

**The nature, leadership and development of senior
leadership teams in New Zealand primary schools**

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DECLARATION

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This Thesis entitled: “**Exploring Teamwork in Primary School Leadership Teams**” is submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the Unitec Institute of Technology degree of Master of Educational Leadership and Management.

Candidate’s declaration

I confirm that:

- This Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project represents my own work;
- The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies.
- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee.

Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: **2015-1063**

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ABSTRACT

Senior Leadership Teams are the most common permanent team found in New Zealand primary schools and the complex and changing role of the principal is identified as a reason for their emergence and establishment as a necessity for organisational success. However, there is very little literature on the role of the principal as the leader of a primary school Senior Leadership Team. There is no specific research on what leaders must do to develop high performing Senior Leadership Teams, and what team members need to know and do to assist their team to become a high performing team. This study sought to fill that gap by investigating the nature of Senior Leadership Teams, the principal's leadership role within these teams and the development processes that lead to a group of individuals becoming a high performing team.

An interpretive approach was adopted for this qualitative study involving in-depth investigation of the experiences and practices of Senior Leadership Teams in five New Zealand urban primary schools. The study involved the use of two research methods. Firstly, semi-structured interviews were used to explore perceptions from the principal's perspective. Secondly, focus group interviews were undertaken to obtain the perspectives of the other members of the Senior Leadership Team.

This study identifies leadership as the single most important feature of developing Senior Leadership Teams into a high performing team. A major finding is that leadership key roles do not apply to the principal alone, and it is possible that everyone within a team might have a key leadership role. Findings also relate to the importance of self-management and managing relationships. Each critical transition point in a team's development involves a significant relationship between two of the leadership role holders. This study suggests the performance of Senior Leadership Teams could be enhanced if principals and Senior Leadership Team members are provided with a greater understanding and insight into the dynamic processes at work within a team and what leadership behaviours and practices are most appropriate to move the team through the team development process. It is recommended that principals and Senior Leadership Team members would benefit from research based, user friendly and practical professional learning and development to assist them to understand the complexity and practices of becoming a high performing team.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Rationale: Why an Interest in Teams?	1
Research Aims and Questions	4
Thesis Organisation	5
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction	7
Conceptualisation of a Team	7
Team Design	14
Team Leader's Role and Function	17
Team Development Processes	22
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS	
Introduction	32
My Approach to this Research	32
Methodology	34
Participant Selection	35
Research Method One: Semi-Structured Interviews	37
Research Method Two: Focus Groups	39
Validity	42
Making Meaning of the Data	45
Data Coding	46
Ethical Issues	47
Summary	50
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	
Introduction	51
Composition of the Schools' Senior Leadership Teams	52

Principals' Perspective	52
<i>The nature of senior leadership teams</i>	53
<i>The purpose of senior leadership teams</i>	53
<i>The principal's leadership role</i>	56
The development of senior leadership teams	61
<i>Forming</i>	61
<i>Storming</i>	64
<i>Norming</i>	66
<i>Performing</i>	67
Senior Leadership Team Member Perspectives	68
The nature of senior leadership teams	69
<i>The purpose of senior leadership teams</i>	69
<i>The principal's leadership role</i>	71
The development of senior leadership teams	76
<i>Forming</i>	76
<i>Storming</i>	78
<i>Norming</i>	80
<i>Performing</i>	83
Consolidated Findings	84

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion	90
The Nature of Senior Leadership Teams	90
Leadership Practice	94
Team Development	95
Principal knowledge	95
<i>Forming</i>	97
<i>Storming</i>	98
<i>Norming</i>	99
<i>Performing</i>	101
Principal's leadership of development	102
<i>Forming</i>	102
<i>Storming</i>	103
<i>Norming</i>	104

<i>Performing</i>	106
Team members knowledge	107
Team members participation in team development	108
Conclusions	111
Recommendations	112
REFERENCES	114

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Information Sheet – Principal	121
Appendix B: Information Sheet – Team	122
Appendix C: Consent Form – Principals	123
Appendix D: Consent Form – Team	124
Appendix E: Organisation’s Permission To Conduct Research	125
Appendix F: Interview Schedule – Principal	126
Appendix G: Focus Group Schedule – Team	128

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 The Team Landscape Sheard and Kakabadse (2004, p. 62)	27
Figure 2.2 The Leadership Landscape Sheard and Kakabadse (2004, p. 65)	29

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Senior Leadership Team Composition	52
Table 2: Comparison of principal and team members’ perspectives	85

