture through top-down, hierarchical and managerial systems of accountability in an attempt to align state agencies with an idealised model of private sector efficiency. However, applying such a narrow agency model alongside a market system of choice saw the intended aim of community empowerment shift progressively closer to accountability, and the central focus on operations shift to a policy-controlled environment. Changes in classroom teaching practice and student learning experiences brought about through the dissemination of educational policy is tangible evidence of the capacity of politicians to impact the lives of individuals (O'Neill, 2010).
Subsequently, schools have become self-managing institutions with local communities recognised as important and given elective representation on school governing boards under legislative requirements. “State-approved performance management systems” (O’Neill, 2010, p. 138) have been introduced and linked to mandated professional standards, teacher attestation and salary progression. Also an Education Review Office (ERO) was created to monitor a school’s progress in relation to their charter and ensure compliance with national legislative requirements (Court & O’Neill, 2011). While the intentions of the reforms were a legitimate attempt to right previous educational wrongs and empower communities, the outcome has been a plethora of new injustices and complexities. Picot’s appointment gave the Treasury and SSC the opportunity to set the trend for non-educationalists to increasingly drive reforms, justified by the assumption that policy decisions could only be rational when made by those with no interest in the outcomes and the perception of ‘provider capture’ (Gordon, 1992; O’Neill, 2010). Relationships between educational leaders and teachers have become increasingly premised on contractual and accountability mechanisms rather than the accrual of trust (Court & O’Neill, 2011). The expansion and intensification of school leaders’ roles has meant principals daily face challenges related to complex staff issues, external government requirements, quality management, marketing and finances (Organization for Economic and Cooperative Development, 2008). This includes tensions that arise as leaders attempt to implement school-wide goals while maintaining positive relationships with staff in order for quality teaching and learning to take place, and as a result, improved student outcomes.

One of the most significant elements of the reforms was the establishment of a Board of Trustees (BOT) for each school with the intent to increase local community involvement, make schools more responsive to community needs and increase management accountability (Youngs et al., 2007). The Education Act (Government of New Zealand, 1989) envisioned the BOT’s role to involve governance leadership rather than management. It was concerned with the “overall purpose, values and mission of the organisation” (Youngs et al., 2007, p. 50) and focused on big picture strategy and policy to force schools into becoming more responsive to community needs. These ‘big picture’ responsibilities include the allocation of operational funds, principal and staff appointments, industrial relations, and setting and overseeing
policies to meet the goals of the school charter (Bennett, 1994; Gordon, 1992, 1995). The creation of ERO enabled the State to have indirect, although initially coercive, control over national MoE requirements to make schools more accountable for performance, monitoring a school’s progress in relation to their charter to ensure goals were implemented and their stated aims were adhered to (Gordon, 1995). However, key leadership appointments and policy changes over the last decade prompted changes in ERO’s review model changing the emphasis “from ‘audit and compliance’ to ‘assess and assist’” (p. 13), thereby signalling awareness within government circles that persuasion is a more effective method to secure the dissemination of education policy by teachers than coercion (O’Neill, 2010).

The 2001 Education Standards Act (Government of New Zealand, 2001) mandated governmental expectations around achievement standards, assessment-led planning and teaching quality to satisfy workforce competency and productivity demands. The intent was to deeply embed assessment practices more in teachers’ day-to-day work and move the “focus of public accountability from the material conditions under which all teachers work … to the disposition individual teachers demonstrate in the classroom” (O’Neill, 2010, p. 14). Thus the government was able to shift blame for low student attainment away from variables such as structural issues or student background onto teachers, backed by research showing quality teaching as “one of the most important influences on improving student achievement” (Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 1 of 2). While assessment practices were portrayed as a commitment to personalising the student learning, they also served as accountability objectives to hold teachers responsible not only for planning, implementation and assessment, but also for their students’ achievement against normative benchmarks of attainment (O’Neill, 2010). A change to a National led government in 2008 has seen stronger emphasis placed on “national testing and assessment for political and public accountability purposes” (O’Neill, 2010, p. 14) under arguments of ‘shared’ language and understanding, reinforcement of teacher judgement and its perceived relevance to setting school-wide goals (Key, 2007).
School-wide goals

In New Zealand’s current policy environment, the need to meet school-wide goals articulated in the school charter has had a significant influence firstly, at the micro level on school organisation and management practice, and secondly, at the macro level through compliance with external government requirements. The development, implementation and achievement of school goals are legislated in government policy (Government of New Zealand, 1989), formulated through school governance mechanisms, implemented by school management, achieved through the efforts of classroom teachers and students, and monitored by ERO.

The school charter provides clarity of direction and a “sense of purpose for the school and its community” (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 1 of 2) through the expression of the school’s short and long-term strategies. It reflects what will be done that year and over the next three to five years to improve student achievement and progress, and outlines the “school’s vision, values, important education goals and student outcomes” (Government of New Zealand, 1989, p. 128) in line with community aspirations and national imperatives. Both strategic and annual planning focus on student achievement, determining annual school improvement targets and intended actions to help meet strategic goals informed by on-going self-review (Ministry of Education, 2001). Strategic review is where the effectiveness of past actions are evaluated against the school’s goals and targets so support and resources can be adjusted where necessary (Ministry of Education, 2013). It is a formative analysis that predominantly relates to the charter and “includes community expectations, values, vision and strategic aims” (Ministry of Education, 2012). At the end of each year the school’s annual report provides a summative analysis of the school’s progress in meeting the charter’s goals and targets by using an analysis of variance, and is seen by the MoE as “an essential part of a school’s cycle of self-review and continuous learning” (Ministry of Education, 2011).

Principals are expected to initially create, define, and communicate a clear communal vision articulating their preferred future for the school founded on the students’ best interests, thereby forming a foundation to ensure all management
activity can be purposeful (Bush, 2003). A communal vision that effectively underpins day-to-day decision making and operations is then encouraged through a shared process of public dialogue, where mutual agreement on “who teachers and students are, what authentic learning involves, and what the social and academic purposes of schools are” (Starratt, 2003, p. 21) is reached. However, Starratt (2003) also argues that leaders need to be mindful of the gaps “between the communal vision and the institutional processes, structures, policies, and programs” (p. 17). Willingness to make changes in school procedures and structure in order to support the vision will also have an effect on the success of the initiative.

Although the vision espouses moral and educational direction, it is unable to be woven into the organisational ‘fabric of the school’ until concrete goals, and expectations focused on student achievement are established, communicated and monitored (Robinson et al, 2009). The BES on school leadership by Robinson et al. (2009) suggests leaders have an important role to play in ensuring goals are tailored to meet the specific needs of their students, and that they are clear, realistic, and linked to educational purposes. By identifying and communicating links to the pedagogical, philosophical, and moral purposes outlined in the vision and their correlation to current desired outcomes, leaders are able to facilitate collective agreement and consensus towards achieving these goals and their embedment in classroom practice (Weber, 1996). Furthermore, evidence indicates that the setting and communicating of school goals and the level of staff consensus is educationally significant, and a “discriminator between otherwise similar, high and low-performing schools” (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 40). This means in order to be effective school-wide goals must be kept “at the forefront of the school’s attention” (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004, p. 49). Setting the school’s vision, goals, and expectations is a fluid and dynamic process, dynamic in their futuristic view and assurance that all students have equal opportunity to achieve their maximum potential, but fluid in that they are under constant review and revision as to their continued alignment to the intended pathway of the school (Robinson et al, 2009). Therefore, determining and reviewing the school’s vision and subsequent educational goals must be seen as an essential component of effective leadership and management (Bush, 2003).
The term ‘mutuality’ is used conceptually in a human resource management model alongside a unitary frame of reference to describe the way a shared purpose and tight fit is developed in an organisation through policy, systems, strategic planning, and goals (Rudman, 2002; Walton, 1985). The underlying theory behind the model is that this process of mutuality, where all systems, processes, and practices align with the goals of the organisation, will elicit commitment and a mutual responsibility for outcomes. Although Rudman’s (2002) work on ‘mutuality’, or the sharing of a common cause, is situated in an organisational context, it can also be applied in an educational setting where mutuality may be seen to be achieved when each teacher’s professional practice and goals show a ‘vertical fit’ with the goals of the school. Macky and Johnson (2003) define ‘vertical fit’ as the link between Human Resource strategies, policies and practices and management’s strategy for achieving a firm’s objectives” (p. 11). Therefore, in an educational context, ‘vertical fit’ describes the link between school policies, organisation, relationship practices, and school goals, where there is mutuality between school-wide goals and the goals of individual teachers. This suggests that achieving vertical fit, or ‘mutuality’ between an individual teacher’s professional practice and goals and school-wide objectives may be an important contributor towards improving learning and teaching, and gaining staff commitment and consensus.

Macky and Johnson also discuss the importance of achieving ‘horizontal fit’, or ‘horizontal integration’, to ensure unity amongst the different elements that make up the organisation’s overall system. They define ‘horizontal fit’ as “the coordination of all Human Resource strategies, policies, procedures and actions into an integrated system” (p. 10). In an educational context, this is where all activities related to teacher development and performance, and school organisation and management “work together in an integrated system” based on the school’s stated objectives (Macky & Johnson, 2003, p. 11). One of the strategies leaders are expected to use to achieve mutuality is through performance management micro-processes, such as performance appraisal and professional development (Cardno, 2012). Performance management systems are used as a mechanism to translate “the mission, aims and
values of an organisation into individual objectives” (Forrester, 2011, p. 5) in order to improve performance, productivity and accountability of teachers so school-wide goals can be met and student outcomes improved.

The developmental purpose of appraisal is used to align teacher goal-setting with departmental and school goals and influence individual learning and change, and ultimately organisational learning and change (Cardno, 2012). Likewise, professional development is crucial to the success of any reform initiative, having the greatest effect when there is mutuality between individual and school goals, and current policy and programme implementation (Bolam, 2002; Fullan & Muscall, 2000; Sinnema & Robinson, 2007). Performance appraisal and professional development centre around the student learning needs expressed in the school-wide goals, both processes being linked and informing each other (Sinemma & Robinson, 2007). However, in appraisal the two purposes of development and accountability that underpin governmental requirements can create tension, escalating difficulties already faced by leaders when striving to manage relational and organisational concerns. This can result in a leadership dilemma where conflict arises between the achievement of school-wide goals and a leader’s efforts to maintain positive relationships with their colleagues (Cardno, 2012).

In a similar vein, Rudman (2002) explicates the Matching Model in terms of Human Resource Management, where there is a tight fit between the goals, expected employee behaviours, and employing people who exhibit these behaviours (Rudman, 2002). The Matching Model takes a behavioural perspective and is aligned with the hard approach identified by Macky and Johnson (2003), where human behaviour must fit into organisational objectives and strategies. This rational approach is driven primarily by matching Human Resource practices and employee behaviours to organisational objectives, where emphasis is placed on using humans as a resource and centred on accountability and performance management (Oldroyd, 2005). On the other hand, the soft approach is more humanistic, and strategic goals are but one of many variables considered (Macky & Johnson, 2003). Emphasis is placed on developing resourceful humans through attention being directed towards employee development, group relations, and constructive supervision. This approach aligns with the Harvard model, which is more holistic,
contains more variables and is based on ‘mutuality’ where there is a tight match shown between organisation goals and individual needs (Rudman, 2002).

The tensions between these two approaches mirror the dual purpose of leadership and development - the desire to empower and develop employees versus the need to achieve results. The hard approach is shaped by external expectations and fosters a low trust culture, while the soft approach is formed by internal expectations and develops high trust. One gets the task completed to achieve the desired results, whilst the other focuses on motivating and nurturing those who perform the task (Oldroyd, 2005). According to Oldroyd (2005), neither approach is right nor wrong but its use should be context driven, the most appropriate approach selected to suit the current situation. However, while the hard approach is effective in certain contexts, it can become problematic in educational settings.

In summary, because the achievement of school-wide goals rests on the efforts of individual teachers, it is essential that educational leaders seek to gain consensus and commitment from their staff towards implementing new initiatives, adopting the process or approach that best fits the situation. Parallel to this, research by Robinson et al. (2009) highlights the importance of trusting relationships, showing how the levels of trust between leaders and their staff is linked to leadership, change management, and raising student achievement.

**Relationships**

A common strand that runs throughout the literature on educational leadership is “the management of relationships between professionals who are accountable for student learning” (Cardno, 2012, p. 35). The actions of principals, as the central figures, directly shape the emotional climate in their schools (Price, 2012). Research indicates their influence is greatest when trusting, co-operative, and open environments are created, and where staff input is welcomed (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Hoy, Smith, & Sweetland, 2002; Louis et al., 2010). Even with an intimate knowledge of the culture of the school, managing relationships can be problematic and present challenges to leadership. Scott (1999)
uses a metaphor to emphasise the importance of relationships, viewing the driving force behind implementing change as evaluation, and people with their motives, histories, learned ways of behaviour, perceptions, and relationships the ‘fuel’. Therefore, Dimmock and Walker (2002) recommend leaders be vigilant in finding solutions to issues that arise, as relationship breakdowns can adversely influence outcomes such as the achievement of school-wide goals, and potentially lead to the creation of difficult leadership dilemmas. Leaders need to develop an environment where people work together in a manner that reduces negativity and disagreement, and where group members can communicate openly and honestly to build an environment based on trust and loyalty (Fullan, 2003).

In addition, fostering positive relationships with staff has been proven to generate higher levels of job satisfaction, and cohesion and commitment to school-wide goals, where trust is the foundation stone towards building and maintaining constructive relations (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood, Leonard, & Sharratt, 1998; Louis et al., 2010; Moolenaar, Daly, & Sleeger, 2010). Bolman and Deal (2008) found a direct correlation between the effectiveness of a worker’s performance and the quality of their working relationships. Similarly, Southworth’s (2004) study in small primary schools in Britain discovered a school leader’s capacity to engage productively with teachers lay at the heart of effective leadership, where trusting relationships were founded on open communication and shared knowledge through an on-going developmental process.

Educational research indicates a strong statistical link between changes in relational trust and student improvement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Robinson et al., 2009). Robinson et al. (2009) highlight the significance of the relational aspects that underpin each of the five dimensions of effective leadership practice they identified. By the same token, a research programme conducted in 400 urban Chicago elementary schools in the 1990s concluded the relationship skills of educational leaders directly correlated with improvement in students’ social and academic outcomes (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Bryk and Schneider (2002) found increased relational trust between leaders and their staff led to changes to school culture, where teachers were more willing to implement change, become more collaborative, and to engage in professional dialogue. The development of trusting collegial
relationships resulted in more collaborative and effective efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. However, Bryk and Schneider (2002) did acknowledge that it was easier for principals to develop trust in smaller sized schools where communication was often face to face, as opposed to larger schools where affiliation tended to be with a department or faculty, rather than the school as a whole.

Because the charter, or more specifically the strategic goals, express the school’s aims and intentions towards improving student outcomes, building trusting relationships with staff may be seen as critical when the successful achievement of these goals is dependent upon the contributions of a number of people. For example, before school-wide goals can be embedded successfully into classroom practice leaders must gain collective agreement and consensus to ensure staff commitment towards new initiatives (Weber, 1996). Robinson et al. (2009) identify a number of strategies by which leaders can establish trusting relationships in school settings. Firstly through respect, acknowledging the value of each teacher’s role towards meeting school goals and being open to listening to their ideas. Secondly, by ensuring teachers feel their concerns are both heard, and taken into account during decision-making. Leaders who have the ability to genuinely listen foster a sense of personal esteem with their staff, helping to cement their affiliation to each other and the school and thereby increasing the leader’s likelihood of being considered trustworthy and inviting reciprocity (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Thirdly, by demonstrating competence in their role including identifying and dealing with conflict situations that undermine the collective effort of teachers to achieve school-wide goals (Robinson et al., 2009). Lastly, through consistently modelling respect, regard, competence, and integrity in their daily encounters with staff.

Therefore, for educational leaders to be effective it is clear that individual and group behaviour patterns must be characterised by commitment to mutually shared objectives, high levels of trust, respect, and authentic, open relationships (Owens, 2004).
Collaborative decision making

Another strategy leaders use to nurture trusting relationships with staff is in providing opportunities for them to influence school decisions by selecting and managing decision making processes which best support their leadership style, school make-up, and collaborative structures (Cardno, 2012). Teachers are more likely to change their actions when they have been closely involved in meaningful decision making (Mansell, 1985; Wylie, 2012). Because school-wide goals can only be achieved by dealing with people and through people it is important decision making is perceived to have a collaborative component to help gain consensus and commitment, foster trusting relationships and enable productive conversations (Cardno, 2012). Collaboration is seen to be inclusive and implies consideration of others by leaders when managing decision-making. Moreover, the literature links participative decision-making processes with building positive team relationships, aligning individual goals with school-wide goals, teacher well-being, productive resolution of dilemmas, and school improvement and effectiveness (Cardno, 2012; Psunder, 2009; Vroom, 2003).

However, effective leaders also need a degree of flexibility in decision making, and must be prepared to utilise “a variety of styles according to the nature of the problem being solved” (Cardno, 2012, p. 121). Due to its time consuming nature collaborative decision making should not be used ad hoc, but accompanied by a framework that clearly justifies the process to prevent it from becoming contrived (such as in false collaboration) and/or tokenistic (Brundrett, 1998; Cardno, 2012). Leaders must decide whether collaboration is necessary and to what degree, basing decisions of involvement on others’ expertise, relevance, degree of jurisdiction, and whether or not staff can be trusted to be collaboratively involved so the interests of the organisation are best served (Cardno, 2012; Hoy & Miskel, 2006; Owens, 2004). Hoy and Miskel (2008) suggest in an educational context leaders must evaluate each scenario individually to decide whether teacher participation will improve “the equality of the decision” (p.355) or impede effective decision-making.
Likewise, Vroom’s model of shared decision making attempts to enhance the quality of decisions by matching participation with the nature of the problem or situation (Vroom & Yetton, 1993). He advocates using four rules of quality, leader information, trust, and problem structure to decide on whether to make a unilateral decision or involve others. The degree of collaboration depends on the importance of the decision, leader knowledge, degree of consequence, and subordinate expertise. Furthermore, Hoy and Miskel (2008) argue as a rule subordinates should be involved in decision-making if “their acceptance of the decision is critical for effective implementation” (p. 357), and where group, rather than autocratic decision-making, will encourage staff buy in and commitment such as when setting school-wide goals. However, they also warn that teachers should not be expected to participate where they have insufficient information or expertise. In addition, although time and development constraints can limit the extent of participation, over time leaders can develop the necessary knowledge and skills in teachers to enable effective contribution (Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

Therefore, on one hand leaders seek to fulfil organisational requirements and achieve school-wide goals, while on the other hand, they are challenged by the necessity of building trusting relationships and using processes such as collaborative decision-making processes to gain staff consensus and commitment. Essentially, the merging of organisational and relational needs is necessary in order for productive change to take place. However, leaders often face barriers to individual and collective learning, such as their own lack of interpersonal skills or obstructive actions by staff that prevent quality teaching and learning, and therefore improvement in student outcomes. Tension arising during this process can create conditions where a ‘leadership dilemma’ is more likely to occur.

**Leadership Dilemmas**

The term ‘leadership dilemmas’, describes long-term problems that obstruct school improvement and inhibit the achievement of school-wide goals. A focus on leadership dilemmas and their management is worthwhile because developing an understanding on how to effectively manage dilemmas can improve the likelihood of
attaining school objectives (Dimmock, 1999b). Furthermore, we learn most about ourselves and our colleagues during times of crises (Argyris & Schön, 1978). According to Cardno (2012), the term ‘leadership dilemma’ is used for three reasons. Firstly, because only those in leadership roles can influence the learning-teaching environment, meaning leaders must take ownership of these dilemmas in order to lead individual and collective organisational learning and change. Secondly, the leader has an obligation to use this ‘ownership’ “as a starting point for dilemma management” (p. 63). Lastly, because of the tensions that arise between organisational and relationship concerns. The increased accountability for school leaders instigated by ‘Tomorrow’s Schools’ reforms has increased both the number and complexity of ‘leadership dilemmas’ as leaders attempt to work with and through their staff to attain the school’s stated goals, thereby generating tensions between “meeting the needs of the organisation and maintaining positive relationships with individuals” (Cardno & Reynolds, 2009, p. 208).

Alternatively, ‘ethical dilemmas’ are those problems encountered by leaders that challenge the moral fibre of decision-making (Campbell, 2003; Dempster & Berry, 2003; Starratt, 1996). ‘Ethical dilemmas’ involve perplexing situations where people have to choose between “competing sets of principles, values, beliefs or ideals” (Cranston, 2006, p. 107). According to Dempster and Berry (2003), ethical decision-making is made more difficult by the pluralistic cultural environment and the number of ethical perspectives “from which ethical judgements can legitimately be made” (p. 472). They argue that the complexity and number of ‘ethical dilemmas’, as with ‘leadership dilemmas’, encountered by school principals have increased since the early 1990s due to significant societal changes and the ways schools are currently administered and managed. Although their research examines the effect of trends and changes to ethical decision-making by principals in Australia, they advocate their findings are also applicable to New Zealand as both countries followed a similar pathway of educational reform.

Dilemmas are challenging problems that arise which contain elements of contradiction, conflict, ambiguous relationships, multiple demands or goals, and “inconsistency and paradox in the ways in which they might be conceived and approached” (Dimmock, 1999b, p. 447). They are messy, emotion packed, and
invariably place leaders ‘between a rock and a hard place’ (Cardno, 2012). Dilemmas present no routine solution, more a matter of ‘right and right’ as opposed to ‘right and wrong’ (Glatter, 1994), and require irreconcilable choices between “competing, highly-prized values that cannot be simultaneously or fully satisfied” (Cuban, 2001, p. 10). They exist where a complex problem creates equally undesirable or conflicting alternatives, and any choice made will sacrifice “some valued objective in the interest of other objectives” (Hoy & Miskel, 2005, p. 421). These complicated issues persist in resurfacing and attempts at resolution often only aggravate the conflict further, leading to uncertainty and feelings of inadequacy and incapability (Cardno, 2007). Dilemmas are commonly found in organisational leadership settings where leaders are under heightened pressure to make undesirable choices between competing and prized values (Cardno & Reynolds, 2009). Complex, tension-fraught problems are created as leaders seek to satisfy more than one objective, such as the implementation of school-wide goals and attending to staff needs (Cardno, 2007). Dilemmas can be identified by the challenges that emerge as leaders strive to balance autonomy and accountability, worker improvement and support, and organisational needs versus individual relational needs. These “people problems” tend to recur because organisational objectives can only be achieved dealing with people, and through people.

It is important to note that not all leadership problems are dilemmas. Some are easily solved, and dealt with using strategies associated with single-loop learning (Argyris, 1977). Cuban (1992) differentiates between the two types by describing dilemmas as ‘intractable problems’. He believes dilemmas are unable to be solved, but may be managed through a form of ‘satisficing’ which involves unsatisfactory compromises (Cuban, 2001). Similarly, Dimmock (1999) argues that while one element, or horn, of the dilemma may be satisfied, the complexity and plethora of issues mean other elements remain unresolved, where attention to one aspect is at the expense of sacrificing other aspects. He hypothesised five possible outcomes or effects of dilemmas, and concluded dilemmas lent themselves to creative management strategies rather than resolution (Dimmock, 1999b). Moreover, Dempster and Berry (2003) questioned the ability of school management to be able to make effective decisions due to ethical difficulties, such as local school needs and priorities conflicting with governmental requirements of compliance with policy initiatives. It is
not surprising therefore that educational leaders, when faced with the complex challenges caused by dilemmas typically adopt a similar stance and view dilemmas as unsolvable, thus avoiding the necessity of dealing with the problem.

In an educational context, the two horns of a leadership dilemma manifest themselves as a tension between meeting school-wide goals and maintaining trusting relationships with staff (Cardno & Reynolds, 2009). Bolman and Deal (2008) used the term ‘framing’ to refer to the different lens people use to make sense of a situation and to decide their reaction. In the case of a leadership dilemma, the decision on which horn to sacrifice is often determined by whether a leader uses a structural or human resource frame to view the situation. On one hand, the structural frame, or lens, places emphasis on productivity and goals, utilising and managing staff through managerial systems to achieve organisational ends (Macky & Johnson, 2003). On the other hand, a human resource frame focuses on the desire to “satisfy human needs and motivation by creating a caring, trusting work environment, where participation and shared decision-making enlist commitment and involvement” (Dimmock, 1999a). Bolman and Deal (2008) suggest principals may use one or a combination of strategies, including the political or symbolic frame, dependent on the way they frame a situation. However, in taking the stance that dilemmas are ‘intractable problems’ and unable to be solved means educational leaders are unable to meet school-wide goals and maintain positive relationships with staff without preferencing one over the other. In contrast, Cardno (2007) believes that in order for schools to learn and succeed in achieving their stated objectives educational leaders must be prepared to “acknowledge and confront dilemmas and attempt their resolution” (p. 33), especially those associated with the effectiveness and quality of teaching and learning.

The BES on school leadership found submitting negative feedback to underperforming staff one of the most difficult situations educational leaders faced when seeking to achieve organisational goals (Robinson et al., 2009). Their findings indicated that many of the “people problems were longstanding, difficult to resolve, and had negative consequences that spilled over into other areas of school life” (p. 191). Likewise, a study by Cardno (2007) using educational leaders participating in leadership development programmes at Unitec Institute of Technology identified
leaders perceived issues that had managing people and/or self at the centre of a complex problem challenging to deal with. Cardno's (2007) research found that managing people issues focus on staff performance, where school-wide goals may be jeopardised through the undesirable acts of individuals. For example, where professional standards are not maintained, underperforming and/or ineffective teachers are allowed to continue negative practices, resistance to mutuality between individual and school goals, and inability to gain staff consensus for change initiatives. Alternatively, managing personal issues looked at difficult situations such as leaders needing to deliver the hard messages, accepting advice without feeling threatened, overcoming feelings of inadequacy, and pursuing issues even when staff may disagree with decisions.

Although leaders desire to resolve ‘leadership dilemmas' that “present major challenges to organisational effectiveness” (Cardno, 2012, p. 61), the process may be fraught with tension due to the difficulties in maintaining positive relationships and serving organisational needs. Research shows leaders typically use ineffective responses such as avoidance, soft sell, hard sell and ‘controlling conversations’ when addressing dilemmas (Dimmock, 1999b; Robinson & Lai, 2006). However, although a number of researchers (Cuban, 2001; Dempster & Berry, 2003; Dimmock, 1999a; Dimmock & Walker, 2005) believe dilemmas are either unable to be solved or involve unsatisfactory compromises, there is a growing literature base advocating a productive approach based on Argyis’ (1977) double loop learning model discussed later, whereby dilemmas can be resolved to a point they do not reoccur (Argyris & Schön, 1996; Cardno, 2012; Dick & Dalmau, 1999; Piggot-Irvine, 2003b).

Embedding dilemma management in organisational practice requires leaders to understand and communicate both the theory base and skill knowledge to all members to ensure relationships are left intact, organisational goals can be achieved, and the problem remains solved (Cardno & Reynolds, 2009). However, developing an understanding of the dilemma management approach does not necessarily ensure leaders feel confident in its use. As well as overcoming avoidance, they must face other emotive barriers such as the over-riding feeling of fear (Argyris, 1977). For example, often our defensive patterns are based around the
fear of being threatened or embarrassed, or defending ourselves from harm and stress in the environment. Therefore, capable leaders develop a repertoire of more sophisticated defensive strategies and become skilled in their use. As result, effective leadership practices that indirectly affect teaching and learning will be inhibited until deep-seated problems are revealed and resolved (Cardno & Reynolds, 2009). This means developing a successful dilemma management culture requires “change of great magnitude in individuals, teams, and organisations” (p.222).

Dilemma management theory base

The concept of Organisational Learning from which dilemma management is derived, is based on the premise that an organisation is able to learn and change, thereby recognising the workplace as an important learning environment where a focus on continuous improvement can produce changes that support the achievement of organisational goals (Boreham & Morgan, 2004). In an educational context, effective leaders create conditions that foster organisational learning so teaching and learning can be improved, thereby increasing the likelihood of school-wide goals being met (Cardno, 2012). Cardno (2012) claims schools committed to organisational learning are also committed to building positive relationships between leaders and their staff so productive behaviours such as the long-term resolution of ‘leadership dilemmas’ can take place. Furthermore, organisations can improve their capability to achieve their stated goals by forging relationships between leaders and their staff “strong enough to sustain the challenges of learning as individuals, in teams and as an organisation” (p. 37). Therefore, building productive relationships may be seen is an essential foundation block towards promoting organisational learning and change.

Organisational learning is based around a number of important premises. For example, for organisational learning to take place individuals must be open to the possibility of learning, realising they may be personally implicated in contributing to the existence of the error in the first place (Argyris & Schön, 1996). Secondly, organisational learning is about ‘meta-learning, where individuals theorise about the learning process itself and seek to understand how people learn and why certain
learning does not occur (Sun & Scott, 2003). Argyis and Schön (1996) adopt a ‘theory of action’ perspective to encourage collaborative inquiry in organisations, and to assist with understanding and practicing productive reasoning. ‘Theories of action’ can be defined as the fundamental beliefs and values that underpin human behaviour and thereby determine the actions taken to resolve problems and manage dilemmas (Cardno, 2012). Argyis and Schön (1996) separated ‘theories of action’ into two elements – espoused theories and theories-in-use. Espoused theories are those beliefs or values guiding our behaviour to which we give allegiance to, talk about, and describe to others. Alternatively, theories-in-use is the theory we actually put into practice, which may or may not be compatible with our espoused theories. This means we learn about someone’s theory-in-use by observing their behaviour rather than by asking them (Argyris & Schön, 1974).

Cardno (2012) argues that in an organisational learning approach effectiveness is viewed “as the ability to find out what is wrong when problems persist, and to learn from mistakes in order that long-term, recurring problems can be solved” (p. 42). Senge (1990) suggests this type of organisational culture is grounded upon a foundation of leaders modelling, supporting and facilitating learning, where learning is highly valued and seen as a skill to be mastered. Leaders also recognise the importance of building trusting relationships with their staff in order to foster organisational learning through productive conversations (Senge, 1990) and to detect and correct anything that inhibits the improvement of teaching and learning.

Argyris (1977) distinguishes between the two contrasting processes of single and double-loop learning, both designed to improve organisational practice by adjusting individual actions in order to solve problems that jeopardise the achievement of school-wide goals.

**Single-loop learning**

Single-loop learning, or defensive theories of action, is our most common modus operandi, where new tactics and actions are tried to enable the organisation to continue under its current policies to achieve its objectives (Argyris, 1977). These strategies include avoidance, soft and hard sell, and controlling conversations. Goals of winning, maintaining control, suppressing conflict and avoiding unpleasantness
govern the underlying beliefs of this practice. Therefore, single-loop learning is constrained by defensive values that permit “alternative actions but not alternative thinking” (Cardno, 2012, p. 47). The result is low freedom of choice, commitment, and risk-taking, and a focus on rationality at the expense of emotionality to unilaterally protect oneself (Argyris, 1977). Although this process can be effective in solving simple problems, it has proven ineffective when dealing with long-term recurring issues such as ‘leadership dilemmas’. This is because changing the action does not change the underlying values that caused the problem in the first place.

The ‘hard sell’ strategy uses an authoritarian or coercive leadership style, often calling on a higher authority such as school policy to assert power and bully the other person into change (Robinson & Le Fevre, 2011). This approach seeks to match performance management practices and employee behaviours to organisational objectives (Macky & Johnson, 2003). While the hard approach can be effective in certain contexts, it often becomes problematic in an educational setting with so many goals to achieve and student individuality. The emphasis is placed on using teachers as resources to achieve school-wide goals centred on systems of accountability and performance management (Oldroyd, 2005). Therefore, the adult relationship is put at risk in the “interests of addressing the educational concern” (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 192). This strategy is likely to provoke defensiveness, resentment, compliance without commitment, and a token short-term meeting of organisational goals.

In contrast, in the ‘soft sell’ strategy organisational goals are sacrificed in order to protect relationships and avoid unpleasantness (Robinson & Le Fevre, 2011). The soft approach is more humanistic, and strategic goals are but one of many variables to be considered, the leader placing greater value on the “emotional risk facing the adults than the educational risk facing the students” (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 192). Emphasis is on developing resourceful humans by directing attention towards employee development, group relations, and constructive supervision. The tensions between the two dimensions of soft and hard sell mirror the dual purpose of leadership and development - the desire to empower and develop staff versus the necessity to achieve results; the hard approach shaped by external expectations fostering a low trust culture, while the soft approach is shaped by internal
expectations developing high trust. The first gets the task completed to achieve the desired results, whilst the other focuses on motivating and nurturing those who perform the task (Oldroyd, 2005). However, both strategies can be seen as equally controlling because their goal is the same, the imposition of one’s own point of view upon another (Robinson et al., 2009).

In summary, while single-loop learning is effective when there is collaboration, people prepared to go along with the leader, and when there is no conflict, the skill-base behind these strategies has proven ineffective when managing a dilemma and will not result in a resolution. Confrontation is both required for, and strongly correlates to problem solving. Consequently, “leaders must tackle the cognitive conflict while simultaneously limiting the relational harm from doing so” (Robinson & Le Fevre, 2011, p. 231). In fact, “the process of naming, analysing, and resolving problems – far from being a negative experience” – has been shown to strengthen relationships (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 204).

**Double-loop learning**

Single-loop and double-loop learning processes can be differentiated by the opposing values that guide attempts to solve the problem. Double-loop learning, or productive theories of action, seeks to modify an organisation’s behaviour by “questioning underlying organisation policies and objectives” (Argyris, 1977, p. 116). Based on productive reasoning, it increases the possibility of critical reflection-in-action. The focus is on individuals surfacing and examining hidden beliefs and values (theory of action) to discover why they behave in a certain way (theory in use), and demonstrating a willingness to generate valid information, desire to seek and monitor a solution, and a commitment to change. Individuals and groups within the organisation must become critically reflective in understanding the source of the problem, as solutions made prior to reaching this stage are destined for failure. According to Cardno (2012), commitment to double loop learning is challenging because it forces people to identify and modify behaviours that are barriers to resolving complex problems, especially in conflict situations. Furthermore, defensive patterns such as avoiding unpleasantness and exerting control must be overcome
before a new set of strategies can be developed that are based on valid information and commitment to change.

A number of researchers have developed models or tools to assist leaders in using a process of double-loop learning to resolve dilemmas. Argyris (1993) developed a hypothetical model called the ‘Ladder of Inference’ to explain how people observe, gather information and make assumptions. In order to prompt productive rather than defensive reasoning, this model has been adapted into a tool to assist in recognising our tendencies to make assumptions about the world we expect others to unquestionably accept (Boyett & Boyett, 1998; Senge, 1990; Stone, Patton, & Heen, 1999). The ladder of inference tool can be used to develop skills in productive dialogue centred on effective advocacy, through sharing our assumptions, beliefs, values, framing and contexts (Cardno, 2012).

The BES on effective leadership practice used the term ‘constructive problem talk’ to describe a process where leaders inquire into their own and other’s theories of action to detect, check and correct mistaken assumptions to enable changes in undesirable practices, guided by values of generating valid information, shared control and solutions, and joint commitment (Robinson et al., 2009). In order to build a Learning Organisation leaders are often required to challenge and change well established teacher practices. Evidence indicates that leaders engaging “in ‘constructive problem talk’ are better able to help teachers make changes” (p. 128) to benefit their students”, as opposed to those who use avoidance strategies, blame, and/or inciting defensive reactions. Alternatively, Robinson and Lai (2006) use the term ‘Open to Learning Conversations’, to define an approach focused on understanding the views of others. Differences in viewpoints are seen as opportunities for learning, rather than insurmountable obstacles preventing the resolution of dilemmas.

Cardno’s (2007) research with educational leaders participating in leadership development programmes at Unitec Institute of Technology found understanding the nature of leadership dilemmas and how to manage them constructively “increased their willingness and confidence to confront a dilemma” (p. 41). This therefore suggests that professional development in relation to effectively resolving leadership dilemmas is critical for leaders in order to develop the ability to engage in critical
analysis and productive dialogue through a process of double-loop learning and productive reasoning.

**Summary**

The development, implementation, and achievement of school-wide goals play an integral part in school organisation and processes aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning, and therefore student outcomes. ‘Mutuality’ is achieved when the individual goals of teachers show a vertical fit with those of the school, and all school processes, systems, and policies align horizontally with school objectives. The literature highlights the importance of leaders building trusting relationships with their staff and working collaboratively during decision-making to ensure consensus and commitment to school-wide goals. However, ‘leadership dilemmas’ may emerge as leaders seek to address the needs of the organisation while at the same time satisfying the relational needs of their staff.

It is important to acknowledge that not all dilemmas that jeopardise the achievement of school-wide goals stem from teaching staff. Although there is increasing literature around the issue of leadership dilemmas in educational settings, research studies and the theory base tend to focus on the leader’s perspective and the strategies they use to resolve issues. As a result, researchers have largely ignored any challenging situations encountered by teachers where the non-achievement of school-wide goals and poor teaching quality may be the result of negative choices made by those in leadership positions. For the purpose of this study, I have termed dilemmas generated by the detrimental actions of educational leaders which are perceived to inhibit the ability of teachers to implement quality teaching and learning in the classroom ‘employee dilemmas’.

The next chapter will explain and critique the research methodology selected for this study.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Introduction

It is difficult to understand and interpret educational leaders’ attempts to address leadership dilemmas that arise in the context of relationship challenges and goal achievement without attempting to view it through multiple perspectives. This is because of the complexity of the problem, range of unsatisfactory alternatives, number of competing views, and the emotion it evokes. Commitment to this viewpoint therefore underpins the choice of research methodology and methods. This chapter explains the rationale behind the research of two public high schools case studies using a humanistic or interpretive approach to gather qualitative data. With reference to the literature, sampling and the two data collection methods of interview and documentary analysis are examined, followed by an outline of data analysis strategies including issues that relate to reliability and validity. The final section summarises important ethical considerations relevant to the study.

Research Methodology

Overview

Every research study bases itself around a purposeful design with the intent of strengthening validity and ensuring the data collected can adequately address the research topic (Yin, 2011). Historically educational researchers have commonly used two differing research approaches to fulfil the three roles of exploring, describing and explaining, each approach underpinned by a disparate epistemological philosophical position. (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). According to Davidson and Tolich (2003) epistemology seeks to define knowledge, distinguish its principal varieties, identify its sources and establish its limits. Its central concern is deciding on what counts as legitimate knowledge. Although researchers use a plethora of terminology to describe the two epistemological positions, they can be broadly categorised as the scientific and humanistic approaches.
The scientific paradigm is based on logical and empirical observations that lead to probabilistic casual laws, which then lead to a prediction of general patterns (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). It is reductionist, objective, realist, collective and value-free, and focused on reliability and consistency. In order to prevent contamination researchers are observers who respond mechanically to the environment (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Criticisms levelled at this approach emphasise the dehumanisation of the individual, and bias caused by repetition and predictability (Holbrook, 1977). Furthermore, Wittgenstein (1974) believes that when all the scientific questions are addressed the main issues of life will still be left untouched.

In contrast the humanistic, or interpretive approach, is a systematic analysis through observations that lead to understandings and interpretations of people’s social worlds (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). It is relationship orientated, subjective, underpinned by theory, and based on validity, understanding and multiple interpretations. Researchers are involved with their subjects, initiating actions and producing their own environments (Cohen et al., 2007). However, Cohen et al. (2007) identifies a number of criticisms to this approach: abandonment of scientific procedures of verification; power of others to impose their own definitions of situations on participants (eg inequalities of power); and narrow micro-sociological perspectives.

Although the scientific and humanistic approaches have dissimilar characteristics, there is no clear dichotomy of paradigms. They are more easily understood on a continuum that ranges from positivist to post-positivist, rather than seen as opposite and polarised (Creswell, 2002). Both approaches have strengths and weaknesses. Guba and Lincoln (2005) suggest blending the “elements of one paradigm into another, so that one is engaging in research that represents the best of both world views” (p. 201). Likewise, the evolution of educational research and ensuing epistemological debate has caused researchers to widely acknowledge that “no one research paradigm can answer all the questions which arise” (de Lansheere, 1997, p. 14). Moreover, recognising the supplementary nature and commonality of purpose of both approaches, and the multidisciplinary, multimethod and multilevel elements of educational research, Keeves (1997) recommends researchers choose inquiry
methods founded on the nature of the problem, researcher skills and “disciplinary perspectives from which the problem is viewed” (p. 278).

**Qualitative Research Rationale**

The nature of responses required to understand relationship strategies that support the achievement of school-wide goals and answer the research questions for this study comprehensively necessitated a predominantly humanistic, or interpretative approach, for three reasons. Firstly, it was both subjective and interpretive, capturing an educational leader’s perception of the difficulties they encountered, and constructing and understanding meaning from their own experiences and situation. Secondly, it was relationship orientated, concentrating on the leader’s interactions with their staff, strategies they use to manage relationships effectively, and the response from others to their actions and choices. Thirdly, multiple interpretations can be made dependent on the leader’s position, role and effectiveness, and their staff’s expertise, co-operation or resistance.

Because of the humanistic epistemological position taken, the methodological approach was primarily founded on qualitatively orientated research design processes, where a few examples were examined in-depth within the context of two educational institutions (Bassey, 1999; Creswell, 2002; Mutch, 2005; Stake, 2005). Using Denzin’s and Lincoln’s (2005) generic definition, qualitative research can be described as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world” and consists of “interpretative, material practices that make the world visible” (p. 3). An emphasis on qualitative methodology also means samples can be deliberatively selected from essential and typical units, rather than using random procedures as in quantitative research (Davidson & Tolich, 2003).

Furthermore, qualitative research was likely to provide rich descriptions of the constraints of everyday life, participants able to respond to the research interview questions with descriptive explanations emphasising both context and interpretation of meaning (Creswell, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This approach allowed the flexibility to consider a range of interpretations on what was happening and the ability to explore the views of others and how they made sense of the world around them.
The intent was to allow the information to “emerge from participants in the project” under guidance so themes could be developed from the data, rather than more contrived information specified in advance as in a quantitative approach (Creswell, 2002, p. 189).

Qualitative researchers employ a “wide range of interconnected interpretative methods”, in their search for better ways to understand the “worlds of experience they have studied”, believing there is no single interpretive truth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 21). A case study, a prevalent and specific methodological approach to qualitative educational research, was particularly suited to this research project because it investigated a phenomenon within its real-life context, and was not restricted by any specific data collection methods (Merriam, 1998). The decision to focus on a case study approach was based firstly on its insightful, exploratory, and ‘interpretation in context’ nature, and secondly its focus on “holistic description and explanation” (p. 29). Since the purpose of the research was to explore multiple perspectives of understandings and interpretations around dilemmas that arise when leaders attempt to manage relationships while achieving organisational goals, personal accounts and stories were appropriate in order to develop thick descriptions of attitudes and behaviours associated with this area. A case study approach provided an opportunity to explore ways in which life histories, personal idiosyncrasies, and circumstances affected individual perceptions and influenced responses.

The term case study, in the context of this research, referred to the way in which data selection and analysis informed the research, the unit of analysis being the two selected high schools, and the school’s senior and middle management team and experienced teachers the embedded unit of analysis (Yin, 2011). Each case included two data collection methods conducted within a single-site school setting. At the broader level, findings from a two-site case study yielded greater confidence than a single-site. Although social and economic conditions differed, the presence of similar events meant data emerging from comparative findings common to both sites and those unique to a single case provided deeper insights into the phenomenon and increased support for the study’s main arguments (Freebody, 2003; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2011). Alternatively, at the narrower level the number of interviewees, practices,
policies and actions triangulated data and enhanced the validity of findings, thereby overcoming limitations associated with case study research (Freebody, 2003; Yin, 2011). The uniqueness of each case and participant experiences in the context of leadership dilemmas also increased my ability to undertake critical analysis on relationship practices and their effect and influence on attitudes and behaviours (Bassey, 1999; Thomas, 2003; Wellington, 2000). Moreover, collecting data from several sources was consistent with case study research (Yin, 2011), and using two different methods of data collection, semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis, meant “a more complete picture of human behaviour and experience” was obtained (Morse, 2003, p. 189).

**Sample Selection**

Limitations of time and the size of the research study led to pragmatic decisions regarding sample size and geographical location of the schools participating in the project. A preliminary scan made it possible to identify a number of secondary schools according to a region in New Zealand, stability in Principalship, and evidence from the Education Review Office public school reports on successful implementation of their strategic plans. Three schools were excluded from the sampling frame due to ethical considerations related to workplace and personal relationships. Although five schools were identified as possible locations, three appeared better suited to this research.

Initial contact with the three schools was made via email, the Principals receiving a short concise proposal outlining the nature and purpose of the proposed research with the option of clarifying understanding and any apparent burdens or benefits for their school before confirming organisational consent. This was followed up by a phone call ten days later. Two schools expressed their interest in participating in the research study. Both are co-educational state funded public high schools that cater for students from years 7 to 13. Although the two schools are bicultural, European and Maori, and of similar roll size, they have differing demographic profiles and hold mid to lower socio-economic (decile) ratings.
Interview Sampling

The size of the research study, and limitations on time and labour with transcribing and analysing the data, also influenced the interview sample size. Furthermore, the exploratory and explanatory nature of the questions suggested pursuing a smaller “number of very in-depth interviews with particularly informative interviewees” would be of greater value than conducting more but receiving inferior information (Vogt & Gardner, 2012, p. 144). Because of this, and the time needed for transcription and data analysis, interview numbers were restricted to eight. Therefore, one of the acknowledged limitations of this study is the likelihood of other staff not interviewed may have similar or different views. However, a larger sample would have precluded the opportunity to go as deep with the analysis and the interviews as I have done for this number of people and keep a thesis of this size manageable.

Due to the specialist nature of the knowledge required and adherence to principles of qualitative methodology it was not appropriate for this study to use random sampling, meaning purposive sampling was indicated in order to select participants who had the necessary role, experience and expertise to answer the interview questions (Bryman, 2008). Potential interviewees were invited to participate in the study based on their leadership positions as Principal, Deputy Principal (DP), or Head of Department (HOD), and their experience in that role. In the case of the HODs, selection criteria also considered the number of teachers in their department and gave preference to middle managers of core subjects.