ABBREVIATIONS/GLOSSARY

DP	Deputy Principal
AP	Assistant/Associate Principal

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Senior Leadership Teams are the most common permanent team found in New Zealand primary schools and the complex and changing role of the principal is identified as a reason for their emergence and establishment as a necessity for organisational success. However, there is very little literature on the role of the principal as the leader of a primary school Senior Leadership Team. There is little specific research on what leaders must do to develop high performing Senior Leadership Teams, and what team members need to know to assist their team become a high performing team. My thesis topic entitled 'The nature, leadership and development of senior leadership teams in New Zealand primary schools' sought to fill that gap by investigating the nature of Senior Leadership Teams, the principal's leadership role within these teams and the development processes that lead to a group of individuals becoming a cohesive Senior Leadership Team.

RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY: WHY AN INTEREST IN TEAMS?

I am a principal in a New Zealand primary school and the leader of the school's Senior Leadership Team. Recently both my deputy principal and my assistant principal left for other positions in quick succession leaving me with the task of appointing replacements. New people were appointed from senior teacher positions which created the need to consider what I would do to grow this group into an effective team. My interest in this topic arose as a result of my involvement in my studies on educational leadership and management and so I was aware of the need to underpin my actions with a sound theoretical basis. Team development moved from a theoretical understanding into a practical necessity.

The prominence of teams in education settings is evidence of the belief they are viewed as an essential element of schools organisational structure (Bush & Glover, 2012; Cardno, 2012). In their extensive observation based research into Senior Leadership Teams within the context of six British secondary schools, Wallace and Hall (1994) provide a description of the reforms that led to the decentralisation of the school system in the late 80's and early 90's that devolved responsibility for the governance and management of schools to the school level. This resulted in innovations to school

leadership and the promotion of team approaches underpinned by democratic values and egalitarian beliefs about teacher involvement. There was a shift from hierarchical and bureaucratic organisational structures to collaborative environments where team work approaches promote staff ownership (Walker, 1994). Similarly, Cardno (1998) who used a fax survey to collect data, in her study of team practices in New Zealand primary and secondary schools highlights the importance of the idealistic and functional dimensions of teamwork for promoting co-operation and collegiality and as a mechanism to effectively manage school operations. The increased complexity of school management resulting from school reforms has led to a willingness by principals to embrace the inclusion of teams in decision making and school operations (Cardno, 1999).

Teams have become an organisational 'must' have and are now the most common permanent team found in New Zealand schools (Bush & Middlewood, 2005; Cardno, 1998, 2012). The devolution of responsibility to teams is viewed as a means of enhancing the engagement of staff and improving their productivity in order to achieve superior outcomes to those possible where individuals are working alone (Cranston & Ehrich, 2005). A postal survey of 150 principals of large English and Welsh primary schools with rolls of over 300 pupils by Wallace and Huckman (1996) concluded that Senior Leadership Teams are in place in some form in the majority of schools who responded and they had a role in sharing the management of the school. In his small follow-up study of four primary schools, Wallace (2002) found that school's Senior Leadership Teams were a means of sharing the burden of leadership to ensure learning and teaching reforms were implemented.

The promotion of collaborative practices has been closely associated with distributed leadership to the degree it is now recognised as the "preferred leadership model in the 21st century" (Bush, 2013, p. 543). In their research into high performing leadership teams in nine English primary, secondary and special schools, Bush, Abbott, Glover, Goodall, and Smith (2012) assert that Senior Leadership Teams are a manifestation of a distributed approach to school leadership and have risen in popularity due to the developing evidence that suggests distributing leadership has positive impacts on student achievement outcomes (Bush & Glover, 2014; Matthews, Rea, Hill, & Gu, 2014). Gronn (2003) suggested principals view this model of leadership as a means

for school communication, to maintain contact with developments happening within the school and to strengthen their influence and authority.

Although effective Senior Leadership Teams have become an expression of distributed leadership there has been “limited research addressing the relationship between the model and leadership teams in education” (Bush & Glover, 2012, p. 21). Likewise, this oversight has also been recognised by Thomas (2009) who asserts in his research into effective leadership teams in six English secondary schools, that while distributed leadership has been the subject of substantial research, little has been written about the role of leadership teams as a function of distribution. Findings from three separate but related research projects into effective leadership of English primary, secondary and special schools over a 20 year period have led Earley and Weindling (2004) to state that, given the importance attached to teamwork, there have been few empirical studies made of Senior Leadership Teams in education. The focus of most research has been on the leadership role of the principal and research on the performance and development of Senior Leadership Teams is lacking (Abbott & Bush, 2013; Cranston & Ehrich, 2005; Thomas, 2009). An exception is the research of 180 school leaders in a province of South Africa by Bush and Glover (2013) using a survey approach, which concluded that many Senior Leadership Teams are still emergent and did not provide helpful examples of good practice.

Outside of education there is a considerable quantity of literature related to teams, some of which will have application to educational settings (Cardno, 2012; Thomas, 2009) and feature in my research. Theoretical models and empirical research into team performance and effectiveness are becoming more prevalent in non-school contexts, but as recommended by Barnett and McCormack (2012) in their research into leadership team performance and effectiveness of three Australian secondary schools, they need to be compared with the outcomes of research in real world settings. It is the real world setting of five primary school Senior Leadership Teams that forms the context for my research.

It is evident from this brief overview that given the emphasis on team leadership practices, research of primary school Senior Leadership Teams has been largely neglected and this is especially so for New Zealand primary schools. The early

research of Cardno (1998) establishes the prevalence of these teams in New Zealand primary schools; the extensive research of Wallace and Hall (1994) provides an insight into the nature and operation of British secondary school leadership teams; Wallace (2002) has reported on his findings concerning Senior Leadership Team effectiveness in primary schools in England and Wales; and more recently Bush, Abbott, Glover, Goodall, and Smith (2010) have reported on their research into effective Senior Leadership Teams in English primary, secondary and special schools; and Thomas (2009) on Senior Leadership in British secondary schools. The challenges of developing an education environment that is going to meet the demands and expectations of 21st century learners requires schools to reflect on the adequacy of leadership practices and their ability to meet the demands of a quickly changing world (Stoll & Temperley, 2009). There is a gap in the literature concerning the nature, leadership and development of Senior Leadership Teams in New Zealand primary schools which I have sought to fill with my research.

RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS

With my study I have sought to contribute to the knowledge base in relation to Senior Leadership Teams guided by the following three aims.

Research aims

1. To understand the nature of Senior Leadership Teams in New Zealand Primary schools;
2. To explore perceptions of the principal's leadership role in Senior Leadership Teams in New Zealand primary schools; and
3. To investigate team development processes that lead to a group of individuals becoming a cohesive Senior Leadership Team.

Research questions

The research questions driving this study are:

1. What is the nature of Senior Leadership Teams in New Zealand Primary schools?
2. What are the perceptions of the principal's leadership role in Senior Leadership Teams in New Zealand primary schools?

3. What team development processes lead to a group of individuals becoming a cohesive Senior Leadership Team?

THESIS ORGANISATION

This thesis is divided into five chapters, which all contribute to an understanding of the nature of Senior Leadership Teams, the principal's leadership role within these teams and the development processes that lead to a group of individuals becoming a high performing team.

Chapter One, is an introduction to this research and describes the rationale as to why an interest exists in doing research on primary school Senior Leadership Teams. It also contains the research aims and questions relating to this study.

Chapter Two, the literature review chapter, critically reviews the literature pertaining to the nature and function of Senior Leadership Teams, the principal's leadership role within these teams. The development processes that lead to a group of individuals becoming a high performing team are examined. Due to the limited quantity of research in New Zealand primary schools, literature from international settings, from the secondary sector and from outside education informs this study.

Chapter Three, examines my research methodology and provides an explanation of the rationale underpinning the subjectivist epistemological position taken for this research project. The two data collection methods used: semi structured interviews and focus groups are described and the factors related to data analysis, validity, triangulation and ethical considerations relevant to the study are discussed.

Chapter Four, presents the findings gathered from the principals of five New Zealand primary schools and the other members of the Senior Leadership Teams of those schools. Findings are presented in relation to the themes that emerged from the data.

Chapter Five, presents a thematic discussion of the findings on the nature and function of Senior Leadership Teams, the principal's leadership role within these teams and the development processes that lead to a group of individuals becoming a high performing

team. This chapter includes conclusions made in relation to the research questions and recommendations arising from this research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is to critically review and examine the literature pertaining to the nature and function of Senior Leadership Teams, the principal's leadership role within these teams and the development processes that lead to a group of individuals becoming a high performing team. Due to the limited quantity of research in New Zealand primary schools I have drawn on literature from international settings, from the secondary sector and from outside education.

As I reviewed the literature the following themes were evident in the literature:

- Conceptualisation of a team;
- Team design;
- Team leaders role and function; and
- Team development processes.