An experienced teacher from each school was also invited to participate based on their expertise and experience as educational practitioners, having more than two years employment at their current school and prior teaching experience in at least two other schools, five years being the benchmark in the Teacher Professional Standards to identify teachers as experienced (Ministry of Education, 1999). Where more than two eligible participants expressed interest interviewees were then purposively invited based on their length of service at that particular school.

The texts for documentary analysis were selected based on their specific relationship to the development and implementation of school-wide goals and relationship
practices. This included the school charter, strategic goals, current policy and guidelines, and the annual report.

**Research Methods**

The two data gathering methods associated with a qualitative case study approach selected to best solve the research problem were semi-structured individual interviews and documentary analysis.

**Semi-structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were the primary data collection method used as it is best suited when in depth information is required, for subjective knowledge and potentially sensitive subject matter, and for elaboration and the clarification of answers (Hinds, 2000). This technique was chosen because of its ability to explore “more complex and subtle phenomena” (p. 174), and its correlation to a case study qualitative approach where eliciting the in depth responses necessary to properly answer the research questions entailed potentially sensitive and subjective information, and respondents to elaborate on their explanations (Denscombe, 2007). The other benefit of the qualitative interview was its flexibility as a research tool, enabling me to explore participants’ responses further and extract meaning by additional probing, this data often being the most revealing (Bryman, 2008; Denscombe, 2007; D. Scott & Usher, 2004).

Although interviews cannot always be easily categorised as structured, semi-structured or unstructured, it is helpful to view them as existing on a continuum where highly structured sits at one end and completely unstructured and open ended at the other (Bryman, 2008). Structured interviews use predefined close-ended questions (Hinds, 2000), and focus on providing accurate data and definitive analysis at the expense of an in-depth understanding of meaning (Yin, 2011). In contrast, unstructured interviews provoke meaningful discussion around a pre-determined theme or area using open-ended questions that differ according to the individual, context, and setting. The aim being to understand participants “on their own terms and how they
make meaning of their own lives, experiences and cognitive processes” (Brenner, 2006, p. 157).

Because both formats in their purist form have inherent weakness this research study used semi-structured interviews located somewhere near the middle of the continuum to combine the two processes, asking some structured questions followed by an “exploration of general themes related to those questions” (Hinds, 2000, p. 47). The purpose behind this was to utilise the strengths of both structures while at the same time decrease their weaknesses. Asking each respondent similar questions helped elicit more accurate data, whereas willingness to deviate and pursue interesting observations or delve deeper gave participants the flexibility to elaborate and expand on personal experiences and interpretations of meaning. This flexibility was particularly important in expanding on data already analysed from the documents collected and exploring issues identified in the literature.

**Process**

Interviews were conducted according to a pre-developed interview schedule (see Appendix A - D) specific to each educational leadership position. The questions were informed by issues identified in the literature, my prior understanding of differing responsibilities and challenges likely to be encountered in certain leadership roles, and ensuring all research questions were covered and able to be answered comprehensively. Questions were then grouped into categories that related to themes that had emerged from the literature - school-wide goals, dilemma management and relationships, and professional development. Lastly, following Vogt and Gardner (2012) recommendations, interview schedules were piloted with two principals whose schools were excluded from the original preliminary scan in order to alleviate issues such as differences in the meaning of questions caused by role, age, ethnicity or gender.

All interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis to allow participants the time, freedom, and confidentiality to openly express opinions without fear of contradiction, share personal experiences, and elaborate or clarify explanations (Denscombe, 2007; Hinds, 2000). Focus groups as an additional data collection method was
considered for use with the experienced teachers, but discarded because of the potential for participants to feel restricted in their responses, and the extra time required to transcribe the data. Prior to each interview the interview schedule was emailed out to allow participants the time to consider their responses so in-depth and detailed answers could be elicited.

The eight interviews varied in length between 18 to 80 minutes, with 46 minutes being the average time. Each interview was digitally recorded as a permanent record to ensure the accuracy of the data collected (Denscombe, 2007). It was then transcribed and a copy sent to respondents to read and validate as a true and accurate record where they were given the opportunity to add or delete any information they felt uncomfortable about (Hinds, 2000). After an initial read and cursory analysis of the school charters, the two school Principals were the first interviews to be conducted, thereby providing a context and sense of the school’s philosophical position in relation to meeting school-wide goals, and the challenges and successes they faced when merging the implementation of these goals with supporting relational needs of staff. The HOD, teacher, and DP from School B were interviewed in that order a week and a half later. While conducting the HOD’s interview a minor addition was made to that and subsequent interviews due to the reoccurrence of the word ‘trust’ by both the Principal from School A and the HOD. As a result, a trust question was added (see Appendix B, C, and D). To allow time for the transcription of data already collected and to begin processing some of the findings, School B’s DP, HOD and teacher interviews were conducted two weeks later.

**Documentary Analysis**

Documentary analysis is a qualitative data collection method that permits researchers to indirectly study human behaviour by examining the contents of written communications (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). It explores “the writer’s own ideas, beliefs and attitudes relating to the subject matter”, and can provide valuable information about the context of an institution and its culture (Hinds, 2000, p. 53). Data is systematically collected about a phenomenon “for the purpose of finding and/or understanding patterns and regularities in it” (Mogalakwe, 2006, p. 221). The
examination of secondary sources of data is often used in conjunction with other primary source research methods such as interviews (Wellington, 2000). A qualitative case study is a prime example where the collection and analysis of documents complements and triangulates data gathered from the interviews (Fitzgerald, 2007). Other benefits pertaining to this process include the ability to gather information that may be difficult to obtain in an interview, and access to texts being at the researchers convenience and generally unobtrusive. On the other hand, documents may be inaccurate or only relevant to the moment of time in which they were created, and the process is time-consuming and requires methodical analysis (Fitzgerald, 2007).

Collection

The Principal of each school was asked to provide copies of school documents that related specifically to the development and implementation of school-wide goals and relationship practices. This included the school charter, strategic goals, annual report, annual plan, and current policies and procedures. The texts provided important contextual information particularly related to the philosophical position and value placed on achieving school-wide goals versus building and maintaining trusting relationships with staff, thereby adding meaning to the data gathered from the interviews (Wellington, 2000). By analysing the documents prior to the majority of the interviews, I was able to gain a comprehensive understanding of the systems in place and was therefore able to spend more time exploring individual perspectives, attitudes, and behaviours.

Analysis

The meaning of documents can become contentious. A document cannot be an ‘objective cultural identity’ because its meaning must depend on both the reader’s perspective and the author’s intentions (Giddens, 1993). Consequently, in order to gain complete understanding texts must viewed as ‘socially situated products’ which have multiple meanings (J. Scott, 1990). This means documents must be examined contextually with other data sources, and analysed in different ways so both literal and interpretative understandings can be explored (Wellington, 2000). Researchers
typically use an analytical framework to enable in-depth examination and interpretation of documents. In this case an initial framework of analysis was used to assess documents according to the following four criteria (Bryman, 2008; Fitzgerald, 2007; Wellington, 2000):

1. Authenticity – Is this the current version of the document?
2. Credibility – Does the document accurately reflect practice?
3. Representativeness – Is the school’s vision, values and philosophy represented clearly in the charter, strategic goals, annual plan, policies and procedures?
4. Meaning – What can be understood from the embedded meanings lying within the document?

In order to take a critical stance and to understand embedded meanings the analytical process of the document’s contents was guided by seven questions whose development was based on the recommendations of two researchers. (Fitzgerald, 2007; Hinds, 2000). Firstly, Hinds (2000) suggests using a range of questions to help researchers align their “background, position and theoretical stand to the position of the document and its authors” (p. 117). Secondly, Fitzgerald advises asking questions at the outset that focus on the characteristics of the document, authorship and position, when, why and for whom it was written, and for what purpose. As a result the questions in the analytical framework centred on authorship in relation to position and bias, purpose with consideration to the social, political, cultural condition in which the document was produced, frame of reference to other relevant school documents, and the content looking at values conveyed and assumptions made about the audience (see Appendix E)

Data Analysis

Interview Analysis

Qualitative analysis is expected to follow systematic procedures when transforming raw data into ‘findings’ or ‘results’ and identifying vital features and relationships consistent with the data (Wolcott, 1994). According to Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006) this process has four defining features. Firstly, it is inductive rather
than deductive, where analysis is ‘grounded’ and driven by the data itself rather than predetermined theoretical hypotheses. Secondly, the researcher is the prime analytic agent. Thirdly, because it is both inductive and agent driven, the analysis becomes “a highly interactive process between the researcher and the data” (p. 196). Lastly, it is a labour-intensive and time-consuming process.

A thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the qualitative data gathered and transcribed from the semi-structured interviews in order to sort and classify the data into categories to organise and render it meaningful (Lofland et al., 2006). This meant each transcript was inspected line by line, colour coding any key words related to school-wide goals such as aims, objectives, intent, strategic and targets. Concurrently the transcript underwent a focused coding, a more selective and conceptual process to knit together larger chunks of data in order to begin the formulation of “overarching ideas and propositions” (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 201). This was centred on the themes of mutuality, relationships, collaboration, student outcomes, and barriers that emerged during the interview and transcription process. Each theme was then further coded using symbols to specify who was involved, whether it was an ideal or practice, implicit or explicit, and to identify the specific relationship or student outcome stipulated.

At the same time as coding it was also to critical to begin memoing, or interpreting the data, writing down ideas that arose on recurring themes, connections, patterns, issues, procedures and experiences to institute an intermediary step between coding and the first draft of the analysis (Charmaz, 2001). Annotations were made in the margin as significant ideas, concepts, relationships or connections emerged that related to one or both schools, or to certain positional roles. Where necessary varying forms of diagramming such as tables, and concept or flow charts were used to arrange data so as to visually portray connections and relationships, or cross classify (Lofland et al., 2006).

While coding the first transcript of the Principal from School A, it became clear that sometimes answers given by the respondent referred to questions asked earlier or later in the interview, thereby making it difficult gain a full understanding of any one question in its current format. Lofland et al. (2006) highlight the importance of thinking flexibly
and being open-minded, not committing oneself to a “particular perspective or line of argument too early in the analysis process” (p. 217) which made me open to considering an alternative way of filing the data to make it more researcher friendly. Therefore, I removed groups of data from the original transcripts and placed them into three separate documents using the same headings as the interview schedules: school-wide goals; relationship practices and dilemma management; and professional development, further separating them by school and the four different roles of Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of Department, and teacher. From there each paragraph was analysed and summarised briefly to help understand the embedded meaning and placed into a table.

Using the original transcripts with their highlighted coding, focused coding, and memoing, and the transcript summary table similarities for each individual school were identified and comprehensively listed under the three titles of positive strategies, negative strategies and barriers. The list of positive strategies were then split into three sub-categories of enhancing staff commitment, relationship management, and personal leadership qualities which related to organisational, interpersonal and intrapersonal contexts. The specific position that identified each strategy during their interview was bracketed at the end of each phrase.

Table 3.1 Example showing how the findings from both schools were collated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITIVE STRATEGIES</th>
<th>/ 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhance staff commitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutuality of goals, core beliefs and principles (P, DP, HOD, T, P, DP, HOD, T)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative decision-making (P, DP, T, P, DP, HOD, T)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant PD (HOD, T, P, DP, HOD, T)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students at centre of teaching and learning / decision-making (P, DP, HOD, T, DP)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative leadership - disperse power (P, DP, HOD, T)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow through (P, DP, T, DP)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research / evidence based (P, DP, T, P)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive, commitment, can-do attitude (HOD, T, DP, HOD)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well organised, planned (P, HOD, T, DP)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing leaders (P, T, DP)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal (P, HOD, T)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strategies having a total of three or four staff members were then colour coded to stress the significance of their commonalities and connections, and any strategies identified by only one participant eliminated. Lastly, the data from each school was
combined, totalled, and colour highlighted. Table 3.2 is an example of how the findings were set up in tabular format, and then coded with colours to identify which strategies came through more than others did.

Two prominent leadership dilemmas mentioned by leaders in each school also were formatted into a table in order to examine the issues, assumptions, and values contributing to the dilemma, the single loop or double loop strategies used by the leader when attempting to resolve the problem, and the barriers that made resolution challenging. Lastly, using all the data analysed from each school the most significant findings that related to the research questions were summarised.

**Document Analysis**

Like interviews, document analysis uses coding to build up categories “that can be applied across the range of material being analysed” (Hinds, 2000, p. 53). Both Hinds (2000) and Fitzgerald (2007) discuss using literal and content analysis initially to classify data and search for embedded meanings where data is coded by understanding the accepted definitions of key words, phrases and concepts, noting instances when specific words or phrases are used, deriving meaning from the terms and images, and lastly establishing themes. Alternatively, Altheide (2004) developed a more thematic approach called an ethnographic content analysis to assist in developing a grounded theory. His model codes data thematically based on contextual understandings, continuously testing and revising the categories to stimulate conceptualisation, and interpretation of meaning. While this research study primarily used Altheide’s thematic approach, key words and phrases and their frequent use was also analysed in relation to the ‘situatedness’ of the educational institution.

In order to analyse the content in a systematic way, the initial analysis of both school charters used the same coding, focused coding, and memoing constraints as when analysing the interview data to strengthen the validity of the research. During the focused coding stage, greater emphasis was placed on student outcomes and sub-categorising them as academic, behavioural, or holistic as when compared to the data collected from the semi-structured interviews. Sections where the MoE or ERO
had input were also coded and memoed, especially in relation to areas targeted as requiring improvement in the latest ERO report. The analytical process was iterative in that it involved several readings prior to and during the interview procedure and after the interview data was analysed, categories being developed and refined as data was collated (Fitzgerald, 2007). Scanning school policy and procedure documents identified a number that explicitly referred to the school charter, strategic goals, strategic plan, or the mission statement.

**Validity and Reliability**

The rigour of qualitative research is robust when researchers make decisions that increase the validity of method application, data analysis and trustworthiness of interpretations (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Internal validity for this research study was demonstrated in three ways. Firstly, through methodological triangulation, where concurrent validity was achieved under a case study umbrella through two methods of data collection - interview and document analysis (Cohen et al., 2007). Secondly, predictive validity was realised by using similar interview procedure for different respondents in the same educational institution, and ensuring documents were analysed using the same protocol and questions. Thirdly, interview respondents validated their transcript to ensure accuracy, and were given the opportunity to add or delete information. External validity on the other hand was endorsed through comparatively and transferability, by providing clear, detailed and in-depth descriptions and sufficiently rich data so others can decide on the extent the findings are transferable and generalizable to their situation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schofield, 1990).

To strengthen validity and minimise the amount of bias during the interview process questions were formulated carefully and piloted beforehand to ensure the meaning was crystal clear, rapport could be established with the respondent, the “potentially distorting effects of power” were minimised, and similar questions and sequencing adhered to (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 152). At the data analysis stage, the researcher ensured that both interviews and documentary analysis used a consistent coding of responses, and sought to avoid subjective interpretation of data or making
unsubstantiated inferences and generalisations. However, as Vogt and Gardner (2012) argue there is no such thing as a generic interviewee or researcher. Each has background characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, occupation, and experiences that shape their understanding of the meaning of questions and responses. Therefore, the influence of the researcher must be passed through rigorous scrutiny to ensure “biases and taken for granted notions are exposed” (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 714), and alternative ways of looking at data are considered. Lastly, the validity of documentary analysis was ensured by establishing the authenticity and credibility of each document (J. Scott, 1990).

Although reliability, or credibility, does not have the same focus in a qualitative study as in a quantitative design, it is still important to consider ways in which this can be achieved. In this instance, LeCompte and Preissle’s (1993) guidelines of consistency through replication were followed, where a number of elements of the research study were repeated. Firstly, the researcher remained the same throughout the study. Secondly, data collection and analysis for both interviews and documentary analysis followed the same analytic constructs and premises in all instances. Thirdly, methods of data collection were restricted to using only interviews and documentary analysis. Lastly, all participants and documents were selected from the same educational institution, thereby maintaining consistency in demographics, social situation, and conditions.

**Ethical Considerations**

The core idea behind research ethics is respect in how we treat others, protecting them from physical and emotional harm and ensuring their rights and privacy are maintained (Wilkinson, 2001). No matter what model is used, researchers have a moral obligation to exercise responsibility towards the respondents, the study, and lastly ourselves (Punch, 1986). Moreover, Johnson (2002) proclaims “the most important ethical imperative is to tell the truth” (p. 216). To ensure ethical considerations were identified and adhered to, the Unitec Research Ethics Committee (UREC) reviewed and approved this study. Consequently, two schools were selected from outside the researcher’s local area to avoid close collegial,
friendship and blood relationships from having any conflict of interest on the research study results. Furthermore, because of the bicultural nature of the two secondary schools the researcher offered a consultation with the resident kaumatua. However, both Principals considered this process unnecessary due to the nature of the research and the participants involved.

This research study recognised a moral imperative to protect the interests of all interviewees through ethical decision-making by obtaining informed consent from respondents prior to conducting the interviews (see Appendix F). In addition, the Principal of each school was given a short concise proposal outlining the nature and purpose of the proposed research, with the option of questioning and clarifying their understanding and discussing any apparent burdens or benefits for their school before signing an organisational consent form (see Appendix G). Steps were taken to ensure subjects understood the nature of the study by providing an information sheet (see Appendix H) about the research project and its purpose, explaining what their contribution would most likely entail, confirming protection of their rights including data analysis and storage, and reiterating its voluntary nature (Wilkinson, 2001). However, the proposed open ended questions were necessarily vague as they explored personal meanings, feelings and experiences that were likely to require further probing and elaboration (Vogt & Gardner, 2012). While documentary analysis of public documents, such as the school charter and policies, did not legally require an informed consent it was seen as an ethical courtesy to do so, and to stipulate the list of documents that would be used for data collection (Vogt & Gardner, 2012).

To avoid harm researchers must be aware of inequalities in the power of both researchers and respondents when conducting interviews, and seek to defuse power relationships where the possibility of harm is dependent “on the vulnerability of the interviewees” (Vogt & Gardner, 2012, p. 257). In this research study, as expected the Head of Department and teacher interviews portrayed an asymmetry of power, the interviewer controlling the questions and shaping the answers. Both of the Principal interviews were conducted on the last Friday of the second term holidays to help alleviate issues of workload and restricted time limit, and reduce the effects of antithesis of power. However, although the researcher asked the questions the
interview was still to some extent shaped by the educational leader. The researcher adjusted their perception accordingly and expressed gratitude for the time taken out of a busy schedule to answer the questions.

All questions were piloted beforehand from different perspectives to check for sensitivity and unambiguous meanings in order to minimise harm and avoid deceit. In addition, respondents read and validated their transcripts as a true and accurate record and were given the opportunity to add or delete information they felt uncomfortable about, their files being retained in a secure location. The Principal's validation of documentary analysis ensured that the information gathered from documents would not inadvertently cause harm to the institution or its staff on the understanding no school documents were appended to the thesis manuscript. Likewise, both the school and interviewee have the right to confidentiality and anonymity where their identity is protected by the researcher (Fontana & Frey, 2005). All participants were informed of this right in the information sheet (see Appendix G) and consent form (see Appendix F) that was sent out prior to the interview. In this study the anonymity of the school was maintained by using Vogt and Gardner's (2012) guidelines to ensure the contextual description of the institution omitted any specific details that may indicate its identity. Furthermore, specific statements only related to each school have been generalised to provide anonymity. For an example, the vision statement for each school was generalised to prevent identification through internet search engines.

In transcripts, discussions with others such as the research supervisor, and in the completed written report pseudonyms were used, interviewees referred to by their positions such as School A, DP, HOD, and so on. The participants selected the interview site at a location they felt their privacy was best assured, and interviews were digitally recorded to ensure an accurate portrayal of what was said. The reporting of documentary analysis was underpinned by values of honesty, fairness, and accuracy. Moreover, the researcher took all care during data analysis to avoid stereotyping respondents and the populations from whence they were drawn, and to not misrepresent findings by leaving out significant data.
Summary

With reference to literature, this chapter has outlined the qualitative case study methodology and design used to conduct research into relationship practices that support the achievement of school-wide goals. Two case studies, two data collection methods, and multiple perspectives have been used to triangulate and strengthen the validity of data collected. In-depth interviews provided an opportunity for leaders and teachers to share experiences, perceptions, and feelings within the context of their own schools to elicit a deeper understanding of the challenges and dilemmas that arise as leaders attempt to merge organisational goals with relational needs of staff. The rich data gathered from the eight interviewees and relevant school documents will be examined and analysed in Chapter Four.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

The contents of this chapter provide a detailed analysis of the data gathered during this research project. This is a partial snapshot of two schools at the beginning of Term Three from the views of four people within each school. This chapter is structured so the data from the two secondary school case studies are initially presented as separate entities. This is followed by an analysis of the collective findings in order to gain greater insight into the strategies used by leaders when merging the two elements of organisational goals and relational needs, and to allow for a more cohesive synthesis between the two perspectives.

Introducing each small-scale case study is a contextual description to enable greater understanding of the setting in which the research is located. The overview, depicted in tabular format, summarises the triangulation of findings related to positive and negative relationship strategies, and the perceived barriers to the achievement of school-wide goals. Analysis of findings from the eight semi-structured interviews is structured according to the three categories that grouped questions in the interview schedules: school-wide goals; leadership dilemmas and relationship practices; and professional development. The documentary analysis on each school charter is included in the second section on school-wide goals. Combined findings from both case studies are examined in the light of significant similarities and differences. This three-part analysis summarises the data and leads into Chapter Five, where the findings will be discussed in light of the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

Part One: School A

Context

School A is a middle-sized low decile secondary school with a high Maori student population. Teaching and learning is underpinned by Te Kotahitanga, a research and professional development programme that supports teachers in improving the
learning and achievement of Maori students by enabling teachers to create a culturally responsive context for learning. The 2011 ERO report recognised the effects of this change by acknowledging the number of teachers who were using Te Kotahitanga teaching strategies as a tool to improve student engagement and achievement (Education Review Office, 2011).

In order to explore multiple perspectives four staff were interviewed from a range of leadership and teaching positions within the school’s hierarchal structure, all having been employed at that particular school for five years or more, and having taught in at least two other schools. The current Principal has led School A for six years and had over twenty years’ experience in this role. On the other hand, the DP was in his first Deputy Principalship and is the only member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to be appointed by this Principal. He has previously taught in two other schools, the last in a HOD role. In contrast, the HOD is very experienced in her role, having held that position in three other schools prior to School A. Lastly, the teacher interviewed is primary trained, and has previously taught at both an Intermediate and Full Primary School.

The documents provided for documentary analysis were the school charter, annual plan, and current policies and procedures. The process involved an in-depth analysis of the school charter, and a cursory examination of the policies and procedures to investigate their alignment to the charter.