It should be noted that the two terms Senior Leadership Team and Senior Management Team are used synonymously. Senior Management Team was used in the early literature (Cardno, 1998; Wallace & Hall, 1994; Wallace & Huckman, 1996) and has largely been superseded by the term Senior Leadership Team from the early 2000s (Bush et al., 2012; Earley & Weindling, 2004; Goodall, 2013; Thomas, 2009). For the sake of clarity I will be using the term Senior Leadership Team/s throughout my thesis.

CONCEPTUALISATION OF A TEAM

Schools have become organised so that teams perform a significant role in the organisation's achievement of its teaching and learning goals. From the beginning it is necessary to have a common conception of what a team is compared to a group of people who merely work together. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) state that "A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable" (p. 112).

Similarly Cardno (2012) describes a team as a “body established to accomplish specific tasks and its members have skills which fit with those of others to produce an overall pattern of effective performance” (p. 141). From these quotes it is possible to identify a team’s attributes as being a small number of members working together and using their complimentary skills to successfully achieve a common goal.

This definition of a team from Sheard, Kakabadse, and Kakabadse (2009) places emphasis on the synergy that is generated when team members who are working together integrate their skills to a achieve a common goal:

A team generates positive synergy through coordinated effort. The individual efforts of team members result in a level of performance that is greater than the sum of the individual inputs. A team is a group in which the individuals have a common aim and in which the jobs and skills of each member fit in with those of the others. (p. 145)

In this very comprehensive definition provided by Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006) they have brought together all the features of a team developed in the earlier definitions. A notable addition is that a team functions within a wider organisational context and interacts with other aspects of the organisation.

(a) two or more individuals who (b) socially interact (face-to-face or, increasingly, virtually); (c) possess one or more common goals; (d) are brought together to perform organizationally relevant tasks; (e) exhibit interdependencies with respect to workflow, goals, and outcomes; (f) have different roles and responsibilities; and (g) are together embedded in an encompassing organisational system, with boundaries and linkages to the broader system context and task environment. (p. 79)

Of the three main types of teams found in organisations identified by Cardno (2012) as permanent, project and self-managed, the Senior Leadership Team is of the permanent type. Senior Leadership Teams meet the definition of *permanent* teams. They are functional teams that are built into the structure of the school, normally consisting of the principal, deputy/assistant principals and frequently other senior teachers, who work together continuously and have a close working relationship. In her research into teams in New Zealand Schools, Cardno (1998) found there to be a

very high incidence of Senior Leadership Teams in schools in both the primary and secondary sectors. She traces the origins of Senior Leadership Teams back to the reforms of the New Zealand education system and the introduction of self-management in the late 1980s (Cardno, 2006). The British system saw the emergence of Senior Leadership Teams in secondary schools in the early 1970's and this was followed by its use in the primary sector in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Earley & Weindling, 2004; Wallace & Hall, 1994). Similarly, in writing about reforms and decentralisation in the Australian education landscape, Walker (1994) describes Leadership Teams as an important feature of school structures and participative approaches that became popular in the 1980s.

From the definitions, there is consistent agreement about common identifiable elements concerning the nature of a team that is assumed is equally applicable to Senior Leadership Teams. Teams:

- Consist of an identifiable number of people working interdependently;
- Are committed to a common purpose or goal;
- Delineate the roles and contributions to be made by team members;
- Hold themselves accountable for effective performance;
- Develop positive synergies;
- Are empowered to accomplish specific tasks; and
- Do their work within a larger social system or organisation.

The significance of each of these common elements requires further explanation and discussion in relation to their applicability to Senior Leadership Teams.

Team makeup

There is significant agreement that heroic models of leadership based around the role of the principal have been surpassed by an emerging recognition of the advantages of distributed forms of leadership (Barnett & McCormack, 2012; Bush & Middlewood, 2005; Gronn, 2003). A strong case is made in the literature that effective Senior Leadership Teams working interdependently are able to achieve far more than in traditional structures where the principal coordinates the separate contributions of other school leaders (Bush & Glover, 2012; Thomas, 2009). A culture of shared beliefs, values and behaviour norms provides the framework in which a team can collaboratively operate (Walker, 1994; Wallace, 2001).

The ideal size of a team to achieve optimum performance is very much school specific and what works in one situation may not work in others. As teams grow in size structural complexity increases and it becomes more difficult to achieve constructive interactions and work through hierarchical, functional and individual differences. Sheard and Kakabadse (2004) in their monograph summarising key leadership behaviour associated with the creation of high performing teams, and Bolman and Deal (2008) in their classic work on organisations, argue that larger teams are more likely to be adversely affected by groupthink, are less cohesive and less likely to feel personally accountable for team outcomes. It is therefore suggested that teams should have the minimum number of members required to achieve team goals. Numbers of between three and six are considered optimal (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004; Thompson, 2014).

Commitment to a common purpose or goal

Setting clear goals, expectations and articulating them is a core aspect of strategic leadership (Cardno, 2012; Huszczo, 2004; Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009). The purpose of a team defines the reason for its existence and creates the focus for shared commitment, mutual understanding and collective performance (Bush et al., 2012; Thompson, 2014). High performing teams reframe their purpose into specific and measureable goals that contribute towards the organisations strategic goals, which they use to drive their performance (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

Thomas (2009) states that Senior Leadership Teams fulfil two compelling purposes – operational and strategic. Operational management ensures smooth and efficient operation of a school and strategic leadership focuses on change, improvement and planning for the future. Strategic leadership is associated with complexity and high risk, which in turn requires significant interdependence of all members of the team and commitment to the organisation's vision and goals (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004). Not only does a team need to know and understand the relevance of its purpose and goals, they must also believe they are important (Bell, 1997; Wheelan, 2016). Clearly understood purpose or goals lead to a greater willingness by team members to commit their time, energy and expertise which leads to greater effectiveness of the Senior Leadership Team. Team members must be bold and ask questions to clarify the team's purpose and goals if they are unsure (Wheelan, 2016).

Team member roles and contributions

Wallace and Hall (1994) describe that the overall role of the Senior Leadership Team is “to manage the school within the leadership of the head, supported by the governing body” (p. 57). For schools to achieve their strategic goals it is vital for individual members of the team to have clarity about their individual responsibilities and a well-defined awareness of both individual and group roles and contributions (Bush & Glover, 2012; Goodall, 2013; Thomas, 2009; Yukl, 2010). In primary schools, it is common practice for members of Senior Leadership Teams to take on multiple roles due to there being fewer staff in the school (Abbott & Bush, 2013; Bush et al., 2012; Wallace & Huckman, 1996).

The role of individuals within a team can be considered in a number of ways. Cardno (2012) describes these as a *functional contribution* and a *relational role*. Each member of the team needs to know their function within the team which is defined by their designated position for which they will have the requisite expertise and qualifications. The way in which a person relates and behaves towards other team members determines the relational role they have within the team. The most widely used relational roles are the nine team roles developed by Belbin (2010, 2012). Belbin (2010) argues that a high performing team requires a balanced representation of all the roles.

Team accountability

Accountability is defined by Thompson (2014) in his text on teams in organisations, as the “implicit or explicit expectation that one may be called on to justify one’s beliefs, feelings, and actions to others” (p. 192). An essential aspect of team-working is for teams to review processes, activities and decisions in order to improve their performance and effectiveness. Regular self-evaluation should lead to both the team and individuals participating in professional learning to facilitate further development (Bush et al., 2012; Thomas, 2009; Thompson, 2014). Teams should have an expectation they are going to be effective and achieve their goals. Therefore, teams must encourage values and norms that encourage innovation, productivity, goal accomplishment and coordinated effort (Wheelan, 2016). Wheelan (2016) describes the tendency to blame others for poor results as a “fundamental attrition error” (p. 51). This term means that we misjudge people, misconstrue their behaviour and motives

and attribute their actions to personality characteristics rather than taking other factors into consideration. A consequence of this is for group members to take personal responsibility for group success but to attribute failures to leaders and others.

Develop positive synergies

The development of a highly cohesive Senior Leadership Team that exhibits synergy does not happen by chance and is a dynamic that is facilitated by positive leadership and management strategies by the principal (Bell, 1997; Cranston & Ehrich, 2005). Synergy is defined by Thompson (2014) as the sum total of the combined efforts of the team achieving a greater effect than that of individual effort when working autonomously. Synergy is something that takes time to emerge. Working in teams can release creative energy, makes work more enjoyable, and leads to improved efficiencies (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004).