**Overview**

Table 4.1 depicts a summative analysis of the findings from the documentary analysis and four semi-structured interviews on strategies used by educational leaders to enhance staff commitment towards achieving school-wide goals, manage relationships effectively, and the personal qualities of leaders staff consider important. Those characteristics highlighted by only one participant have been removed from the table. The fourth section shows the overall results from the interview questions on negative strategies used by leaders that have led to a breakdown in relations, and the perceived barriers towards meeting school objectives. The negative practice of bullying has been added because, although not
Table 4.1 *Summary of findings from School A*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>POSITIVE STRATEGIES</strong></th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhance staff commitment - organisational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students at centre of teaching and learning / decision-making</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutuality of goals, core beliefs, principles – gaining consensus</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative leadership - disperse power</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative decision-making</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research / evidence based</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing leaders</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant PD</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive, commitment, can-do attitude</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared, organised, planned</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow through</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship management - interpersonal</td>
<td>DA</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build trusting relationships</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have the hard conversations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication: professional dialogue/incidental conversation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive, approachable, and available</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genuine interest in staff as individuals</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipate problems. Early intervention</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modelling</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apologise if get it wrong</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership qualities - intrapersonal</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk the talk</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn from experience / mistakes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutuality of educational, personal, school philosophy</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency at job</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>NEGATIVE STRATEGIES</strong></th>
<th>P</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dishonesty, lies</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of communication</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing the positional card</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No follow through. over promising / under delivery</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>BARRIERS</strong></th>
<th>P</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embedded school culture</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underperforming or incompetent leaders</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underperforming / unsupportive teachers</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard conversations more difficult the closer the relationship</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to collaboration</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal issues outside school</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalities</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to change, especially from older staff</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>HISTORICAL NEGATIVE PRACTICES</strong></th>
<th>P</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying – yelling (previous schools)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: DA - Documentary Analysis  
P - Principal  
DP - Deputy Principal  
T – Teacher
happening in School A, there is evidence to suggest it has significantly influenced the behaviour of those staff that have experienced this in the past. Lastly, the column showing the findings from the documentary analysis of the school charter has been removed when not applicable.

**School charter and school-wide goals**

The Principal was responsible for writing the school charter document under consultation with the school and wider community, in compliance with MoE requirements. The charter articulates the vision, values, strategic goals and measurable student outcomes and targets for the following three years. According to the Principal, this particular charter was developed four years earlier through a participative consultation process that was guided by an external education-based consultant. The process included a swot analysis, student council, staff, and BOT definitions on what they felt a School A graduate should look like, and the Maori community’s input into the proposed goals and values. The Principal now believes it is time to revisit the consultation process to ensure the school is still meeting the needs of the community and students.

*PRINCIPAL: I think that you probably need to do the consultation about once every three years anyway, a whole cycle.*

The charter, strategic plan, and annual plan documents has been recently reviewed and revised in line with advice from the University of Auckland’s Starpath Project Team, ERO recommendations, and MoE requirements. The goals and targets of the school centre on the core business of raising student achievement levels under the mantra of successful learners. In essence, there are only three school-wide goals around student achievement, reducing disparities, and enhancing community engagement. Because of the high percentage of Maori students, there is a strong focus on bi-cultural learning experiences and the alignment of school practices and procedures to Te Kotahitanga, emphasising whole school participation and commitment supported by professional development and appraisal. The charter also stresses the over-riding need to provide clearer achievement information as identified in the previous two ERO reports.
School A has moved from a compliance-based model to one where school-wide goals have become meaningful, aspirational, based around development of the whole student, and tailored to match the specific needs of the school and community. There was an expectation that students were at the centre of teaching and learning and decision-making, suggesting the mantra of successful learners had become more embedded into school culture. The following comment sums up this view:

*DP: So compliance isn’t the focus, the focus is back to the kids. With the focus being our kids, regardless of what’s going on, regardless of what you’re putting in place to reach those goals, we remind people come back to the kids. If that’s not doing anything for our kids, for our students, throw it out, not interested.*

Two values conveyed through the charter are efficiency and equality. The ideal of efficiency was explicit with the number of references made about data driven decision-making, sustainable and collaborative leadership, and improving the quality of student achievement information. In contrast, the concept of equality was seen as more aspirational, the charter’s goal of reducing inequalities through addressing socio-economic, academic and health disparities aligning with the Principal’s own drive for social justice.

*PRINCIPAL: I’m a big fan of leadership for social justice … That to me is all about moral dilemmas. What happens when you’re working in a system that’s innately unjust?*

This was not the only example where statements made by the Principal and those expressed in the charter and annual plan appeared to mirror each other, highlighting the importance of individual as well as organisational mutuality in the relation to commitment to school-wide goals. The Principal believed he had honed his educational philosophy to be in tune with his personal one, and felt the school was a fit.

*PRINCIPAL: The worst dilemma of all would be to be in the wrong school. I’m not in that, but that’s the ultimate leadership dilemma finding you’re not really where you want to be, and there are plenty of cases of that.*

According to him, although in principle the strategic aims and school-wide goals in the charter are developed by the BOT, in reality he believed they often came from the Principal themself. In this case, the Principal’s own educative philosophy and
drive for social justice could be seen to have influenced the development of the charter’s mission, vision, values, and goals. In addition, all the interviewees mentioned mutuality of core beliefs and principles as an important prerequisite for gaining staff consensus and commitment to school-wide goals, thereby preventing the occurrence of leadership dilemmas. The teacher believed this was one reason why her working relationship with the Principal was so strong.

`TEACHER: ... because I align with his vision. My beliefs and my core principles for education align with his.`

All respondents discussed the significance of mutuality to school-wide goals and related these to their own and/or departmental practice. School A looked to have a number of processes in place to help ensure goals became school-wide, and not merely compliance activities for the charter. Leaders appeared to have effectively communicated goals to staff, all respondents identifying the three school-wide goals in varying degrees of detail, and explaining its relationship to their practice and the vertical alignment of school, departmental and individual goals. This is illustrated by the selection of comments below:

_HOD:_ We just tend to adopt the school-wide goals as our department goals. They’re pretty good goals. I mean how can you argue with those goals of raising student achievement and addressing disparity.

_TEACHER : In terms of how they relate to my practice, everything. I have found in my experience that if I work towards the goals which are set in our annual strategic plan it helps to frame my leadership practice a lot better, then I know what I’m actually trying to achieve … I must say I focus just more on the goal of raising student achievement, raising Maori student achievement. For example, the collection of evidence, using smart tools to collect evidence that will inform decisions. Evidence-based decisions is one of my goals and that then aligns with the raising student achievement goal because I want to model that with the staff as well._

Both the Principal and DP described how the leadership structure of the school had changed to support the strategy and annual goals outlined in the charter to encourage more collaborative teaching and learning, and to build sustainable leadership capacity. By broadening the organisational senior leadership structure, a Leader of Learning and Change Agent had been included in the SLT, giving more teachers the opportunity to have a voice and input into decision-making. Furthermore, approximately thirty policies and procedures made direct references to meeting aspects of the charter or aligning with the school’s goals and strategic plan.
In the future, the Principal suggested enhancing the mutuality of school-wide goals by appraising teachers against the charter, and allowing Leaders of Learning more input into annual goals and targets.

However, there was potential for leadership dilemmas to arise from out of the charter with assumptions made about the staff’s consensus and commitment to the school vision and goals, support and practice for the principles of Te Kotahitanga, and their openness to collaborative decision-making and growing leaders.

**Relationship strategies and leadership dilemmas**

None of the three leaders was able to initially define a leadership dilemma, although all attempted some definition based on their own experiences of dilemmas. The Principal extrapolated dilemmas would arise around the moral fight for students to be successful, but were inescapable due to the nature of personal relationships and the necessity of driving change, the hardest ones being where you felt your whole person was under threat or duress. In a similar vein, the DP felt dilemmas were forced upon leaders to deal with, where a solution was not readily available. Alternatively, the HOD suggested dilemmas came about when there was a tension between her personal beliefs, what she thought should be done, and whether she had the right to put that onto someone else. She believed if schools put student learning to the forefront the number of dilemmas would decrease.

**Leadership Dilemmas**

The number and type of leadership dilemmas encountered when seeking to meet school-wide goals and maintain positive relationships with staff was dependent on the role and responsibilities of the leader. The Principal’s problems dealt with more big picture and collective issues, while the DP and HOD’s concerns tended to focus on the performance of individual teachers. However, three out of the four respondents identified an unresolved leadership dilemma caused by leaders within the school they believed was inhibiting the school’s performance as a whole. In this case, while the Principal had taken ownership of the leadership dilemma and
recognised the negative impact the behaviours were having on the achievement of school-wide goals, he had been unable to resolve the problem.

According to the Principal, this was a leadership dilemma because the actions by people in positions of power not similarly driven by the vision and goals of the school can stall the process. A range of differing elements had contributed to the complexity of this problem. On one hand, the leaders were predominantly older staff members who had worked at the school for a long time. This meant because the Principal had been externally employed he initially had to work with people who did not necessarily want him there. A traditional view of hierarchical management and power informed the leadership practice of the SLT, two of whom had been at the school for many years, and while mutuality was espoused it was not necessarily practiced. The Principal had also encountered resistance and pack protection when seeking to implement changes to their responsibilities, such as increasing student contact and encouraging collaborative decision-making. On the other hand, a number of staff perceived these leaders to be lacking in drive and passion, and those pushing for change felt frustrated and wanted to move them on. Not surprisingly, the SLT became defensive under attack and refused to consider their own contribution to the problem, reverting to further control mechanisms.

The Principal had used a number of strategies in his attempts to resolve the leadership dilemma. During the first year of his tenure, he worked hard to build positive relationships, respecting what was already in place and asking questions before driving for change. He tried to coach the leaders, working alongside in an effort to grow and enthuse them, changing meeting structures to be more constructive, and targeting performance areas during appraisal. Recognising the negative impact their actions were having on the achievement of school-wide goals, the Principal to some extent now worked around their areas of weakness, becoming strength based, and widening the leadership structure of the school. While identifying, developing, and providing leadership opportunities to those showing burgeoning skills helped grow new leaders and increase sustainability as articulated in the school charter, it also annoyed those higher up the pecking order. Furthermore, although not afraid to have the hard conversations, there appeared to be little change in the leaders’ underlying values and assumptions at the root of their
actions. However, the Principal still remained loyal to the leaders and refused to give up on them.

PRINCIPAL: I hope that the solution to the dilemmas is to keep talking with them and to them and continuing to include them, being inclusive rather than exclusive. Because I have pressures on me to work around them. But they’re my team and I need to work with them. That’s probably the biggest test I’ve had actually in leadership in a strange way.

Although having hard conversations were considered necessary to confront issues and resolve ongoing dilemmas, it was also acknowledged that this approach was problematic because of the need to address relational needs of staff. Both the Principal and DP admitted they found hard conversations more difficult when personal or working relationships were closer, and saw keeping professional distance as important for leaders. The DP confessed he found it challenging finding a balance between building positive relationships and satisfying organisational needs. Due to inexperience, he had initially allowed staff to become too familiar in his loneliness of the new position and unwillingness to be treated differently because he wore a tie and sat in the DP’s office. Furthermore, having experienced an autocratic bully type leader in a previous school, he had tended to overcompensate and put the relationship before the outcome in his efforts not to exhibit bullying behaviours. Because he had only the two strategies of soft sell and hard sell in his toolkit, on the two occasions he played the “positional card” and tried to coerce a staff member into changing their behaviour the relationship had broken down.

DP: So in terms of positional power, on those two times it’s strained it. I’ve got to say, during that period of time where it was strained, I’ve felt uncomfortable and I suspect the other person felt uncomfortable. When we’ve got together and I’ve co-constructed with that person a solution, we worked together way better.

Another leadership dilemma encountered by the Principal was around the mantra of successful learners, where he was concerned that not all staff brought into this vision and were possibly in the wrong school. He cited two examples where teachers had openly “ slagged” students or parents in his hearing, or showed resistance when reinstating a student with behavioural issues. The Principal thought as well as leadership dilemmas, leaders also faced the personal dilemma of being brave enough to back up what they and the school believed in, even when at the risk of offending someone else. Similarly, embedded school culture was identified by the DP and himself as being a barrier to achieving school-wide goals, where poor
practices were excused as being the ‘School A way’, although efforts to define the ‘School A way’ proved elusive.

Alternatively, the DP discussed a departmental situation where two members were tasked with “manipulating” a programme to “make it fit within leadership”. From his perspective, the process itself was relatively easy, but a clash of personalities was preventing its completion. This is possibly why the word “manipulate” was used, because the DP had to try and manipulate, or address the clash of personalities within the department in order to solve the problem. His leadership dilemma was how to convince the two staff members to move their emotion and the personalities aside so the task could be completed, and school-wide goals be met. It was also a leadership dilemma because he had no solution to the issue.

DP: This is what we wanted to achieve, and the endpoint was relatively easy, but to get past their differences, that was a challenge … Again, the challenge was because I think I’m really good at relationships and dealing with the challenges that come along with relationships, and I was stumped. This took me a long time, relatively speaking. … it challenged me, everything I knew of relationships. … I had to use my principal just to get through the end of that dilemma.

Relationship Strategies

The HOD’s leadership dilemmas dealt with individual teachers in her department and the impact of their teaching on student achievement. As well as using coaching, professional dialogue, positive encouragement, and incidental conversations to guide and develop staff, she also considered practical solutions such as splitting a larger class into two smaller ones, and supporting teachers with student behavioural issues, curriculum, and resources.

HOD: We do a lot of stuff on an informal one-on-one basis, so I tend to casually mention my planning that I’m doing, or discuss, how’s that Year 10 class going? Then hopefully move it into that.

She believed her efforts in maintaining open and constructive communication had developed positive relationships with her staff, where any incidents had not led to a breakdown in relations. The strategies the HOD identified as most successful in the long-term for meeting departmental goals while still maintaining a positive relationship with staff were honesty, conversation, and early intervention. Comments
from other respondents reinforced the value of communication, leaders needing to be available, approachable, and willing to engage in professional dialogue. The teacher’s statement below summarises these views:

**TEACHER:** Making yourself available. People will talk to you if you’re seen to be approachable. Being available and approachable. Because you might be approachable, but you’re never around. You might be only approachable at your house. If you’re a leader of a team, your team needs to know that they can come and see you about what’s going on, big or small. Even if it’s about the milk in the fridge. They need to know that they can come and tell you, and you’ll listen and if you’re not approachable, that’s a barrier. Starts to build not nice stuff.

From the teacher’s perspective, leaders had used a number of other positive strategies that persuaded her to change her practice, such as professional development using off-site courses, or small group training around the new learning to introduce and support new initiatives. She found leaders who gave clear guidelines on expectations, were organised and planned when implementing new initiatives, and who communicated a clear vision to staff backed by experience and research more likely to engender staff buy-in. In addition, the teacher cited her experiences with open-to-learning conversations in a previous school as being the most powerful strategy used by a leader in relation to making changes in practice.

**TEACHER:** She never answers my questions. She never answers them, so she uses a learning conversation, open for learning conversation and she’s extremely good at it, to get me to reflect back on my thinking. I think that’s a skill that changes my practice the most because it actually impacts my theorising around why I’m doing it.”

All participants highlighted trusting relationships as important towards gaining consensus and commitment to school-wide goals and resolving leadership dilemmas. For example, the process of devolving power through collaborative decision-making and shared leadership had helped establish strong working relationships and gaining staff buy-in for school goals. Competence, loyalty, honesty, and being reflective were also valued as personal qualities that helped build trust in the leader’s ability to perform in their role. The Principal was highly regarded, and spoken of as a mentor, an experienced and knowledgeable leader who used current research to back his decisions, someone who ‘walked his talk’.

According to the Principal, transparency, respecting confidentially, and non-use of positional power were other important character traits, where leaders showed a
genuine interest in their staff rather than asserting their power and being a bully. He believed communication was key, where leaders must be not only good communicators, but also active listeners.

PRINCIPAL: I actually think communication is the way. It’s communication and integrity. It’s not easy for principals to shut up and listen, because listening is really hard work … Exhausting at the end of the day, because people are coming to you for a reason. How can I help you? and off they go … Active listening is quite hard work and quite a skill, and then doing something after the active listening is really important, that you actually follow it up or you’ve checked up with them about how they feel about something. Relationship management one is probably the most important part of our job and if you get it right things are pretty good. If you get it wrong I think the best thing is always to apologise, I should have done this or that.

Lastly, follow through was explored from three different perspectives. In the Principal’s case, this meant following up on issues raised during active listening to resolve the problem. The second example illuminated ‘overpromise and under delivery’, where trusting relationships were compromised by a lack of follow through from being a ‘yes’ person. Lastly, ‘walking the talk’, where staff knew from experience if the leader promised to do something it would be followed up and completed.

*Influences on relationship practices*

Considering the greatest influences on the way they currently addressed relationship challenges, leaders felt having experience in their leadership role and learning from mistakes shaped the way they dealt with relationships. They also acknowledged the impact of mentors on their leadership practice as portrayed in the following comments:

PRINCIPAL: … actually having good mentors myself. I reflect on it now although I didn’t know it at the time but I was actually well schooled by people who took, who still take an interest in my career. I had an asset there that I didn’t realise that they were, people I could talk to …

DP: However, I’ve got to say that of all the theorists, and all the information that you read there’s nothing like talking with an experienced principal. We probably know this, that that’s the best PD. … PD doesn’t get any better than that. Sharing best knowledge, best practice and experiences.
Two of the leaders explained how they now mentored others less experienced than them. For the Principal, because of his knowledge being a mentor had become both an internal and external responsibility. In addition, his own use of literature and research in his capacity as an educational practitioner and mentor meant others also saw this as a valid and meaningful way to develop their practice. From the HOD’s perspective, an ongoing course focused around Vivienne Robinson’s work with difficult conversations and problem-solving had helped her and other HODs in the school to deal with leadership dilemmas.

Both the Principal and DP modelled their own leadership practice on qualities and successful strategies they had seen in other leaders they had worked with. The following comment illustrates this:

**PRINCIPAL:** … working with good people. I modelled myself on them when I reflected on them now, and I thought about the principals I’d worked for and I’ve moved around a bit. I’m not them, but I saw what they did that was them. It gave me confidence to be who I am and use some of their skills.

Alternatively, negative modelling had perhaps a greater impact, where the DP and HOD deliberately went out of their way to not repeat practices they considered ineffective, frustrating, or detrimental to staff. Their perspectives are commented on below:

**HOD:** I know that if something frustrates me then I make a point of not doing that. Actually, one thing that does frustrate me is lack of communication, so I try really hard to keep staff in the picture and let them know what’s going on.

**DP:** I know of two occasions when I have, and I avoid it like the plague. I would have said before that occurred that I think there’s a time and place for that, I don’t believe there is. Right now I don’t believe there is a place for that bully type leader.

Two of the respondents cited bullying behaviours as the most detrimental strategy leaders used when focusing on organisational outcomes. Although not experiencing coercive behaviour in School A, they had both been in a situation at a previous school where a leader had used bullying as their common practice. They explained how this had violated their mana\(^1\) and been very difficult to deal with personally, especially when compounded by power imbalances. The HOD and Teacher identified other historical relationship practices leaders had used that had led to a breakdown

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1. Prestige, spiritual power, charisma – the supernatural force in a person.
in relations. Examples were given of telling lies, dishonesty, underperforming, gatekeeping, making unilateral decisions, being disorganised, and lacking commitment to school-wide goals. Therefore, in its simplest form, negative practices can be defined as acting in a way opposite to practices that build trusting relationships. This was best summarised by the HOD’s comment:

**HOD:** … *when people behave the opposite to what I think is the effective way.*

**Barriers**

Seven out of the nine barriers participants felt prevented a successful resolution to dilemmas arising from implementing school-wide goals had to do with interpersonal relationships within the school environment, highlighting how leadership dilemmas are not only caused by underperforming, resistant or unsupportive classroom teachers, but are just as likely to stem from others in positions of power. In this situation, unresolved leadership dilemmas may then become employee dilemmas, where lower ranked staff are prevented from doing their job to the best of their ability because of obstructive behaviours by their leaders. In addition, half of the respondents also mentioned time or personal issues outside the school as influencing their capacity to fulfil their obligations to the job.

**Professional Development**

Because of the differing roles and responsibilities of the participants, there was a range of perspectives on professional development considered necessary for first time or experienced leaders regarding meeting school-wide goals and leadership dilemmas. In the Principal’s case, due to the complexity of his job he was not sure how this could be done, but believed having strong mentors and modelling had been vital for his own learning. On the other hand, the DP felt preparation should take place prior to accepting the new role so you felt equipped for the responsibilities of the position. While he knew about the training for first-time principals, he was unsure about the time commitment it required.
The HOD was aware of relevant middle leadership courses on TKI\textsuperscript{2}, but found time and accessibility a barrier. She believed regular professional dialogue with others in the same role had been beneficial, as illustrated by her comments below:

**HOD:** … changed meetings from a once a month on Monday after school to every Thursday morning just for half an hour, before school. That’s been really good, … as a team went through the Leading from the Middle document and looked at some of the issues and ideas from that.

One of the valuable things with that Centre of Educational Leadership stuff was just the time to sit round with our fellow HODs and talk about, these difficult conversations, here’s the ones I’m having in my department.

I think we just need to make more time to talk together and share strategies and that as Leaders of Learning. I think that would be quite valuable, and it needs to be on a regular basis.

In contrast, the teacher felt professional development should challenge the thinking of leaders by encouraging them to become more critical about what they are doing in order to address their mind-sets, positioning and theorising so as to get a shift in practice. It must be consistent, ongoing, tailored to school’s needs, and culturally appropriate and responsive, as a model fitting a decile ten school will not be relevant for a decile one or two. She believed there was a real need for relationship training at middle and senior leadership level to develop the ability to build authentic, trusting, and credible relationships between leaders and their staff, but questioned whether professional development could actually teach these skills. Furthermore, she felt professional development at middle leadership level was often targeted at the curriculum, whereas Leaders of Learning needed to become leaders of learning, rather than leaders of teaching. These thoughts are expressed in the following comment:

**TEACHER:** I think the need is for middle leaders to be effective pedagogical leaders, not just content. Leaders of content, and their curriculum subject has shifted, so we need leaders in the middle who can lead teams of teachers to be better practitioners in the classroom, to be better at engaging their students, to be better at figuring out what it is that they’re doing in terms of their practice that’s impacting on the learning in the classroom

**Summary**

In School A the charter was essentially viewed as a living dynamic document that underpinned and framed the school’s teaching and learning, performance

\textsuperscript{2} Te Kete Ipurangi is a bilingual portal-plus web community that provides educational material for teachers.
management, professional development, policy and procedures, and organisational and management systems and structures. While aspirational, it was clear the educational philosophy and ideals espoused in the charter often reflected the practices inside the school. This was driven by a Principal who was perceived by staff to have a clear vision for the school, and the necessary experience and skill to build trusting relationships and implement change to support the achievement of school-wide goals. However, according to half the participants, this impact was to some extent filtered because of his inability to resolve the ongoing leadership dilemma that stemmed from other senior leaders within the school.