There are five behaviours and attitudes that encourage the development of team synergy and culture. Firstly, open, honest and constructive communication where all team member's contributions are heard and valued (Wheelan, 2016). Wheelan (2016) also discusses the need to have a balance in group discussions where there is a ratio of 70-80% of work orientated discussion to 20-30% of supportive comments to ensure team success. Secondly, group cohesion has a positive influence on group synergy leading to increased conformity, group integration, mutual support and commitment (Barnett & McCormack, 2012; Wheelan, 2016). Thirdly, cooperation and collaboration results in a stronger commitment to the team, improved coordination of effort and increased trust between team members (Walker, 1994; Wheelan, 2016). Fourthly, team members must coordinate their efforts to meet the demands of the team's tasks (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Fifthly, trust has a significant influence on team efficacy and enables team members to correctly interpret other team member's behaviour (Barnett & McCormick, 2012). Being explicit about these team norms and clearly specifying desirable and undesirable behaviours is important for team effectiveness (Hackman, Wageman, & Fisher, 2009).

Empowerment to accomplish specific tasks

High performing teams require the authority to manage their work and the necessary resources to perform the task. Team empowerment is a model of leadership that

delegates and shares power which facilitates team development and improved effectiveness (Thompson, 2014; Wheelan, 2016). Principals play a critical role in the shift towards a team centred school leadership where they are still ultimately accountable for the management of a school and vulnerable if the Senior Leadership Team fails (Barnett & McCormack, 2012; Hall & Wallace, 1996; Johnston & Pickersgill, 1997). However, by empowering the Senior Leadership Team the principal is not dispensing with their leadership functions but rather enhancing their leadership effectiveness (Barnett & McCormack, 2012).

Work within a larger social system or organisation

All teams operate within an organisational context or larger social system and interact and work together with other teams. Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006) in their review of teams in organisations, conceptualise a team as being “embedded in a multilevel system that has individual, team, and organisational aspects” (p. 80) where there are linkages across all these levels. The team must be capable of adapting to the changing and unexpected demands made upon it from its surrounding environment. A successful team does not work in isolation and requires a culture where the values of trust, openness and collaboration are advocated (Thompson, 2014; Walker, 1994).

Achieving a school’s educational goals means the Senior Leadership Team is reliant on the cooperation of the other staff and must maintain an interface with the rest of the school. For this to occur it is vital for there to be cohesive ties and shared respect (Bush et al., 2012; Hall & Wallace, 1996). A key concern for Senior Leadership Teams is to ensure they have credibility. Strategies to achieve this include fostering effective two way communication and flow of information, provision for consultation opportunities, making themselves accessible to staff, taking collective responsibility for decisions and always presenting a united front to the staff (Hall & Wallace, 1996; Wallace & Huckman, 1996).

In this section, each of the common elements conceptualised in the literature defining teams has been explained and a common conception of what a team is, compared to a group of people who merely work together, has been formed. In the next section I will be reviewing the literature to identify the significant themes relating to the design and structure of teams.

TEAM DESIGN

The design of the Senior Leadership Team is very important for ensuring the team is aligned with the school's vision for teaching and learning and its members are able to work effectively together to achieve this vision (Thomas, 2009). Research suggests the team should be large enough to encompass the roles required but not too large as to be unwieldy, between four and eight members is considered to be optimum (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004; Thomas, 2009; Wheelan, 2009). The make-up of Senior Leadership Teams is specific to each school, but typically includes the principal, deputy/associate/assistant principals and might also include one or more senior teachers (Cranston & Ehrich, 2005; Gronn, 2003).

In their research into Senior Leadership Teams in secondary schools Wallace and Hall (1994) found several principles that regulated how teams were designed which included: addressing the needs of key school wide management responsibilities; according acknowledgement to current senior leaders; and the desire to achieve a balance of personal qualities, skills and relevant expertise. They found the main criterion for making an appointment was to select the best person for the position, but that did not preclude difficulties for those involved in making the appointment agreeing on what were the right priorities of personality or skills.

There are similarities with the criteria identified by Gilley, Morris, Waite, Coates, and Veliquette (2010) in their literature review on the development of effective teams. When selecting team members, they found that consideration of an individual's competencies and interpersonal style is critical. They describe the competencies as skills, knowledge and attitudes required in the areas of "conflict resolution, problem solving, communication, organisational understanding, decision making, goal setting, and performance management, and planning and task coordination" (p. 13-14). Differences between an individual's interpersonal style can be the source of misunderstanding, tension and conflict. Balancing a team with individuals who have different but complimentary interpersonal styles can assist a team achieve its objectives. They stress the importance of team members having an understanding and appreciation of the differences of each member's interpersonal style.

Three factors for selecting potential team members are proposed by Adair (1997) in his text on effective teambuilding. They are - technical or professional competence; ability to work as a team member; and desirable personal attributes. He states that individuals must have professional skill or technical knowledge needed by the team, but suggests those who have secondary skills, or are capable of being flexible and have something else to offer are desirable. Secondly, ability to work as a team member relates to the motivation levels of individuals and their interest in working hard for the team. He cautions against including a disruptive individual in the team who will upset the harmony of the team. Likewise, Hall and Wallace (1996) agree that teamwork can be undermined by reluctant team members when they engage in manipulative games or refuse to collaborate. Thirdly, desirable personal attributes are those which contribute to the process of completing the team's task and include such things as decision making, problem solving, listening and innovative skills (Adair, 1997).

When the opportunity arises to make appointments to their Senior Leadership Team schools have the option of making either an internal or external appointment. Appointments are seen as crucial to the ongoing performance of the team. In their research Bush et al. (2012) found four distinguishing criteria underpinned this decision. Firstly, it was essential the applicants shared the existing Senior Leadership Team values about children and learning at the school. At the core were children, and the requirement that applicants required a good teaching record. Secondly, they found a proclivity towards internal appointments as internal appointees were a known entity, they had been nurtured into the position, were already immersed in the values of the school and this created continuity. Thirdly, applicants must share the vision of the school. Fourthly, that applicants had the right personal characteristics.

Continuity of employment to the school is viewed as a key aspect for maintaining high performance of Senior Leadership Teams in schools (Goodall, 2013). Abbott and Bush (2013) regard continuity of employment as significant for continuing the links "to the long-term strategic perspective essential to sustainable development" (p. 598). Whether to make internal promotions or external appointments is seen within the context of a transparent process that leads to the selection of the best candidate. Continuity is frequently seen as having greater significance over a fresh approach brought by an external appointee (Abbott & Bush, 2013). Therefore, it follows that high

turnover of team members is detrimental to the performance of the team with the inherent loss of group knowledge and skills that occurs (Goodall, 2013; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006).

According to Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006) in their monograph of 50 years of research into what makes teams effective, team design factors are associated with the configuration of the team task, the teams composition and performance norms. The point is made that tasks that can be performed by an individual should not be performed by a team. Secondly, the composition of the team should be a suitable combination of individuals with the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the team's tasks. Finally, performance norms are associated with personality variables that affect team cohesion and performance. Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006) conclude that team composition variables are very complex and the research foundation into them are still in their infancy. This view is confirmed by Wheelan (2016) in her text about creating effective teams, who says that "membership training hasn't caught on" (p. 49) and that very little is known about being an effective team member. She claims that research literature does not support the conclusion that assessment of the "personality or style compatibility" (p. 13) of team members is significant for team success. What is suggested is that team members in effective teams are knowledgeable about team processes and team tasks. Team members who are given professional development in the skills of their job, how teams function and in how they can help a team function make more effective team members. Furthermore, she suggests that team members do not have to like each other for the team to be successful.

Being a part of a team is not always seen as being a universal good thing. Individuals within a team make a trade-off between their independence (personal identity) and team membership (belonging and association). Both autonomy and team membership and affiliation are important for individuals in a team. However, maintaining a balance between personal identity and group belonging is necessary for individual's emotional wellbeing. This creates a simultaneous need to be part of a team and yet at the same time a fear of losing personal identity as a consequence of this membership (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004).

Gronn (2003) describes three other negative features of teams that are significant in considering team design – *identification, surveillance and feigned community*. Teams are criticised for the way in which concertive control has replaced direct supervision of a more bureaucratic approach. Concertive control is shaping individuals behaviour and action through negotiated team consensus. When teams self-monitor the behaviour of individual team members it is described by Gronn (2003) as a form of “collaboratively coerced compliance” (p. 115). This form of control is more difficult to resist than former bureaucratic approaches. In some contexts, concertive control can be complemented by a range of surveillance tools. These can include the public use of team performance data or electronic monitoring devices which put further pressure on team self-management mechanisms by peers. A further criticism of teams is that they create a contrived sense of community where the equality of management and others in the team is fictional. Teamwork can engender a false presumption that the interests of employees and the employer are shared (Gronn, 2003).

Creating a functioning Senior Leadership Team begins with the selection process. This places a significant responsibility on those making the appointments to select people who are willing and capable of effectively working in a team to achieve school goals. Support must be provided to cultivate a teamwork culture that promotes competence, alignment with school goals and a structure which is adaptable and flexible and able to cope with uncertainty and innovation. From the literature I have identified team design as an important aspect contributing towards an understanding of the nature of Senior Leadership Teams and therefore relevant to my study. In the next section the literature related to the principal's role and function as the Senior Leadership Team leader will be explored.