Part Two: School B

Context

School B is a smaller middle-sized mid-decile secondary school for with a bi-cultural student population of Pakeha and Maori, the larger proportion being Pakeha. The main guiding principle of the school is founded on restorative practice, which is underpinned by the building and maintaining of positive caring relationships and focused on a ‘with’ rather than a ‘to’ attitude. Four staff were interviewed from similar leadership and teaching positions to School A, all being employed at the school for over four years.

The Principal has headed School B for more than ten years, working his way up the ranks in his previous school to DP before appointed to his current position. Alternatively, the DP has taught at a number of schools, this being her second Deputy Principalship. Her experience in different organisational and management systems brought fresh ideas for alternative leadership structures. In contrast, although now experienced in the role, the HOD was promoted to this position early in her career. The last participant has worked at School B for a number of years, and in three schools prior.

The school charter and current policies were the documents collected for documentary analysis. This process involved an in-depth analysis of the school
charter, and a perfunctory inspection of the policies to investigate their alignment to the school charter.

Overview

Table 4.2 represents the overall analysis of the findings from documentary analysis on the school charter and the four semi-structured interviews, and displays strategies used by educational leaders to engender staff commitment to reaching school-wide goals, effective management of relationships, and leadership traits that are valued by staff. The following two sections portray the negative strategies leaders have used that have led to a breakdown in relations, and barriers towards meeting school goals. The final division depicts the historical negative practice of bullying, because as in the case of the DP there is evidence to suggest her previous experiences have significantly influenced her responses. Lastly, the column with the findings from the documentary analysis has been removed wherever considered non-applicable.

Table 4.2 Summary of findings from School B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITIVE STRATEGIES</th>
<th>DA</th>
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<td>Mutuality of, goals, core beliefs, principles</td>
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<td>Relevant PD</td>
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<td>Transparency</td>
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<td>Research / evidence based</td>
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<td>Growing leaders</td>
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<td>Relationship management - interpersonal</td>
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<td>Communication: professional dialogue/incidental conversation</td>
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<td>Build trusting relationships</td>
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<td>Restorative based conversations</td>
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<td>Have the hard conversations</td>
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<td>Genuine interest in staff as individuals</td>
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<td>Not too directive – offer suggestions for change</td>
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<td>Respecting confidentially</td>
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<td>Develop a collegial culture</td>
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<td>Waiting people out – long-term solutions</td>
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<td>Positive, polite, and constructive</td>
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<td>Modelling</td>
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66
### Leadership qualities - intrapersonal

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<td>Learn from experience / mistakes</td>
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### NEGATIVE STRATEGIES

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<td>No follow through, over promising / under delivery</td>
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### BARRIERS

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<tr>
<td>Leaders not always modelling desired behaviours</td>
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<td>Time</td>
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### HISTORICAL NEGATIVE PRACTICES

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<td>Bullying – yelling (in previous school)</td>
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Key: DA - Documentary Analysis  P - Principal  DP - Deputy Principal  T – Teacher

### School charter and school-wide goals

The Principal was very clear about the consultation process the school followed in order to ensure that what was in the charter reflected the needs and aspirations of the community. This process was outlined in the school charter and included three yearly community consultations, annual surveys run with staff and senior student leavers targeting particular areas, and regular meetings with other stakeholders. Information gathered was then used by the Principal, SLT and BOT to inform decision-making, and review and update the charter. The Principal expressed some frustration with the MoE who wanted them to report in a different way, forcing changes from how the charter had previously been written:

**PRINCIPAL:** I would have liked to have thought of our charter’s strategic plan as the things we don’t do. Whereas in actual fact it’s now becoming rather paediatric and it’s only describing what we do do, and the little bits we want to change on it, as opposed to previously, where we would have had all of the things we were about to do in our strategic plan and not daily events that happen.

According to the DP, the goals of the school were predetermined, and set by the BOT and senior management in consultation with staff. She believed it was important for teaching staff to have input on school-wide goals when they related to student achievement and attendance.
The main goals for the school centred on educating students for success by raising academic achievement through high quality teaching and learning in order to prepare students for their future. Furthermore, the charter sought to develop the whole student and encouraged a culture of life-long learning. Due to the bi-cultural nature of the school, one section focused on Maori achievement and the development of identity and uniqueness. Digitalisation being used as a tool to enhance learning and provide easy access to student data for tracking and coaching was emphasised, the Principal’s passion for technology a driving force. The charter also showed a commitment from the principal and SLT to a process of on-going strategic-review and continuous school improvement.

Two values conveyed through the charter are efficiency and excellence. The concept of efficiency espoused in the charter appeared to transfer across into school practice, the Principal making references during his interview to data driven decision-making, data informed professional dialogue, and the quality and accessibility of online student achievement information. On the other hand, the idea of excellence underlay the school vision and school-wide goals. A number of statements in the charter reinforced this value, for example comparing student academic achievement to national levels, and encouraging students to strive for success in all areas including co-curricular.

With the school’s strong focus on restorative practice, mutuality of core principles and beliefs came through as important in both the documentary analysis and interviews. The Principal had put a number of processes into action to engender buy-in and commitment from staff, and articulated these practices in the charter. This included training all staff to facilitator level, and strategic employment where he refused to employ any teacher who did not support restorative practice. The comment below illustrates these views:

PRINCIPAL: I’m quite picky with my staff. If they can’t work restoratively … I don’t care what else or how good they are we don’t employ them. Fullstop. I will not appoint unless someone can work restoratively. I could have a five minute conversation and tell you whether someone philosophically could work in a restoratively based school like ours. All of our appointments have been on the basis that they could work restoratively. That’s probably one of the major reasons that we’re so aligned on that.
The HOD explained how there was also a tight fit between school-wide, departmental, and individual appraisal goals. Because one of the charter objectives for the year was to bring departmental goals more in line with the New Zealand Curriculum Document there had been a major overhaul in the way these were set. In her particular case, she promoted a culture of collaborative decision-making, where the department as a whole discussed the vision, values, and goals, reflected and reviewed the previous year, and determined together what should roll over. Departmental goals tended to be big picture goals, which were then broken down through the Appraisal Process into smaller, more manageable, and more definite goals to make it specific to each teacher’s class, workload, or personal goals.

HOD: The key to our departmental goals is that they still have to be big picture and they have to be aspirational. I’m not really interested in having a goal that says ‘have a do now’ on the board every period. That’s too tiny, too prescriptive and also I want teachers to be free to experiment and to feel free to experiment. As long as they’re trying new things I don’t mind if every so often we have a bit of a failure of a technique. I think that’s how those departmental goals, the fact that they’re so broad, they’re so big, they’re so aspirational, it gives us the freedom to have very big, aspirational, experimental goals as well.

In contrast, the teacher had only a general idea about school wide goals, but knew they were about lifting Maori achievement, school digitalisation, and NCEA targets. It was unclear whether this vagueness was indicative of all teachers in the school, or only from her as a part-timer. She explained how adjustments she had made to a course helping students less academically able to achieve, and her own personal goals of bringing more Te Reo into her teaching related to these school-wide goals.

The DP described how the school supported the achievement of school-wide goals by horizontal integration through its leadership structures and management systems. She believed the pastoral system had been out of alignment with the espoused school-wide goals when she first arrived. Students were in a vertical whanau system headed by a House Leader whose responsibilities only involved organising sporting challenges. On the other hand, the pastoral Dean system was horizontal and assigned to a specific year group, while DPs were unattached and did not fit in anywhere. This structure had proved ineffective when House meetings were often stalled because Deans were elsewhere. As a result, the SLT implemented a new system to run everything vertically, each House now led by a DP with one Dean.
responsible for the pastoral care of the entire whanau, rather than a year group. These changes also had implications for job descriptions and the allocation of management units.

Consistency was achieved by using the same model and method to meet management plans and deadlines, and ensure school initiatives remained in line with school-wide goals. The statement below summarises the value the DP placed on the charter and its influence on the organisation and management of the school:

DP: The charter basically determines how we’re going to run and what we’re going to do and what our goals are. That comes back down to everything that we do as senior managers. Like our job descriptions, our portfolios come out of that, and so it has a total influence on how you’re going to run your school. We don’t have a problem with that, and our management structure is designed to feedback into that. So we have our Senior Managers, and then we have our Leaders of Learning, or our Heads of Department, and so everything is done on a whole charter and strategic plan basis.

Although I was unable to view the Procedure documents, there were a number of school policies that explicitly referred to alignment with the school’s charter values, and strategic and annual plans. For example, policies that dealt with the BOT’s roles and responsibilities, and the Principal’s performance appraisal.

Relationship strategies and dilemma management

Although no leader was able to define a leadership dilemma, two participants gave pertinent examples that showed some understanding about tensions that arose when trying to meet both relational and organisational needs, while the other leader explained the restorative model the school used to resolve dilemmas. The HOD believed there were two types of leadership dilemmas. Firstly, a directive from the top that some staff may consider “stupid”, where people either made the decision to comply or strategically ignored it. Secondly, where someone did not perform at the expected standard, or made a mistake, thereby causing an ongoing problem if not dealt with.

According to the Principal, there were no real leadership dilemmas in the school. He attributed this to his strategic employment, leadership style, the restorative practice
model, having professional development in place to support change, transparency, data informed discussions, and having a number of forums available for staff to voice concerns. When he first arrived, he had found virtually no systems in place and the staff in disarray due to historical leadership issues. Because things were in such “bad shape”, the Principal found staff supported any changes he implemented as long as the school was seen to be moving forward. He also believed that keeping a professional distance was important in his relationships with staff, as shown by this comment:

PRINCIPAL: Because the buck always stops with the principal staff relationships must be kept out of close friendships or you will compromise yourself or the position.

A Deputy Principal’s Perspective

In contrast, the DP gave three examples of leadership dilemmas, one a performance issue, and two around whole school structural or organisational change. In the first instance, while an HOD appeared to lead their department well, they struggled with leadership within student planning, organisation and information, thereby affecting student outcomes in exams and credits. This issue was compounded by the necessity to comply with union processes, meaning the process was drawn out over a couple of years. The DP however did not elaborate on this any further. Eventually, internal coaching helped upskill the HOD, where the DP walked them through the correct procedures.

In the other two examples, leadership dilemmas arose during the process of implementing school-wide change, with tension between what leaders saw as best for the organisation against some teachers who resisted the new changes. The first change was around leadership structure with pastoral care of students in the whanau House system, and the second where parent interviews were changed from speed-dating to student participative conferences. This quote from the DP summarises the two perspectives:

DP: The staff attitude to change and culture is a big one. Staff don’t necessarily want to change just for the sake of doing it and also you’re shaking people’s worlds. It’s not something that you take and do lightly. You have to have done your homework and really looked at why are you making these changes, and is the school going to run far more successfully.
She believed before instigating major change leaders should first confirm it will benefit the whole community, that is the students, school, staff, and whanau, and used the metaphor of the ripple effect when dropping a pebble into a pond to illustrate her point. The DP used an analytical approach to help determine whether the proposed change was actually necessary by answering four key questions:

1. Why change?
2. What method will be used to implement the change?
3. What is the reasoning behind the change?
4. What are we going to get out of it? The final outcome.

She then used a number of strategies to prevent and/or resolve any leadership dilemmas that might arise out of the proposed changes. The DP found successful change was never instantaneous but required time for discussion to ensure staff understanding, and trialling prior to final implementation. She identified four strategies she concurrently used when instigating new initiatives: streamlining systems; gaining consensus; review processes and upskilling staff. Firstly, leaders must be prepared, organised, and planned, aware of those staff members likely to support, those against, and those not caring either way, and ensure answers are ready for any questions likely to be raised by staff. She acknowledged the benefit of critical questioning for the analytical review of new initiatives:

DP: “… you’ve got to have 90% buy in from everybody with maybe a healthy degree of cynicism, and will it work or won’t it. … A healthy degree of questioning, there’s nothing wrong with that. It keeps you on your toes. It keeps you looking at why you are doing things and whether it’s any good.”

Secondly, how change was implemented was crucial, where being driven from the bottom up using collaborative decision-making, rather than authoratively directed from the top down, helped engender staff buy-in and commitment. For example, the DP explained how when Starpath was introduced they had initially implemented the programme from the top, instead of bringing the staff along and upskilling them through professional development. She acknowledged the SLT had tried to do it too quickly, then having to take a step back to rethink their strategy. It was important staff understood the purpose of the change, how it would affect the running of the school and student outcomes, and not increase workload. Thirdly, all four participants stressed the importance of supporting change with professional
development. Lastly, the DP believed robust review processes must be put in place to respond to issues and streamline systems.

**Relationship Practices**

Findings from the documentary analysis and the four interviews identified professional development as an essential component running alongside the change process. The Principal explained how when restorative practice was first implemented, professional development had been scaffolded over an extended period in order to support the initiative. Although the school was committed to training all staff to facilitator level, due to cost they used a trickle down approach by first training the SLT team and the Deans, gradually followed by other teaching staff. Currently only new staff were trained each year. In addition, all respondents highlighted mutuality of goals, core principles, and beliefs as a prerequisite to achieving school objectives and embedding good practices into school culture.

The HOD discussed a leadership dilemma she faced with an older teacher in her department who was resistant to altering his teacher practice to fit in with current pedagogy and changing student needs. She was aware it needed dealing with to prevent an ongoing problem. This particular teacher had worked at the school for many years, experiencing a number of HODs during the course of his tenure. Consequently, he was suspicious of how long she would remain in the school, and being happy with his own practice that had stood him in good stead for many years, questioned her ‘new-fangled’ ideas. Moreover, the younger age of the HOD compared to him further exacerbated his stubbornness.

The HOD had worked hard to build a trusting relationship, deliberately ensuring she was not coercive or forceful, but offered suggestions and ideas about new ways of doing things. She demonstrated long-term commitment to the school, patience, waited him out, and allowed time for change to happen. The following comment shows how under her leadership the teacher’s internal mind-set had changed to lead to a genuine shift in practice.

*HOD: Just by being patient and just by being here and wearing him down and having ideas, and being excited about those ideas, eventually he’s got to the*
point where he will genuinely actually buy into some of my ideas. … He hasn’t just brought into them like the frills, he’s brought into the core stuff. He’s changed the way he does assessments to include a greater range of contexts or to include a greater range of ways to show evidence. That’s made a huge difference to the way that his classes run.

Within the department, the HOD developed a collegial atmosphere, believing that by sharing ideas and encouraging each other in outside school pursuits, teachers would also become supportive and encouraging of internal school activities. Reinforcing this practice, the teacher explained how the HOD got them working together, eating together, and doing craft together so they could get to know each other outside the curriculum. It was important for the HOD to show she cared about her staff as individuals, and that she did not feel threatened when receiving advice or good ideas from them. Other strategies she used to support the achievement of departmental goals was her realisation that issues could not be solved with a quick fix solution such as shouting, giving positive encouragement for small steps made, and modelling good practice.

In addition, the HOD transferred the idea of developing a shared passion for lifelong learning stated in the school charter’s curriculum aim into her own practice. She demonstrated this by showing she was a lifelong learner, and worked hard to develop a departmental culture that supported and nurtured lifelong learning and change. The biggest influence on the way she addressed relationship challenges stemmed from her underlying values of social justice and equity. The HOD had spent a large portion of her life seeking for ways not to perpetuate social structures that caused inequalities, such as breaking down barriers for women in education and culturally for Maori. Aside from resistance to change, the other barrier she identified was attempting to balance her management approaches between long-term teachers and those only there for a short while.

The DP had a wide range of relationship strategies she used to build trust, support the achievement of school-wide goals, and resolve leadership dilemmas. To her, the most important personal leadership qualities were being competent, reflective, committed, honest, upfront, having a ‘can do’ attitude, and placing students at centre of decision-making. She believed building a culture of trust and integrity was
necessary in order to solve dilemmas, where the facts of the issue was dealt with, rather than allowing the personality or emotion to intrude. While both parties might agree to disagree and not end up with an actual resolution, outcomes were based on what was best for students, not necessarily teachers.

Empowering staff by building capacity through coaching and providing opportunities for growth was emphasised by the DP. She focused on the individuality of each person, building on strengths, supporting and improving weaknesses, and turning mistakes into positive learning experiences, while at the same time careful not tread on the mana of staff. This comment illustrates those underlying beliefs:

   DP: Do what I say I’m going to do. Not ever ask anyone to do anything that I haven’t done or are not prepared to do myself. I walk the talk. I don’t just say here do this, I walk beside them. If I can’t, then I’ll explain and say I trust you to go and do it, you’re a professional. If you stuff it up then, look at why we’ve stuffed it up, and then let’s sit down and work out why it happened, but go and have a shot. It’s that building that capacity in people to do what they’re employed to do

Communication and engaging in professional dialogue were the most highly valued strategies towards building trusting relationships, where leaders were supportive, approachable, and available. Three quarters of the participants highlighted ‘walking the talk’ as critical, where leaders followed through, did what they said they would, and modelled behaviours they wanted staff to exhibit. In addition, half the respondents mentioned having mentors, respecting confidentially, being positive, polite and constructive as important.

Participants gave a range of perspectives from an employee’s point of view on the most effective strategies used by leaders to change their practice. In the teacher’s case, this was professional dialogue, appraisal, and collaborative decision-making. She felt the relationship practices the HOD used had helped her consider alternatives and encouraged feedback.

   TEACHER: Because of the way she talks, it’s a strengthening, because she doesn’t make me feel like I’m not good enough. She makes me think there’s other ways of doing something and perhaps this is one of them. It encourages feedback rather than telling me what to do. So I find that a strengthening in the relationship because I trust her.
Alternatively, the DP found principals who treated her with respect and allowed her to get on with her job while being there for advice and guidance helped her most. They allowed her to learn, challenged her out of her comfort zone, and then debriefed well. The HOD spoke about having good restorative and supportive relationships with some of the DPs at School B, such as when they gave her the heads up about something they had heard and respected confidentiality. On the other hand, the opposite was also true, where she lacked trust and guarded her words around one DP who had proven indiscreet.

Restorative Practice

All three leaders felt it was necessary to have the tough conversations to resolve dilemmas. The school’s restorative practice philosophy meant there was the expectation that discussions were restorative based, focused on developing an understanding of the reasons behind the actions and maintaining relationships. The Principal claimed this was different to ‘hard conversations’ in that it was about what was actually going on, and how each party perceived it to be happening for them personally. The first step was to helicopter the issue with everyone by walking through what had happened, thereby gaining some idea of what each party is thinking and feeling. Each person then shares his or her thoughts and feelings, which inform new views of the issue. From this a shared understanding is developed. Often by this stage, each party will have seen what their actions are doing to the other person and be sorry. Lastly, a historic and preventive fix is discussed that culminates in an agreed way forward. Figure 4.1 summarises the Principal’s explanation of the process a restorative conversation would follow:

| Helicopter issue with all parties | Share thoughts and feelings | Develop a shared understanding | Shared decision-making and agreement (historical and preventive) |

**Figure 4.1.** A restorative conversation

Participants should be open, not entering with preconceived perceptions then trying to validate them, but instead focused on developing a shared understanding. The
Principal suggested preparing reflective questions beforehand would assist in hearing what others are saying. He suggested if things are antagonistic to “figure out why”, come to an agreement and move on, ensuring the focus is kept on the future rather than the past. Furthermore, the Principal claimed he did not accept barriers to resolving conflict, but rather believed things should be worked through until resolved.

However, two participants admitted the school does not always live up to being restorative in its collegial relationships, where restorative practices at times are not modelled by senior management in their relationships with staff. This suggested the ability of leaders to model behaviours they wished staff to embody had a filter down effect on those lower down the ranks, thereby affecting its embedment into school culture. One interviewee felt leaders, and especially the Principal as the cultural leader of the school, had a moral obligation to staff to exemplify behaviours they wished teachers to exhibit with students by modelling these in their relationships with staff:

*HOD: We have a duty to be restorative in our relationships with them, and I think sometimes staff don’t get that same respect and restorative intervention or duty from their seniors.*

This perception may have come about by leaders not aligning their emphasis on students with the relational needs of staff.

*Negative Relationship Practices*

The DP described how working under a bullying principal in the past had made her aware of the detrimental effect this practice had on her and other staff, and influenced the way she addressed relationship issues. In this historical case, staff had been isolated into pockets, began to question their professional integrity and ability, felt they had to watch their backs, and become worried about their longevity in the job. Personally, she had found it debilitating, wearying, tiring, and physically straining, and considered the practice unethical where too many people were being hurt. Eventually the DP had resigned, believing the issue was the way the leader dealt with people and that you could not “change a person’s fundamental way of dealing with things if they don’t want to see it.” In contrast, her mother had taught her
to consider the feelings of other people and to treat them, as she would like to be treated. The following comment summarizes these influences:

**DP:** Working under a very bullying principal was a very influential aspect I suppose, and also working under an incompetent principal... the fact of bullying, I don't agree with that as a method of working. So, looking at those things and thinking, and always reminding myself I don't want to do that. There was not effective. That's not how you do it. That's been a big influence. They'll probably be the two biggest ones and how not to do it. How to do it right is how would I like to be treated in that situation, that's been my biggest influence and how I've been brought up. My mum's always said that you don't do anything to anyone that you wouldn't like done to yourself, and that's always stuck in the back of my mind.

According to the teacher, one of the negative practices that led to a breakdown in relations was telling lies, where a leader alleged they had actioned something when they had not, or alternatively had not followed through. Moreover, decisions that were made without staff input, or when staff were asked but not heard, may create a barrier to resolving dilemmas successfully. Because of her part-time status, she also found teaching timetables contributed to difficulties in solving problems, as did the personalities involved, as restorative conversations only work if both parties believe in the process. The DP mentioned a number of other barriers such as avoidance; fear of looking stupid; time constraints; unsupportive staff; and where personal issues outside of the school intruded on a staff member’s ability to perform.

**Professional Development**

All three leaders identified mentors as an important form of professional development in relation to meeting school-wide goals and dealing with leadership dilemmas. From his own experience, the Principal believed having more time in an Assistant or Deputy Principal’s role and experiencing a wide variety of responsibilities before becoming Principal was beneficial, but realised this was not always realistic. He suggested an alternative system of training DPs, where they worked for one to two terms in another school to widen their experience while the school providing on the ground mentoring. The following comment illustrates this point:

**PRINCIPAL:** Having had that on the ground experience is, obviously not essential because it’s not happening now, but it certainly makes the job a lot easier to go into and get through on. So you’re less likely to get into conflict if
you’ve already seen, and have some idea how you can manage something successfully.

The HOD believed the school needed to provide better internal support for HODs new to the role by implementing a monitored buddy system. She recommended instigating a programme to assess the needs of new and incoming staff on a more individualised basis. In a similar vein, the DP suggested proper career counselling be made available for staff, with schools making opportunities available for leadership with support, challenging people to step out of their comfort zone. She would like to see an external programme set up for aspiring DPs, that recognises and teaches the necessary skills, rather than being thrown into the deep end and learning by mistakes. Lastly, the teacher felt leaders needed more professional development in building relationships, such as how to make staff feel more included and not apportioning blame.

**Summary**

In School B, while the charter guided teaching and learning, and school organisation and management, it was more an articulation of current practice than a driver for change. The Principal strategically employed staff who aligned with his own vision and philosophy for the school, and surrounded himself with competent leaders who complemented his strengths. Data gathered from the semi-structured interviews indicated a correlation between leadership practices and the modelling of restorative practice and its embedding in school culture. Therefore, leaders who were not restorative in collegial relationships were perceived to inhibit the staff’s ability to be restorative with students.

**Part Three: Combined School A and School B**

Combining the data from the documentary analysis of the school charter, School A and School B reinforced some themes, while others emerged that had not been as prevalent in a single case (see Appendix I). In order to extract out the most commonly occurring in data, strategies such as ‘restorative based conversations’ and ‘follow through’ were not included in both school tables although shown in the
combined table, because of not meeting the criteria of having at least two ticks. In
the first section on organisational strategies leaders used to enhance staff
commitment, mutuality of school goals, core beliefs and principles were highlighted
as most important, followed by collaborative decision-making, providing relevant
professional develop to support change, and keeping students at the centre of
teaching and learning and decision-making.

The second section focused on relationship management through the interpersonal
skills of leaders. Building trusting relationships had the greatest value with nine ticks,
followed by communication, coaching, having the hard conversations, and leaders
being supportive, approachable, and available on seven ticks. Six of the strategies
mentioned by half the participants from either School A or B were removed from the
combined table, the minimum criteria being three ticks. These were anticipating
problems and early intervention; apologising; not being too directive; developing a
collegial culture; waiting people out; and being positive, polite, and constructive. Of
the intrapersonal leadership qualities listed in the third section, ‘walking the talk’ and
the ability of leaders to learn from experiences and mistakes were the highest
valued. The three tick criteria meant the attribute of loyalty was also eliminated.

Four out of the seven participants included in this section identified dishonesty, lying,
and not following through as negative strategies practiced by leaders that had led to
a breakdown in relations. Furthermore, the two biggest barriers to achieving school-
wide goals and resolving dilemmas were underperforming or incompetent leaders,
and underperforming or unsupportive teachers. This suggested that
underperformance, whether by leaders or teachers, compromised the schools ability
to improve and become a Learning Organisation. Furthermore, incompetence and
being unsupportive also affected the quality of teaching and learning, and
subsequently student outcomes. Lastly, three barriers specific to the context of a
single case study were removed: hard conversations more difficult with closer
relationships; resistance to collaboration; and leaders not always modelling desired
behaviours.

School charter and school-wide goals
In the two case studies, both schools emphasised the importance of implementing a three yearly community consultation process that involved teachers, students, parents, and in the case of School A the wider Maori community. While both schools had a review process in place, School B appeared to have the more robust system, demonstrating a filter down effect through senior leadership to departmental level as illustrated in the following comments:

*DP: Therefore you explain, that this was the goal. If you don’t meet it, then look, review, reflect on it and say why. Was it too hard? Did we set the bar too high, and if so why, and if not, why not? .... You’ve got to have good review processes in place for when things don’t quite go the way you’ve planned.*

*HOD: We try and talk about those vision and values and the goals, the big goals we’ve had for the year and how they’ve worked and what we want to roll over for next year ..*

Both school charters centred on the development of the whole student, where vision statements emphasised success for students. School-wide goals were important and seen to influence teaching and learning, organisation and management, performance appraisal, professional development, and policy and procedures. This was more evident in School A, where due to their aspirational nature the Principal and staff strived to reduce the gap between what was espoused and actual practice, thereby transforming the school charter into a meaningful and dynamic document.

In each case the Principal’s own personal, educative and school philosophy had a strong influence on the formation of the charter and its underlying values and principles. Both Principals acknowledged the vertical fit between their individual beliefs and the philosophy that underpinned the school, and believed themselves a match. In contrast, examples cited in each school identified particular staff members as having personal beliefs and assumptions that did not necessarily align with the educative philosophy of the school or department, thereby creating dilemmas for leaders. This was less evident in School B due to their capacity for strategic employment. All respondents recognised the mutuality of school-wide goals, core beliefs, and principles as being the most significant factor towards gaining consensus and commitment from staff and meeting organisational objectives.
Both schools had made significant changes in their leadership structure to support the achievement of school-wide goals, although for different reasons. In School B, this was to streamline systems and improve the pastoral care of students, while in School A, it was an attempt to work around resistant leaders who obstructed organisational progress and learning. Although leadership dilemmas were evident in both schools, those stemming from leaders in positions of power as in School A appeared to have a larger ripple effect, where when unresolved they inhibited the performance of individual teachers, and consequently the school as a whole.

**Relationship strategies and dilemma management**

A common theme that emerged in both schools was the importance of collegial relationships between leaders and their staff, and in particular ‘trusting relationships’. Strategies participants identified that best managed these relationships were consistent and open communication, leaders being supportive, approachable, and available, and coaching where experts worked alongside staff to develop capacity. The leadership quality most valued was ‘walking the talk’, where a leader’s actions reflected what they espoused.

Although both schools advocated an interpersonal philosophy for students based on either Te Kotahitanga or Restorative practices, this was not always evident in collegial relations between leaders and their staff. In School B, one participant indicated that how well the Principal modelled being restorative had the greatest influence on the way staff accepted and implemented Restorative Practice. The quote below illustrates this point:

*He’s moved a long way on that, and I think that’s what’s made the difference.*

Alternatively, School A demonstrated it was not enough for just the Principal to ‘walk the talk’, but if other leaders did not follow suit it compromised the school’s ability to implement the initiative. The following comment by the teacher when comparing leadership practices in this school with a previous environment highlights this:

*TEACHER: If you went to this person on the team, they said exactly the same thing as what that person on the team did because they all were leading together. That is the most effective leadership strategy I’ve seen is when everybody’s on the same waka, genuinely on the same waka.*
Collaborative decision-making was highly valued in both schools, and provided a range of perspectives as to when and how it was put into practice. The leadership style of individual leaders appeared to dictate this process. For instance, some leaders, such as the DP in School B, viewed collaboration as a method for gaining staff consensus and commitment, and used it when introducing new initiatives and proposed changes. Similarly, it was very important to the teacher in each school that they had an input into decisions affecting them. However, in School A’s case, although collaboration was espoused in the charter and practiced by the Principal, the SLT struggled with the concept constrained by a traditional view of leadership in schools.

**PRINCIPAL:** Collaboration is really good to play when people are keen and enthusiastic to collaborate. If they aren’t so passionate then I think you need to demonstrate collaboration through structure.

In School B, there were varying degrees of collaborative practice observed. Although the Principal espoused collaborative decision-making it was sometimes tokenistic, where staff felt that while asked what they said remained unheard. The DP believed collaboration was necessary for the successful implementation of new initiatives so change could be driven from the bottom up, rather than the top down. In contrast, the HOD’s leadership style centred on genuine collaborative practice and collegiality.

Lastly, seven out of the eight participants asserted that having the hard conversations was necessary to resolve ongoing dilemmas. In School A, two of the leaders saw the ability to anticipate problems, or early intervention, as an important strategy to avoid the onset of problems. In a similar vein, the Principal in School B focused on using preventive strategies such as strategic employment, professional development, and providing appropriate forums to air concerns.

**Professional Development**

Three quarters of participants saw the role of mentors as invaluable for the upskilling and professional development of staff. Evidence suggested that relevant training targeted at the specific responsibilities crucial to each leadership position would be beneficial prior to acquiring the role. For example, leaders often felt ill equipped
when first entering a new position, and expressed guilt that at times their learning and mistakes were at the expense of their colleagues. While some participants believed it was up to the individual school to implement and monitor a support system for new leaders, others recommended external providers supply programmes catering specifically for DPs and HODs, similar to those already in place for Aspiring Principals and First Time Principals.

However, the teacher from each school believed professional development for leaders needed to focus more around relationship practices and leadership skills, rather than being primarily curriculum based as at present. It should be ongoing, develop skills in undertaking difficult conversations and problem solving, and challenge and address mind-sets and assumptions in order to get shifts in practice. Furthermore, there was the implication that professional development should be tailored more to the needs of particular schools, as problems leaders encountered appeared to vary based on the school’s decile rating, student ethnicity, staffing and locality.

The following chapter will provide a detailed discussion of the findings identified in this research linked to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF CASE FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter integrates the literature reviewed in Chapter Two with an analysis of the key findings from the two case studies. An understanding of relationship strategies and leadership skills in relation to organisational, interpersonal, and intrapersonal contexts as seen through the interview data and documentary analysis and supported by the literature introduces the chapter. Interview data where participants refer to specific organisation practices or interpersonal strategies will then frame the shape of the discussion. A closer look at the nature of dilemmas occurring in educational settings provides an opportunity to analyse complexities and any tensions relating to the achievement of school-wide goals and satisfying relational needs.

Relationship Strategies and Leadership Skills

The relationship strategies and leadership skills the eight interviewees and documentary analysis highlighted as being significant towards supporting the achievement of school-wide goals have been loosely grouped according to three distinct categories in order to provide a more comprehensive overview and clearer picture of the combined findings for the purposes of discussion (see Appendix I). These three categories progress from the wider macro organisational setting down to the micro level of the individual educational leader, as according to the literature the leader has both a direct and indirect influence on what happens at the interpersonal and organisational level. For example, at the macro level, leaders often work indirectly to shape the environment in which teaching and learning is delivered, and work with and through the staff to implement the vision and goals adopted by the school (Cardno & Collett, 2004; Southworth, 2004). At the interpersonal level, because school goals are achieved with and through the efforts of individual teachers, leaders must develop trusting relationships with staff to support the achievement of these goals, and to ensure quality learning and teaching for student improvement (Robinson et al., 2009).
The term ‘loosely’ indicates the difficulty faced when selectively constraining some strategies into a set category when they either fitted into, or indirectly related to more than one group. To solve this conundrum, Figure 5.1 depicts a Venn diagram showing perceived interconnections between the three different elements, and the strategies that cross over into other categories. For ease of understanding, aside from ‘Performance Appraisal’ and ‘competency at job’, only those strategies identified by at least half of the participants have been included in the diagram.

**Figure 5.1. Interrelationship of strategies**

Examining the commonalities indicated that what happens at the interpersonal and intrapersonal level has a strong influence on the effectiveness of strategies at the organisational level. At the very heart of school processes and practices is the
building and maintaining of trusting relationships, where the strategies and relation practices leaders selected either added to or detracted from the relationship between them and their staff. This is reinforced by a number of researchers who claim trust is the foundation stone towards building and maintaining constructive relations, and is crucial towards ensuring cohesion and commitment to school-wide goals (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood et al., 1998; Louis et al., 2010; Moolenaar et al., 2010; Southworth, 2004; Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

In the interpersonal circle, which now incorporates those strategies that crossed over into more than one category, a closer examination shows that many of the leadership strategies also helped build and maintain relationships of trust between leaders and their staff. For instance, where leaders in School A and B were viewed as being supportive, approachable, available, and genuinely interested in teachers as individuals, staff were more likely to have confidence that their personal well-being and dignity would be respected. Similarly, coaching and growing leaders can only exist in a mutually gratifying relationship of trust where communication is open, consistent and supports professional dialogue. Leaders who ‘walk the talk’ and model the behaviours they wish staff to exhibit with students were more likely to gain the respect and support of teachers. Furthermore, while having the hard conversations were seen an essential part of dilemma management and resolution, Robinson et al. (2009) believed this process can also strengthen relationships when performed in an environment that values and exudes trust. However, even though participants talked about the importance of having ‘tough’ conversations, and the teacher from School A elaborated on open-to-learning conversations, no one made any reference to single or double-loop learning. Participants seemed unaware of the two concepts, thus inferring this theory base did not shape their thinking or practice.

Similarly, in the organisational circle the practices of collaborative decision-making, professional development, performance appraisal, and putting students at the centre of teaching and learning and decision-making helped create a state of mutuality towards school-wide goals in both schools. The term ‘mutuality’ in this instance aligns with Rudman’s (2002) definition, where mutuality is seen as the sharing of a common cause. At the intersection of interpersonal and organisational practices, respondents in both School A and B discussed coaching as an internal form of
professional development, where leaders worked alongside individual staff to improve teaching and individual performance. Similarly, modelling by leaders could be viewed as a form of coaching, and therefore an indirect method of professional development. In School B, there appeared to be a connection between how well leaders modelled specific behaviours with staff and their buy-in of the school’s philosophy, and ultimately how effectively change could be implemented. In both coaching and modelling, as with professional development, there was the implicit inference that leaders used this practice to help achieve organisational mutuality. Underpinning both interpersonal and organisational practices was the quality of communication between leaders and their staff, where dialogue is two-way and the input of teachers is valued.

There are considerable references to relationship strategies used by leaders to establish trusting relationships within the literature that reinforces the interview data. For instance Robinson et al. (2009) recognise the importance of leaders respecting and valuing staff, and being active listeners who are open to hearing their ideas and concerns. Bryk and Schneider (2002) claim leaders who have the ability to genuinely listen, as advocated by the Principal from School A, foster a sense of personal esteem that helps develop interpersonal relationships and increases the likelihood of leaders being considered trustworthy. Alternatively, Robinson et al. (2009) acknowledge the importance of leaders being seen as competent in their role, and identifying and dealing with leadership dilemmas that undermine the school’s ability to achieve its goals. Moreover, they argue leaders must consistently model the behaviour they wish staff to exhibit, and demonstrate integrity in their interactions with staff.

Lastly, while the intrapersonal sector appears to be less comprehensive than the organisational and interpersonal, this is a misnomer for three reasons. Firstly, because the interview schedule questions focused primarily on organisational and relationship practices, leadership qualities were often identified in conjunction with these two elements rather than as separate entities. Secondly, the leadership qualities identified by each respondent were frequently individualistic and based on their historical experiences to determine which qualities were highlighted as important. Lastly, personal qualities were frequently inseparable from interpersonal
relationship management. For example, the HOD from School B discussed leaders respecting confidentially, which is both an interpersonal strategy and intrapersonal character trait. This was important to her because of her prior experiences with an indiscreet DP.

The intrapersonal sector may in fact be the most significant of the three areas, because a leader’s innate character traits determines the effectiveness of their interpersonal relationships, leadership skills, and ability to enhance staff commitment through organisational processes. This was best demonstrated by the Principal of School A who emphasised the importance of personal qualities such as ‘walking the talk’, being a principled Principal, knowing yourself, having integrity and not being afraid to stand up for the school goals and vision. Because he led by example and tried to ensure his actions reflected what he espoused, the staff interviewed saw him as a mentor and inspirational leader who ‘walked his talk’. Furthermore, adoption of a collaborative leadership style prompted his use of organisational leadership strategies such as collaborative decision-making, shared leadership, and growing leaders. Alternatively, in School B the DP’s practice was underpinned by strong values of honesty, integrity, ‘paying it forward’, and turning mistakes into learning experiences. Her interactions with staff were genuine and strongly influenced by firstly, the historical experiences of leadership bullying practices, and secondly, a mother who taught her to how to treat others with respect.

This raises the issue of historical experience and its impact on an individual’s perception on what is happening, helping explain why there can be so many viewpoints and perceptions of the same situation. During the interview sessions, respondents frequently referred to historical practice and its influence on the way they currently behaved and their expectations for others. This meant the historical practice of what had happened in a previous school also informed their view of what is happening in their current situation, not just the context of their existing school. Therefore, people refer back to past practice, whether in their present or previous school, and use that as a means to justify why they think something is happening, or should be happening. For instance, the teacher in School A used examples of good and bad practice she had previously experienced to evaluate the effectiveness of leadership practices in her current school. Other interviews were similar, where
those participants who had experienced a negative practice highlighted the opposite as being important to them, while those without this experience often did not identify the practice at all. This was especially evident in the three respondents who had historically experienced a bullying leader.

In School B, all three leaders discussed historical experiences that affected their current leadership practice and the interpersonal relationship strategies they selected to use. In the Principal’s case, his previous experience with a keynote speaker at a conference could be seen as a life defining moment, permanently changing the course of his personal and educative philosophy. Alternatively, the HOD’s experiences in left wing politics drove her desire for social justice and her governing value of not perpetuating further inequalities. Consequently, leaders needed to be aware of their personal history and the influence of historical practice on their perceptions and actions, being careful not to overcompensate for what had happened in the past that may otherwise lead to a dilemma. The DP in School A is a prime example of this, where his desire to maintain positive relationships with staff made him reluctant to address dilemmas that arose, which then caused a leadership dilemma for his Principal.

Organisational Leadership Practices

The circle of Organisational Leadership Practice in the Venn diagram addressed those strategies used by leaders to gain staff consensus and commitment towards school initiatives. Responses from both the interviews and documentary analysis recognised mutuality of goals, core beliefs, and principles as the most important requisite for a teacher’s willingness to change practice so organisational learning could take place, school goals be met, and student outcomes subsequently improved (see Appendix I). Therefore, since mutuality is considered so essential, anything that assists leaders in achieving this state must also be important. The interview data indicated that the micro processes of collaborative decision-making, professional development, and placing student achievement at the centre of decision-making were methods that helped achieve organisational mutuality. This aligns with Cardno (2012) and Forrester’s (2011) emphasis on performance
appraisal and professional development as a vehicle to ensure vertical fit between the goals of individual teachers and the school. However, this makes the assumption that the goals espoused during Appraisal also reflect those of the teacher’s theory-in-use.

**Collaborative Decision-making**

In School A, the Principal used collaborative decision-making processes, distributed leadership, and growing leaders to help achieve organisational mutuality by ensuring that staff at different levels had input into the development of the school charter and goals. The Principal used the term “shared leadership” to denote the distribution of leadership roles and responsibilities at a senior management level. According to the literature this is not strictly accurate, as in a generic leadership field distributed leadership is conceptualised as an organisation wide term, rather than a group or team of people as in shared leadership (Cardno, 2012; Woods & Gronn, 2009). However, in the education field the terms have often been used interchangeably, ‘muddying the waters’ and explaining the Principal’s misappropriation of the term, where both the school charter and he consistently referred to distributive leadership as “shared leadership” (Youngs, 2009). Collaborative decision-making leading to better decisions and commitment by staff has proven especially effective when linked with initiatives that seek to improve student outcomes (Cardno, 2012), such as in School A where value was placed on students being kept at the heart of teaching and learning, and decision-making. In addition, some of the literature around decision-making recognises distributed leadership as a form of collaborative decision-making, where the ideal of inclusion throughout the decision-making process is actioned by distributing leadership across a number of levels, groups and individuals (Cardno, 2012; Woods & Gronn, 2009).

The four interviewees explained how in School A the Principal’s collaborative style was firstly espoused in the charter, then communicated to staff and put into action through seminal school processes and his leadership strategies. The collaborative micro-processes of participative decision-making and distribution of leadership were seen an integral part of the Principal’s leadership style, and integrated into the broadened leadership structure of the school. In contrast, in School B the teacher
emphasised how staff needed to feel not only asked but also heard, highlighting the importance of teachers having an input into decision-making that directly concerns them, and demonstrating the increased likelihood of gaining staff consensus when collaborative processes are used effectively. However, at senior management level, it appeared collaboration was often used as a means to engender staff support for school initiatives rather than for its own sake. Responses suggested that for some teachers in this school collaborative decision-making was at times perceived as being more of a consultative, rather than participative process, which is in line with the levels of collaboration noted by Cardno (2012) and Hoy and Miskel (2006).

There are considerable references to collaborative or participative decision-making within the literature, where collaboration is viewed as inclusive and suggests leaders show consideration for others when managing decision-making (Cardno, 2012). Research shows teachers are more likely to change their actions and commit to school initiatives when involved in meaningful decision-making, and where their ideas are both heard and valued (Mansell, 1985; Wylie, 2012). This is especially important when seeking to align the goals of individuals to the school and improve school performance, both of which ultimately depend on the efforts of individual classroom teachers (Cardno, 2012; Psunder, 2009; Vroom, 2003). However, because of the time involved, collaborative decision making should be accompanied by a framework to prevent it from becoming contrived, as it appeared at times in School B (Brundrett, 1998; Cardno, 2012). Leaders must make decisions on whether collaboration is actually necessary and to what degree and include staff based on their expertise, relevance, degree of jurisdiction, and whether they can be trusted to promote the interests of the organisation (Cardno, 2012; Hoy & Miskel, 2006; Owens, 2004).

In School B, the DP found unilateral decision-making was unlikely to gain staff consensus and commitment. As a result, the SLT changed their management of the whole process away from controlling and telling staff what was going to happen, to standing back and creating opportunities for staff to decide. However, while discussion around the decision changed, this only happened while the top retained its management over the process. Therefore, collaborative decision-making is not just a ‘bottom up’ procedure, but must involve the top in order to manage the process.
to enable ‘bottom up’. Senior leaders need to create, and then manage conditions conducive to implementing change in a manner that encourages ownership and commitment from staff.

Hoy and Miskel (2008) recommend leaders evaluate each situation individually to make informed decisions on whether teacher participation will improve or impede effective decision-making. Both Vroom (Vroom & Yetton, 1993) and Cardno (2012) developed collaborative decision-making frameworks to assist leaders in the process. Vroom’s model addressed quality, leader information, trust, and problem structure, where collaboration depended on the importance of the decision, knowledge, consequence, and expertise (Vroom & Yetton, 1993). Alternatively, Cardno’s (2012) framework asked four essential questions to help decide whether collaboration is actually necessary, and to what degree. Hoy and Miskel (2008) believed employees should be involved in decision making when it was critical for the effective implementation of new initiatives, and to encourage staff buy in and commitment. However, teachers should not participate when they have insufficient information or expertise. For example, in School A because the SLT resisted collaboration and were underperforming the Principal had broadened the senior leadership structure to include teachers who had greater expertise and strengths in areas the SLT lacked, and who supported his collaborative leadership style.

Cardno (2012) also explored different levels of shared decision-making from the most simplistic of work distribution, through to delegation and shared leadership. However, Hoy and Miskel (2008) warn that leaders must be able to make executive decisions to limit an employee’s involvement where personal goals may conflict with organisation objectives, as they run the risk decisions will be made at a personal level at the expense of the overall welfare of the organisation. Therefore, while some situations lent themselves to the empowerment and collaboration of staff, there were times when participation inhibited productive decision-making. Although the literature argues that collaborative decision-making processes help increase organisational mutuality, they are not an end in themselves. The findings from the two cases demonstrates this must be done with discernment and careful thought to ensure the process is genuine and in the school’s best interest.
**Professional Development**

Both School A and School B used professional development as a vehicle to support the introduction and implementation of change and help achieve organisational mutuality. This was more evident in School B, both the Principal and the DP describing how professional development was used alongside new initiatives to upskill and gain consensus and commitment from staff. There is agreement with this viewpoint from Fullan and Mascall (2000), who claim professional development is critical to any reform initiative, and increasingly effective where there is a mutuality of individual and school goals, and horizontal integration of school policies and programmes. In a similar vein, Sinemma and Robinson (2007) encouraged practitioners through reflective practice to identify appropriate professional development needs that align with and support individual appraisal goals and the school’s strategic objectives.

According to Timperley et al (2007) typical professional development should begin with a catalyst or rational to convince teachers that change is necessary. After new learning is front-loaded, a range of activities that involve theoretical underpinnings and showing links between teaching and student learning help translate the new knowledge into practice. Finally, repeated opportunities to revisit the new knowledge through activities refine the new practice in classrooms. In alignment with this process, the Principal from School B spoke about his initial experience with restorative practice after a keynote speaker at a conference introduced him to the concept. Convinced of the benefits for student behaviour and learning he began to implement the practice within his DP leadership role, thus demonstrating a shift in practice as his governing values adjusted with the new learning. Later when appointed to School B he initiated similar proceedings, exposing staff to the theoretical underpinnings behind restorative practice and providing them with repeated opportunities to practice the new learning as a facilitator.
Mutuality

There appears to be little doubt within the interview data, documentary analysis, and literature that achieving mutuality of organisational goals, core beliefs, and principles makes a significant difference towards ensuring school-wide objectives are met, and that certain organisational processes and strategies help achieve this state. Further to this, responses from the Principal in each school indicated that mutuality can be separated into the two elements of organisational and intrapersonal mutuality. These relate to the aspects of ‘mutuality of goals, core beliefs, and principles’ and ‘walk the talk’ depicted in the Venn diagram, which show how organisational, interpersonal, and intrapersonal practices consistently link and inform each other. However, while it is possible to have intrapersonal mutuality without organisational mutuality, achieving organisational mutuality remains dependent on intrapersonal mutuality because it is the cohesion and commitment of individuals in the organisation that determines a shared purpose and vertical fit between organisational and individual goals.

Organisational Mutuality

Both Principals highlighted the importance of having the right people in the school, but each context had a different story about the leader’s engagement with staff in terms of managing change and achieving mutuality based around the context of the school and its history of staff relations. Consequently, it is important to have an understanding of the historical context of each school in order to interpret what is going on there. In School B’s case, the Principal had been there for an extended period, which meant he was able to employ people who were more likely to be a fit to the goals and vision of the school. Because he used employment criteria based on alignment, the Principal had managed to surround himself with competent leaders who aligned to the school vision and complemented his strengths. This is an illustration of self-managing schools, where schools to some extent have the choice of whom they employ. On the other hand, in School A there was little opportunity to appoint new staff to positions of power as only one senior leader had left during the Principal’s tenure.
The situation in School B is an example of the Matching Model in terms of Human Resource Management, because there is a tight fit between the goals, expected employee behaviours, and employing people who exhibit these behaviours (Rudman, 2002). The Principal used his employment strategies to ensure he engaged people already aligned to the goals set in place. This is an example of a school that has chosen not to water down the hard approach, but instead is able to run the two approaches alongside each other. Therefore, while there is an element of the matching model evident, there are also aspects of a blended holistic approach where it is not one model or the other, but a combination of both approaches, hard and soft. The Principal has implemented a balanced and integrated approach using hard and soft elements simultaneously (Oldroyd, 2005). In contrast, in School A the Principal appeared to only use the soft approach in his employment process.

**Intrapersonal Mutuality**

The literature situated in the area of Human Resource Management talks about mutuality being achieved in an organisational context by vertical fit and horizontal integration of organisational goals (Macky & Johnson, 2003; Rudman, 2002). One of the findings that came through was having an additional frame for intrapersonal mutuality. This conclusion was reached after analysing the espoused theories of each Principal, and the way their personal and educative philosophies aligned with the vision and goals of the school. In this setting, espoused theories are those beliefs or values that guide our behaviour that we talk about and describe to others (Argyris & Schön, 1996). The espoused theories of both Principals appeared to have a strong influence on the formation and implementation of their school charter and goals. Research by Youngs et al. (2007) on governance leadership in New Zealand schools discovered this was not unusual, board chairs often relying on their Principals to take the lead in policy and charter development.

Likewise, the Principal from School A claimed that the big picture had always come from him, and believed that he had honed his educational philosophy to be in alignment with his personal one and felt the school was a fit. The educational question here is did the Principal in each case study adapt the school’s vision and goals over time to fit in with their own personal and educative philosophy, or was the
school already a match prior to their appointment. In School A, interview responses suggested that although the Principal had introduced his own philosophy of collaborative and sustainable leadership, his values of social justice, successful learners, and reducing inequalities and disparity for Maori matched the values and aspirations already in place in the school community. In contrast, in School B the Principal indicated that things were in such a "bad" state when he first arrived that he was able to mould the school to fit into his own personal and educative philosophy.

According to Argyris and Schön (1996) one element of ‘theories of action’ is theories-in-use, the theory we actually put into practice. We learn about someone’s theory-in-use by observing their behaviour rather than by asking them, or in the case of this research study, by asking other interviewees from the same school for their perceptions. (Argyris & Schön, 1974). From the responses, School A demonstrated a greater compatibility of espoused theory with theory-in-use than in School B, participants describing how the Principal ‘walked the talk’, was collaborative, grew leaders, and was a mentor. Alternatively, in School B, while the staff knew the Principal really believed in restorative practice they did not always feel that the Principal and senior management exhibited restorative behaviour as their theory-in-use towards some staff.

From a different perspective, both Principals believed that having the right people employed in the school was essential for gaining consensus and commitment towards school-wide goals. The Principal from School A suggested that staff who did not support the mantra of successful learners, and who openly “slagged” students or parents were possibly in the wrong school. He used the example of a leader in another school he believed was in the wrong place for the sake of attaining a certain leadership position, where they then tried to force their own values and goals upon others. In this instance, while the leader’s personal and educative philosophies were in alignment, they conflicted with the vision and goals of the school.

Therefore, mutuality can be interpreted on two levels. At the macro level, organisational mutuality includes both a vertical fit with individual and organisational goals, and the horizontal integration of school organisation and management systems and processes. Alternatively, at the micro level of intrapersonal mutuality,
individuals demonstrate alignment between their personal and educative philosophy, and the school’s vision and goals. Finally, similar to a theories-of-action approach, intrapersonal mutuality can be separated into the two elements of ‘espoused’ and ‘theories-in-use’, or ‘assumed’ and ‘actual’, to check that what is espoused reflects the action strategy that is used (Argyris & Schön, 1996). Responses from the interviews indicated that unless the principal and SLT exhibit intrapersonal mutuality related to the school’s goals, core philosophy and principles it is unlikely that a vertical fit with organisational and individual goals can be achieved, meaning the leaders attempts to achieve school-wide goals will be inhibited.

**Interpersonal Relationship Strategies**

The section on Relationship Management Practices in the framework combining the findings of School A and B (see Appendix I) identifies those strategies that leaders use to manage staff through building interpersonal relationships of trust so school-wide goals can be reached, and dilemmas effectively resolved. The data highlights that building and maintaining trusting relationships is highly valued and viewed as a critical part of a leader’s role. Furthermore, Robinson et al. (2009) claim a leader’s impact will be limited if relationships between them and their staff are characterised by a lack of trust. The teacher from each school reinforced this statement by emphasising the importance of training leaders in how to lead and interact effectively with their staff. Leadership strategies such as open communication involving professional dialogue and incidental conversation, coaching, having the hard conversations, and leaders being supportive, approachable, and available were also acknowledged as important in building relationships of trust between leaders and their staff.

**Modelling**

The literature suggests that one of the ways leaders can build trust and develop a culture open to new learning is by establishing respect with staff where their competence and integrity is displayed through effective modelling (Cardno, 2012; Robinson et al., 2009). However, although both schools espoused an interpersonal
philosophy for students based on either Te Kotahitanga or Restorative Practice, this was not always evident in their collegial relations. The key point here is that if leaders espouse a certain style of work or relationships, particularly with students, when staff interactions do not reflect the same style it can become a barrier to achieving school-wide goals. This also links to Robinson et al. (2009) findings on leadership practices that impact student outcomes, where leadership that promotes and directly participates in professional learning had a mean effect size of .84, the largest of the five dimensions. Furthermore, Senge (1990) argues that modelling by leaders is one of the foundation stones, along with supporting and facilitating new learning, that helps develop a culture of organisational learning, where staff are open to change and willing to embrace new learning.

Robinson et al. (2009) suggest that when principals, as the overall leaders of the school, are viewed as a source of expertise they gain respect from staff and have a greater influence over teacher behaviour when compared to other leaders. For example, a participant in School B explained that how well the principal modelled being restorative had the biggest effect on how well staff accepted and implemented the philosophy. This indicated that in order to be effective, leaders must both believe in what they espouse and put it into practice. Therefore, not only should leaders support and participate in the professional development of their staff, but also deliberately model the behaviours they wish staff to exhibit with students. A leader’s ability to do this helps determine their staff’s commitment and willingness towards changing their practice.

Alternatively, School A demonstrated that it was not enough for just the Principal to ‘walk the talk’, but if other leaders did not follow suit it would compromise the school’s ability to implement new initiatives. This suggested that the most effective practice is when all leaders in the school have a shared purpose and common goal. The teacher interviewed used historical experience to compare leadership practices in this school with those in a previous environment, where each person in the senior leadership team had displayed both organisational and intrapersonal mutuality, and a similar theory-in-use. This showed how a filter down effect from the top has an influence on what happens at the bottom, where the Principal models behaviour they
wish staff to exhibit with senior management, who model with HODs, who then model with teachers, who finally model and practice with students.

Therefore, it is important to have alignment between initiatives, so that not only are they evident and reflected in the charter and the school goals, but also apparent in staff relationships and the way decisions are made, particularly in relation to the setting, implementation and review of school goals. Sometimes staff can have the assumption that a philosophy, such as restorative practices, is for the students only and not for them, an ‘either or’ rather than an ‘and’. Responses from the staff in School B indicated that when school-wide philosophies are implemented, they can only become embedded in the culture of the school when they become an ‘and’, and are practiced for teachers during decision-making.

**Trusting Relationships**

A common theme that emerged from the data was the value leaders and teachers from each school placed on building trusting relationships. Similarly, research highlights the significance of trusting relationships and its correlation to leadership, change management, and improving student outcomes (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood et al., 1998; Louis et al., 2010; Moolenaar et al., 2010; Robinson et al., 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2004) Because of the value educational practitioners give to relationships, and in particular trusting relationships, leadership dilemmas are created when these are linked to school-wide goals. For instance, while leaders may value the importance of relationships in organisational processes such as collaborative decision-making, they also want to achieve school goals. Responses from the three leaders in each school indicated that dilemmas arise for reasons such as resistance to change, underperforming or unsupportive staff, or embedded school culture. On the other hand, staff do not always agree with the actions of leaders and may lack confidence in their ability to perform their job competently, such as in School A. The employees then have a dilemma when leaders are unwilling to change or examine their own contribution to the issue. This happens because both groups value trusting relationships.
For three participants the importance of trusting relationships was emphasised because of their historical experience of bullying in a previous school. There is evidence here to suggest that if people experience what they consider a negative behaviour, they will overcompensate towards the opposite to try to ensure they do not perpetuate this practice. Whether or not they are adequately trained to be able to do this is the question around managing leadership dilemmas effectively. This was very important for both DPs, because historical issues of relationship breakdowns in previous schools informed their responses. It may have also contributed to the downplaying of attention towards employee dilemmas in School A, where the DP focused on the relationship to ensure he did not have to make the hard decisions.

Leaders need to recognise the importance of building trusting relationships through productive conversations, rather than using the relationship as an excuse for not addressing the dilemma (Senge, 1990). If leaders compromise on saying what needs to be said in order to protect the relationship, then there is the potential to move into the soft sell area where organisational goals are sacrificed to avoid unpleasantness (Robinson & Le Fevre, 2011). Because the DP from School A had no other strategies available, he then went to the other extreme of hard sell by asserting his authority based on his role. In contrast, the DP in School B had a wide range of strategies that she used, and while remaining focused on building positive relationships, she was not afraid to have the hard conversations. This suggested that building trusting relationships and carrying through organisational responsibilities must happen simultaneously, highlighting the importance of adequately preparing educational leaders for carrying out this process.

Dilemma Management

There were multiple perspectives on the nature of leadership dilemmas based on the historical context of staff relations and educational barriers within each school, and the level of leadership. Examples given by leaders in each school often related to resistance from older teachers who had been at the school for an extended period, engrained school culture, and / or underperformance of either leaders or classroom teachers. However, it is important to acknowledge that a school that identifies and
articulates dilemmas is not necessarily an ineffective school, but may in fact be the
reverse, where the acknowledgement, ownership, and various attempts to resolve
leadership dilemmas show organisational learning is taking place. Therefore, the
presence of dilemmas is not a negative issue, but the challenge of the barrier to
educational performance is when those dilemmas are not articulated and dealt with.
In School A, the Principal was transparent about the long-term problems he faced
with leaders and individual teachers who in his view obstructed school improvement
and inhibited the achievement of school-wide goals. Hoy and Miskel (2005)
summarise the Principal's difficulties in their argument that dilemmas exist when a
complex problem creates a range of undesirable or conflicting solutions, which
means any choice made selects one objective at the expense of other valued
objectives.

In the Principal's situation, because he valued trusting relationships and wished to
remain loyal to his SLT he was reluctant to move them on, although under pressure
from certain staff members and the BOT to do so. He also admitted it was
challenging having the hard conversations because of the closeness of the working
relationship. While he found ways to work around the SLT this did not solve the
problem of their lack of intrapersonal mutuality and drive, and their resistance to
change. This raised the question of misplaced loyalty and whether the Principal was
sacrificing the needs of the organisation for the sake of the individual. While learning
was happening in the case of the HOD and teacher who were included in the
broadened leadership structure, despite the Principal's best efforts he believed the
SLT still impeded the school's ability to move forward to the vision articulated in the
charter.

Table 5.1 provides some examples of how responses from participants often
identified the negative practices of leaders as being opposite to what they
considered effective leadership strategies. The term 'shadow side' is used in place of
negative leadership strategies to show how positive practices also have a 'shadow
side' to them that is always there (see Appendix I). Consequently, there needs to be
some acknowledgement from leaders about the need to engage with the 'shadow
side', and not just sweep negative practices under the carpet. If they overlook or
minimise the opposing side there is the likelihood of a dilemma arising because the issue is not being fully addressed.

Table 5.1 *Relationship between positive and negative practices and strategies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practices and Strategies</th>
<th>Shadow side</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative decision-making</td>
<td>Inappropriate collaborative strategies such as gate-keeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow through</td>
<td>No follow through. Over promising and under delivering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open communication Transparency</td>
<td>Lack of communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genuine interest in staff as individuals</td>
<td>Distant – don’t care about teachers as people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having the hard conversations</td>
<td>Avoidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being supportive, approachable, available</td>
<td>Not being accessible or approachable Bullying / yelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restorative based conversations</td>
<td>Playing the positional card when not appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building trusting relationships</td>
<td>Lack of trust and credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting confidentiality</td>
<td>Being indiscreet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty and integrity</td>
<td>Lying and dishonesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive, commitment, can-do attitude</td>
<td>Lack of drive and commitment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alternatively, from an employee’s perspective, they have a dilemma when looking back the other way and seeing negative practices such as lying and dishonest behaviour exhibited by their leaders. This is a form of ‘ethical dilemma’ (Campbell, 2003; Cranston, 2006; Dempster & Berry, 2003; Starratt, 1996), where behaviours such as lying challenge the ethical and moral basis of decision-making, as opposed to leadership dilemmas which deal with tensions that arise between the goals of the organisation and relational needs. The teacher in School B found ethical dilemmas such as where leaders were caught lying or being dishonest was the most damaging negative practice for her. This assertion was informed by her historical experience with a senior leader who had lied and made her look incompetent in front of parents.

**Employee dilemmas**

The literature situated in the area of leadership around managing dilemmas focuses more upon the perspective of the leader and the strategies they use to merge the
two agendas of fulfilling relational needs while achieving organisational goals. However, one of the findings that emerged from the data is that we also need to have a frame from an employee’s perspective. Evidence from the three different examples provided by School A, School B, and historical practice supported the development of an additional variation of ‘ethical dilemmas’ (Campbell, 2003; Cranston, 2006; Dempster & Berry, 2003), where the dilemma is generated from the negative practices of the leader rather than from those of their employees. I have called these dilemmas ‘employee dilemmas’, because it is the harmful actions of educational leaders that are inhibiting the ability of teachers to implement quality teaching and learning in the classroom. They cannot be termed leadership dilemmas, for by its very definition leadership dilemmas are both acknowledged and owned by the leader, who is then under obligation to attempt a resolution. Employee dilemmas are a form of ethical dilemmas and constrained by inequalities of power that restrict the number of options available, making it difficult for teachers to approach the school leader in an attempt to resolve the problem.

In the first example, the Principal in School A acknowledged a leadership dilemma with his SLT that he had been unable to resolve. His awareness that this also created a dilemma for the people who reported to this team informed the leadership dilemma, but as Principal, he was the only one with the power to deal with it. This strengthened the importance of leaders taking ownership of leadership dilemmas; because for employees with less organisational wide authority, such as the HOD and teacher, while they may acknowledge the presence of a dilemma, they are totally reliant on the Principal for its resolution. In this instance, refusal by the Principal to address the situation would potentially create a dilemma for the employees. However, in School A, although a range of organisational and interpersonal strategies were used in various attempts to resolve the issue; the SLT still demonstrated no change in their behaviour. Therefore, while the leadership dilemma remained, a dilemma was also created for the employees, because who can they go to for assistance if the overall leaders are unable to deal with the situation. They cannot ask the SLT themselves if they are the problem. The Principal’s experiences demonstrated how unresolved leadership dilemmas at senior or middle management level could create an employee dilemma for other staff within the school.
From an alternative standpoint, in School B a misalignment from the staff’s perspective is creating a dilemma for them. This is the source of an employee dilemma in relation to the school’s underlying principle of restorative practice, because while staff are on board with the philosophy, and it is espoused by management and performed holistically for students, the Principal and senior leaders in their communications with staff do not always carry across these same principles. Therefore, an employee dilemma is created under the assumption that a philosophy, such as restorative practice, should not only be for students, but should also be practiced by leaders with staff.

In contrast, from a historical perspective three participants described how yelling and bullying behaviour by a leader in a previous school had emotionally disempowered and affected their ability to perform in the classroom. In each case it was the Principal who used bullying and coercion as their primarily relationship strategy, thereby creating an employee dilemma. In two cases, inbalances of power meant staff lower down the ranks lacked the authority to confront the leader about their conduct. Furthermore, the leader’s position of power gave teachers limited options for resolution. In the end, two out of the three respondents resigned and moved on rather than working any longer in an environment where they felt disrespected as both a person and educational practitioner.

From three different perspectives, situations were described where underperforming and resistant leaders, leaders not modelling practices they wished staff to exhibit, and bullying leaders subsequently created dilemmas for staff. These are examples of employee dilemmas, because when leaders will not change negative practices or examine their contribution to a problem they can inhibit a teacher’s ability to perform and obstruct school objectives. Employee dilemmas could inarguably have a greater effect on the achievement of school-wide goals than leadership dilemmas because of the position of power and role of the leader within the school. Of all the negative strategies identified, bullying in past schools appeared to be the most destructive, where participants would eventually resign rather than remain in an environment where bullying was the prevalent leadership strategy.
However, because the focus of this research has been on leaders and their practice in relation to the achievement of school-wide goals, it remains unclear as to how employees can resolve employee dilemmas, and whether in fact this is even possible. Interview responses suggested that in each instance leaders were unwilling to change their behaviour and examine the impact of their actions on others and the school’s performance as a whole. Where the leader was the school Principal the options of employees appeared limited, where they could select to remain where they were in status quo, resign and move to another school, or initiate union proceedings that may in the longer-term prove potentially damaging for the school.

**Importance of strategies**

From analysis and discussion of the two case studies, the necessity of leaders having a range of strategies to select from when merging the two elements of school-wide goals and relational needs can be viewed as a critical leadership skill. This is because there is no one size fits all. What works in one situation and in one context will not necessarily be effective in a different setting because of the individualistic nature of people and the multiple perspectives that can arise from a single event. The DP in School B recognised this fact and tried to treat each staff member as a unique individual when dealing with issues. On the other hand, the data highlights that certain organisational and interpersonal strategies have proven effective in achieving mutuality of school-wide goals and building trusting relationships with staff.

Evidence suggested that within educational leadership, there is a range of being fully equipped with strategies and not having any strategies, so leaders end up flip-flopping between soft and hard sell. Those who recognise the effect of their historical experience of bullying behaviour probably need to be even more aware of not moving into just focusing on building relationships and avoiding dilemmas. This is in line with the theory on hard sell, soft sell and avoidance tactics that is explicated in the literature by a number of researchers (Macky & Johnson, 2003; Oldroyd, 2005; Robinson et al., 2009; Robinson & Le Fevre, 2011). Consequently, building trusting relationships with staff and dealing with dilemmas needs to be a simultaneous process.
The accounts given here indicated that while leaders acknowledged the importance of confronting dilemmas and having the hard conversations, they predominantly chose to focus on the preventive strategies that built positive relationships with staff and encouraged consensus and commitment to school-wide goals through mutuality. The absence of reference to either single or double-loop learning processes showed a lack of awareness around these concepts and their implications towards gaining permanent shifts in practice. However, three participants offered a more detailed explanation about specific tools used either by, or with them, where a productive conversation had helped elicit changes in practice.

Firstly, the Principal in School B explained the structure of restorative practice conversations that underpinned student behaviour management, espousing this as a leadership strategy for dilemma management. This is in a way related to Argyris’ (1993) ladder of inference, where shared understanding, and productive rather than defensive reasoning is the focus (Boyett & Boyett, 1998; Senge, 1990; Stone et al., 1999). Secondly, the teacher in School A referred to historical experience, where a leader in a previous school had been adept at using open-to-learning conversations. She described how the way the leader never answered her questions and used a learning conversation to encourage her to reflect back on her thinking changed her practice most, because it affected her theorising around why she did things. Lastly, the DP from School B and the HOD from School A gave two different perspectives on professional development based on Robinson’s work around having constructive conversations (Robinson et al., 2009; Robinson & Lai, 2006; Robinson & Le Fevre, 2011). In the first instance, this was in the format of a three-day leadership course. In contrast, the HOD’s course was over three sessions and shared with other middle leaders in the school. Furthermore, because they had changed the structure of HOD meetings there was the ongoing opportunity for professional dialogue around the new learning.

However, because ‘employee dilemmas’ are often ‘ethical dilemmas’, where staff see something in leadership practice that for them is morally questionable, this may add an additional level of complexity for leaders when dealing with ‘leadership dilemmas’ because of the ripple out effect on relationships and its impact on a teacher’s ability to perform.
Summary

The interrelationship of organisational, interpersonal, and intrapersonal leadership strategies and emergence of leadership and employee dilemmas gives an indication of the complexities of leadership in terms of achieving school-wide goals. While responses identified a number of relationship strategies and leadership skills most participants considered important (see Appendix I), the discussion brought out a range of differing perspectives and suggested that no one size fits all. It appeared the strategies leaders found most effective in each setting was dependent on the historical context of relationships and diverse issues in each school. However, there was general agreement that building trusting relationships between leaders and their staff was at the core of leadership practice and underpinned collective efforts to reach school objectives. Furthermore, mutuality and collaborative decision-making were seen as important strategies in assisting leaders’ efforts to gain staff consensus and commitment to school-wide goals.

The literature and the evidence presented leads to an understanding that unless educational leaders have a range of organisational and interpersonal strategies available in terms of dealing with leadership dilemmas, especially those stemming from the behaviours of others in positions of power, they will be ineffective in achieving school-wide goals. The final chapter will summarise the key findings, reach conclusions on the link between relationship practices and the achievement of school-wide goals, and show relationships of mutuality in an educational environment. Lastly, recommendations are made that support the development of leaders in this area.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study has provided valuable insight into the complexity of an educational leader’s role in relation to dilemmas that arise from the two potentially competing elements of satisfying organisational needs and maintaining positive relationships with staff. The final chapter uses both the literature and interview findings that relate to goals, organisational and relational leadership practices, and dilemmas to reach in-depth conclusions and make recommendations.

Firstly, the summary of findings reaches conclusions based on the three themes of mutuality, relationship strategies, and dilemma management, informed by ensuring there is a response to the research questions. An examination of these ‘big picture concepts’ identifies gaps in professional development for leaders and the research literature base which are responded to in the recommendations. Lastly, the limitations of the research process are discussed.

Summary of Findings

Mutuality

In the two case studies, mutuality of goals, core beliefs, and principles was viewed as the most important organisational strategy a leader could use to enhance staff commitment to school-wide goals. In order to be effective and influence teaching and learning, school-wide goals need to be woven into the organisational fabric of the school through achieving vertical fit and horizontal integration. The participants in School A and School B described how they perceived their school charter to influence teaching and learning, and school organisation and management. The components of the school charter and the seminal school processes each participant focused upon helped build a picture of how their organisation achieved a vertical fit between school goals and those of individual teachers, and which particular school-processes were horizontally integrated with school-wide goals.
In School A, the school charter was aspirational, articulating the vision, values, and educational goals of the principal, school, and community, and focused on developing successful learners and improving student achievement (Robinson et al., 2009). Responses suggested school-wide goals were meaningful and seen to underpin and inform teaching and learning. Participants explained how performance appraisal was used to create a vertical fit between school-wide goals and those of individual staff, and to encourage shifts in practice to lead to an improvement in performance (Forrester, 2011). The school leadership structure was broadened to horizontally align with school-wide goals, and school policies and procedures appeared to reflect and support the charter.

In School B, the charter expressed what the school was currently doing and focused upon raising student achievement through high quality teaching and learning. The findings tended to suggest appraisal was used at departmental level to ensure departmental goals and the goals of classroom teachers showed vertical alignment to school-wide goals. According to the DP, professional development was an integral part of implementing new initiatives, and it seemed a number of other school organisational structures and management systems demonstrated horizontal integration with the charter. School policies made reference to strategic goals and values. The principal and SLT espoused commitment to an ongoing process of strategic review and school improvement.

However, responses from leaders interviewed in the two schools described how leadership dilemmas were created when tension arose from staff who lacked intrapersonal mutuality, were resistant to change or underperforming, or adhered to an embedded negative school culture. Alternatively, participants explained how their current or historical negative experiences with leaders and the practices they had selected to use had inhibited mutuality and the achievement of school-wide goals. For example, where leaders had limited relationship strategies to draw upon, were unethical in their practice, lacked trust, or did not effectively communicate to staff.
Figure 6.1 combines what was highlighted in the data from both schools in a conceptual model to help understand how mutuality becomes important with the need to achieve school goals while also managing relationships, and the tensions that are created during the process. At the core of the circle, the school charter expresses the school’s vision and values, and encapsulates those aims in concrete educational goals targeted at improving student outcomes. These school-wide goals underpin and inform teaching and learning, achieving vertical fit with the goals of individual teachers through the processes of performance appraisal and professional development. Horizontal integration is realised when organisational and management structures and systems, policies and procedures align with and support the achievement of school objectives. The entire process is located in an ongoing process of formative strategic review. However, as shown by the arrows that attack the circle, mutuality can be obstructed by the ‘shadow side’ of leadership practice, or from staff who are not committed to the goals of the school.

Figure 6.1. *Relationships and Tensions of Mutuality*

Figure 6.1 therefore depicts the organisational aspect of mutuality, the ‘what’, and the tension that can arise as leaders attempt to gain staff consensus and commitment to school-wide goals. However, to achieve the ‘what’ requires the ‘how’ of trusting relationships, collaborative decision-making, and effective communication. Therefore, organisational and interpersonal relationship strategies, and intrapersonal
leadership qualities then become the vehicle leaders use to manage collegial relations with staff to achieve mutuality, and ultimately school objectives and improvements in student outcomes.

**Relationship strategies**

Some of the most challenging problems for leaders in the two case studies involved tensions that arose between their desire to achieve school-wide goals while still maintaining positive collegial relations with staff. All of the leaders interviewed identified behaviours by certain staff members that had jeopardised the achievement of school objectives and required their intervention with varying degrees of success. While there will always be dilemmas because of the nature of working with and through people, in relation to the third research question, there are a range of strategies and practices that seemed to lessen the likelihood of these intractable problems occurring. For example, organisational strategies such as collaborative decision-making, professional development, and performance appraisal helped leaders achieve organisational mutuality and gain staff consensus, commitment and alignment to school objectives. However, the impact of these processes was lessened when individuals were unwilling to support new initiatives, or examine their own contribution to a problem so shifts in practice could take place and they could reach a state of intrapersonal mutuality.

Therefore, leaders need to place equal weight on building and maintaining positive relationships with staff and satisfying organisational needs, because it is only through the efforts of individual classroom teachers that school-wide goals can be achieved. The interpersonal strategies leaders chose to use when interacting with staff determines the quality of the relationship, where strategies such as being supportive, approachable and available, coaching, and open communication added to the relationship. Alternatively, negative practices such as bullying as mentioned in a historical context, and coercion and lying identified in the current school setting, often appeared to lead to a breakdown in relations. Leaders must be careful not to prioritise relationships over school objectives, and be willing to engage in productive conversations to ensure school-wide goals can be met.
Therefore, both the soft and hard approaches of building trusting relationships and having productive conversations are necessary, and need to run simultaneously alongside each other governed by a process of putting educational goals based around student learning at the forefront (Oldroyd, 2005). Leaders need to have a range of strategies to draw upon, as different settings, situations, and individuals can require different ways of dealing with the problem. What works in one school and in one situation will not necessarily elicit the same response with a staff member at another school in a different location. This suggests that the ability of leaders to use a range of relationship strategies when dealing with staff has implications on how successful their school will be in achieving school-wide goals and thereby improving student outcomes.

**Dilemma management**

Leadership dilemmas arise when tension is created by the leader's obligation to meet school objectives while also maintaining positive relationships with staff, and can result in the school’s ability to implement goals related to quality teaching and learning being compromised (Cardno, 2012). In relation to the first research question, behaviours such as underperformance, incompetence, resistance, embedded school culture, and lack of intrapersonal mutuality have been shown to cause leadership dilemmas. From the examples given in the two case studies, it appeared these ‘people problems’ were often of long-term duration and had no easy resolution. They also often involved older staff who had been at the school for a number of years who had become entrenched in their way of doing things and how they perceived school culture.

There is evidence from the historical experiences of some of the participants to suggest the need for a frame from an employee perspective, where a dilemma arises from the negative behaviours and actions that stem from the leaders themselves. This is an example of an ‘employee dilemma’, which is a type of ‘ethical dilemma’ (Dempster & Berry, 2003), because when leaders are unwilling to change or consider their contribution to a problem they can obstruct a teachers’ ability to perform, and thereby inhibit the advancement of school objectives. Interview responses suggested ‘employee dilemmas’ may possibly have a greater impact on
the achievement of school-wide goals than ‘leadership dilemmas’ because of the leader’s position of power and role in the school.

However, some of the leaders participating in the research who had not received specific training on how to deal with dilemmas effectively reverted to defensive patterns of behaviour, and used only the strategies of soft sell, hard sell, or avoidance when attempting to implement change. In the first and third instance, this may result in school goals not being achieved, and in the second lead to a breakdown in collegial relations. What came through from the findings was firstly the importance of actually having some strategies to manage relationships, and secondly, when combining the findings from both schools, the range of strategies explicit in the data. This suggests it is important for schools not to rely on only using the one strategy, and that leaders would benefit from specific training beginning at middle leadership level on how to merge the two elements of school-wide goals and relational needs.

**Limitations of the Research**

These research findings should be regarded as an example of leadership practice in secondary schools in relation to school-wide goals and dilemma management and not be used to generalise practice. Although this qualitative study gathered in-depth data and compared, analysed, and evaluated findings against the literature limitations of time, and the size of the research study led to a deliberately small sample size of interviewees and schools being selected. Because only four participants at each school were interviewed, data collection was limited to their perceptions and thus precluded other similar or different viewpoints. Furthermore, in the case of two participants from School A, time constraints at the conclusion of the interview restricted their response and prevented further elaboration. It is important to note that in some other interviews, this discussion led to the emergence of significant data.

Only two schools from a localised geographical location participated in the interview phase of this project, meaning findings are limited to this region and secondary
school environment. The result may differ if the same research was conducted in another setting. In addition, because both secondary schools were middle-sized and low to mid decile with a bicultural mix of Pakeha and Maori, experiences of leaders and teachers in smaller or larger schools, the primary or intermediate sector, or higher socio-economic areas may vary from those in the schools involved.

**Recommendations**

This study of relationship strategies that leaders use to prevent or resolve dilemmas that arise around school-wide goals and the complexities that surround this activity has led to the following recommendations.

**Leadership Professional Development**

The participants acknowledged that currently most of their professional development for leaders was around curriculum. Therefore based on the findings of this research, I recommend leadership training programmes be established that target the needs of leaders in relation to the prevention and resolution of leadership dilemmas, developing their ability to apply a range of organisational and interpersonal relationship strategies shown to be effective. These programmes need to challenge the thinking of leaders, make them more critical about their own practice, and address mind-sets and theorising so as to get permanent shifts in practice. According to Robinson (1993), this demands that educational leaders examine their own theories-of-action to determine their contribution to factors that may obstruct the achievement of school-wide goals.

However, the SLT’s resistance to change in School A shows that shifts in practice do not only depend on the training undertaken, but are constrained by the motivation of an individual, their commitment to practice the new learning, and creating conditions that are conducive to facilitating change. In School B, the teacher gave an example of where restorative practice was ineffective, demonstrating how relationship strategies only work when both parties believe in the process. Therefore, while the professional development so essential for leaders to change leadership practice may
be made available, ultimately long-term change still rests upon individual leaders, and their willingness to embrace and commit to the new learning.

_Further Research_

This research has highlighted possibilities for future research around dilemmas from an employee perspective, the significance of ‘intrapersonal mutuality’ as a requisite for the achievement of school-wide goals, and widening the research base to involve schools of different sizes, locations, and socio-economic areas.

Firstly, research on ‘employee dilemmas’ would add a richness to the theory base around dilemmas currently missing. Through the findings, it became clear that dilemmas caused by people in positions of power may have a far-reaching effect on the school’s ability to perform and support quality teaching and learning. Furthermore, employees were often unable to resolve the issue because they did not have the authority to confront the perpetrator due to power imbalances. While this study has highlighted the emergence of ‘employee dilemmas’, it remains unclear as to how and whether these dilemmas can be resolved without recourse to a higher authority. This research could lead to an increased awareness of leader power play, the importance of owning and resolving leadership dilemmas, and illuminate possibilities for employees who are situated within seemingly intractable ‘employee dilemmas’.

Secondly, this study has found a paucity of research on ‘intrapersonal mutuality’ in relation to school-wide goals. While there is a focus on ‘organisational mutuality’ (Macky & Johnson, 2003; Rudman, 2002) and double-loop learning processes (Argyris, 1977; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Cardno, 2012), there is little around how the relationship between an individual’s personal and educative philosophy and that of the school they are employed in impacts commitment and performance.

As highlighted earlier in this chapter, the sample size and geographical catchment of the research may limit its applicability to schools of a different size, sector, location, decile rating, or student ethnic mix. It may be useful to explore a nation-wide
approach to confirm whether the experiences of participants in this study are representative of those in other contexts.

**Final Reflection**

Using the organisational, interpersonal, interpersonal framework has helped this study reveal a range of relationship strategies and leadership qualities that assist leaders in achieving school-wide goals. It highlights the importance of not only using an organisational structural lens, but that the multi-level perspectives of organisational, interpersonal, and intrapersonal need to be viewed as a whole. Therefore, a final recommendation for further research is that a frame like this, or one similar, be used to understand mutuality. However, because mutuality is reliant on decision-making, it can create conditions where dilemmas are likely to occur. This research has shown that dilemmas also need to be framed from more than one perspective, as ‘employees’ may also have a form of ‘ethical dilemma’ towards a leader. Consequently, ‘employee dilemmas’ need to be understood alongside ‘leadership dilemmas’ when understanding mutuality as a means used by schools trying to achieve goals and maintain relationships.
REFERENCE LIST


APPENDICES

Appendix A - Interview Schedule for Principals

Participants will be asked questions from the list below. The sub-questions are provided as possible follow ups if required.

School-wide goals
1. What is the process followed when developing school-wide goals for the charter?
2. How do these school-wide goals influence the organisation and management of the school?
3. What are the successes and challenges you have had around implementing school-wide goals while attempting to maintain positive relationships with staff?

Dilemma Management and Relationships
4. How would you define a leadership dilemma?
   a) What specific ‘leadership dilemmas’ have you encountered in meeting school-wide goals and maintaining positive relationships with the staff, without mentioning names please?
5. What strategies have you used when attempting to resolve these ‘leadership dilemmas’?
   a) What effect did this have on the relationship between you and the staff member/s involved?
   b) Which strategies have you found the most successful in the long-term for producing the best outcomes towards meeting school-wide goals?
6. What experiences have had the greatest influence on the way you address relationship challenges in relation to meeting school-wide goals?
   a) What do you think are the barriers that have prevented a successful resolution to ‘leadership dilemmas’ you have encountered?

Professional Development
7. What changes would you like to see in the professional development available for both first time and experienced Principals in the areas of meeting school-wide goals and dealing with leadership dilemmas?
8. Is there anything else you wish to add?
Appendix B - Interview Schedule for Deputy Principals

Participants will be asked questions from the list below. The sub-questions are provided as possible follow ups if required.

School-wide goals

1. How do the school-wide goals in the charter influence the school’s organisation and management?
2. What are the successes and challenges you have had around implementing school-wide goals while attempting to maintain positive relationships with staff?

Dilemma Management and Relationships

3. How would you define a leadership dilemma?
   a) What specific ‘leadership dilemmas’ have you encountered in meeting school-wide goals and maintaining positive relationships with the staff, without mentioning names please?
   b) What professional development have you received to address ‘leadership dilemmas’ successfully?
4. What strategies have you used when attempting to resolve these ‘leadership dilemmas’?
   a) What effect did this have on the relationship between you and the staff member/s involved?
   b) Which strategies have you found the most successful in the long-term for producing the best outcomes towards meeting school-wide goals?
5. What things have you done to build trust with the people who work under you?
6. What experiences have had the greatest influence on the way you address relationship challenges in relation to meeting school-wide goals?
   b) What do you think are the barriers that have prevented a successful resolution to ‘leadership dilemmas’ you have encountered?
7. What positive strategies have leaders used with you that have been effective in changing your actions while still maintaining a trusting relationship?
   a) What relationship practices have leaders used with you that have led to a breakdown in relations?
   b) Has this influenced the choices you have made when addressing issues with staff working under you?

Professional Development

8. What changes would you like to see in the professional development available for both first time and experienced Deputy Principals in the areas of meeting school-wide goals and dealing with leadership dilemmas?
9. Is there anything else you wish to say?
Appendix C - Interview Schedule for Heads of Department

Participants will be asked questions from the list below. The sub-questions are provided as possible follow ups if required.

**School-wide goals**

1. How do your departmental goals align with the school-wide goals in the charter?
   a) How do these goals influence the organisation and management of the department?

2. What are the successes and challenges you have had around implementing departmental goals while attempting to maintain positive relationships with staff?

**Dilemma Management and Relationships**

3. How would you define a leadership dilemma?
   a) What specific ‘leadership dilemmas’ have you encountered in meeting departmental goals and maintaining positive relationships with the staff, without mentioning names please?

4. What strategies have you used when attempting to resolve these ‘leadership dilemmas’?
   a) What effect did this have on the relationship between you and the staff member/s involved?
   b) Which strategies have you found the most successful in the long-term for producing the best outcomes towards meeting departmental goals?

5. What things have you done to build trust with the people who work under you?

6. What experiences have had the greatest influence on the way you address relationship challenges in relation to meeting departmental goals?
   a) What do you think are the barriers that have prevented a successful resolution to ‘leadership dilemmas’ you have encountered?

7. What positive strategies have leaders used with you that have been effective in changing your actions while still maintaining a trusting relationship?
   a) What relationship practices have leaders used with you that have led to a breakdown in relations?
   b) Has this influenced the choices you have made when addressing issues with staff working under you?

**Professional Development**

8. What changes would you like to see in the professional development available for both first time and experienced Head of Departments in the areas of meeting departmental goals and dealing with leadership dilemmas?

9. Is there anything else you wish to say?
Appendix D - Interview Schedule for Teachers

Participants will be asked questions from the list below. The sub-questions are provided as possible follow ups if required.

School-wide goals

1. What understanding do you have about the school-wide goals in the charter and their relationship to your teaching practice?

2. How do the individual goals developed during your appraisal process align to school-wide goals?

Dilemma Management and Relationships

3. What strategies have leaders used to build a trusting relationship with you?

4. What strategies have leaders used with staff to get ‘buy in’ when introducing new initiatives?

5. What strategies have leaders used when attempting to change your practice in some way?
   a) Why do you think they selected those particular strategies?

6. What effect did this have on the relationship between you and the leader involved?
   a) Which strategies were most effective in changing your actions while maintaining a positive relationship?
   b) Which strategies led to a breakdown in relations?

7. What do you think are the barriers that have prevented a successful resolution to these problems?

Professional Development

8. What changes would you like to see in the professional development available for educational leaders in the areas of dealing with relationships and achieving school-wide goals?

9. Is there anything else you wish to say?
Appendix E - Documentary Analysis Framework

The analytical process will be guided by the following questions, based on authorship (position and bias), purpose (social, political, cultural condition in which it was produced), frame of reference (relationship to previous documents), content (values conveyed) and audience (assumptions made).

1. **Type of document**

   | ___ school charter | ___ policy |
   | ___ school strategic goals | ___ procedure |
   | ___ annual plan | ___ other | ______________________________ |
   | ___ annual report |

2. **Authorship**

   Author/s of document:

   Title/s

   What position have the author/s taken?

   Are any biases conveyed?

3. **Purpose**

   What is the purpose of the document?

   Last reviewed *(if appropriate)*

   Why was the document written? What evidence within the document indicates this?

   Are there any social, political or cultural conditions that influenced its formation?

4. **Frame of Reference**

   When was the document written?

   What is its relationship to other documents?

5. **Content**

   What values are conveyed? *(eg equality, efficiency, excellence, and choice)*

6. **Audience**

   Who is the intended audience?

   What assumptions are made about the audience by the author/s?

   Where can it be accessed?

7. **Analysis**

   a) List any key ideas/themes/issues identified in the document that have to do with planning, strategy, decision-making, consultation, dilemma management, and staff relationships.

   b) What questions are left unanswered by the document?
INTERVIEWEE CONSENT FORM –

DATE: …………………………… Date: ……………………………

TO: participant’s name

FROM: Adele Anderson - researcher

RE: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

Research Project Title:
Relationship Practices that support the achievement of school-wide goals

I have had the research project explained to me and I have read and understand the information sheet given to me.

I understand that the individual interview will be 40 to 45 minutes long. I understand that everything I say is confidential and none of the information I give will identify me or my organisation, and that the only persons who will know what I have said will be the researcher and their supervisor. I also understand that all the information that I give will be stored securely at my home in a locked filing cabinet and in password protected files on my computer.

I understand that my discussion with the researcher will be digitally recorded and transcribed. I understand that I will be provided with a transcript for checking before data analysis is undertaken and that I may withdraw myself, or any information that has been provided for this project, within ten days after receiving the transcript for validation. I understand that I can see the finished research document if I wish to. I also understand my participation is voluntary.

I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be a part of this project.

Participant Signature: …………………………… Date: ……………………………

Project Researcher: …………………………… Date: ……………………………

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2013-1037

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (date) to (date). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix G - Organisational Consent Form

Organisational Consent

I (name) (position in organisation) of (organisation) give consent for Adele Anderson to undertake research in this organisation as discussed with the researcher.

The consent is subject to approval of research ethics application no 2013-1037 by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee and a copy of the approval letter being forwarded to the organisation as soon as possible.

Signature:

Date:
Appendix H - Information Sheet

INFORMATION SHEET

Research Project Title:
Relationship strategies that support the achievement of school-wide goals

Tena koe

Thank you for your interest in participating in my research into relationship practices used by leaders to support the implementation and achievement of school-wide goals. My name is Adele Anderson. I am currently enrolled in the Master of Educational Leadership and Management degree in the Department of Education at Unitec Institute of Technology and am completing a major research project as part of my Masters in Educational Leadership and Management.

Research Project
The overall aim of my project is to understand the nature of leadership dilemmas that may arise in the specific context of implementing school-wide goals and maintaining trusting relationships with staff. This research study will draw on the findings from previously isolated studies to current leadership practice in order to inform a range of possible effective relationship practices that may emerge from this study. This in turn has implications for future leadership development of principals, and senior and middle managers in relation to implementing school-wide goals and maintaining trusting relationships.

What it will mean for you
I will be collecting data using an interview schedule and would appreciate being able to interview you for 40 to 45 minutes at a time that is mutually suitable, and in a place chosen by yourself. The interview will be digitally recorded, then transcribed and a copy sent to you for your approval prior to data analysis. You are free to ask me to not use any or part of the information you have given and may also withdraw fully from the research within ten days after receiving the transcript. If you chose to do this your data will not be used.

Your name and any information that may identify you will be kept completely confidential, meaning neither you nor your organisation will be identified in the Thesis. The results of the research activity will not be viewed by any other person in your organisation without the prior agreement of everyone involved. I can also provide the opportunity to share the overall findings of this research before it is submitted. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form.

Please contact me at ___________________________ if you need more information about the project. At any time if you have any concerns about the research project you can contact my supervisor:

My supervisor is Howard Youngs, phone 815 4321 ext. 8411 or email hyoungs@unitec.ac.nz.

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2013-1037
This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (date) to (date). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
# Appendix I - Combined findings of School A and School B

## Positive Strategies

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<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow through</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Relationship Management - Interpersonal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Build Trusting Relationships</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication: professional dialogue/incidental conversation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive, approachable, and available</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have the hard conversations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restorative based conversations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genuine interest in staff as individuals</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modelling</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting confidentiality</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Leadership Qualities - Intrapersonal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Walk the talk</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn from experience / mistakes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutuality of educational, personal, school philosophy</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency at job</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Negative Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dishonesty, lies</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No follow through, over promising / under delivery</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of communication</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing the positional card</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Underperforming or incompetent leaders</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underperforming / unsupportive teachers</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to change, especially from older staff</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embedded school culture</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal issues outside school</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalities</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Historical Negative Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bullying - yelling</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Key: DA - Documentary Analysis  P - Principal  DP - Deputy Principal  T – Teacher