TEAM LEADER'S ROLE AND FUNCTION

For teams to become a meaningful and essential element of schools' organisational structure, principals will need to carefully consider the meaning of leadership and their role within Senior Leadership Teams. There is a growing body of literature supporting the view that school leaders and leadership are important (Bush & Glover, 2014; Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). In their review of literature related to the concept of distributed leadership undertaken for the British National College for School Leadership, Bennett, Wise, Woods, and Harvey (2003) state that

leaders have the primary responsibility for generating and maintaining organisational culture which they do by articulating and communicating vision, values, beliefs and direction. They are the central driving force that creates organisational cultural transformation.(Bolman & Deal, 2008; Bush, 2011; Connolly, James, & Beales, 2011). Zaccaro, Rittman, and Marks (2001) argue that leadership is a critical factor for the success of a team and is therefore a prime reason for its failure.

There is no one agreed conception of leadership. Due to its importance for Senior Leadership Teams and school effectiveness an understanding of this complex concept is necessary. The following has been provided by Bush and Glover (2003) as a working definition:

Leadership is a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. Successful leaders develop a vision for their schools based on their personal and professional values. They articulate this vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and other stakeholders to share the vision. The philosophy, structures and activities of the school are geared towards the achievement of this shared vision. (p. 8)

This quote confirms the importance for leaders to frequently articulate the vision in order to influence others to share and support accomplishment of the vision.

Similarly ,in this definition of leadership provided by Yukl (2010) he emphasises that leadership is a process of influencing others to agree to a shared understanding of what needs to be accomplished together.

Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives. (p. 26)

A central element of leadership is that it includes a process of intentional influence. The leader must convincingly share and articulate desired goals to persuade others to agree to and support the accomplishment of these goals. Linked to influence are the personal and professional values underpinning the goals or actions chosen and how they influence the way in which leaders plan strategically (Bush, 2011). Leadership that is values driven is concerned with developing a holistic, future orientated vision that maximises learning opportunities for all students (Cranston, 2013). Through

leadership processes, leaders lead organisations, motivate and develop people, and establish the direction and strategies that promote a focus and commitment that enable adaptation when circumstances change (Kotter, 1996). The primary focus of leadership is to develop conditions that enhance the quality of teaching and learning (Bush, 2011; Cardno, 2012; Matthews et al., 2014; Robinson et al., 2009). It is asserted by Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) that “leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning” (p. 28). In their six year Canadian research project to identify the nature of successful educational leadership, Seashore-Louis et al. (2010) draw the conclusion that leadership has a significant effect on, and makes a substantial contribution to the improvement of the quality of a school's organisation and student learning.

The role of principal leadership has evolved since the reforms that led to the decentralisation of the school system in the late 80's and early 90's resulting in the devolution of responsibility for the governance and management of schools to the school level (Walker, 1994). The contention is that the role of the principal has changed from management to the role of instructional leader (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). There are similarities with this viewpoint to transactional and transformational aspects of leadership. Transactional leadership relates to day-to-day operational management that operates through formal authority mechanisms that efficiently manage routine tasks. Transformational leadership is focused on a vision for the future, values, expectations and empowering others to take responsibility for making change and achieving the team's goals (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006; Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004). In a perspective written by The Wallace Foundation (2013) a musical metaphor is used to describe different approaches to leadership that principals can take. First, is that of the one man band in which the principal does it themselves. Second, those who choose to delegate responsibilities are likened to the leader of a small jazz group. Third, is the principal who believes in widely sharing leadership. They are compared with the conductor of an orchestra who helps a large group of musicians create a symphony that also includes opportunities for soloists to perform. This metaphor demonstrates that even though a variety of leadership patterns can exist in schools “the principal remains the central source of leadership influence” (p. 6).

What is apparent from the literature is that the use of these analogies can be applied to the leadership of the principal in primary schools to show how the principal effectively achieves a school's goals. The complexity of leadership practices and range of contexts encountered supports the view promoting a team leadership perspective. This requires a principal to be sensitive to the context and able to use different approaches depending on the circumstances (Crawford, 2012). It is also evident that it is unlikely for one person to have the capacity to fully comprehend and competently manage the requirements and responsibilities of every context. On this basis, leadership should be considered from the standpoint of a team role and the contribution the team can make. The emphasis has now moved to team based leadership and ownership (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010; Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004). Collegiality, participatory approaches and distributed leadership are supplementing solo leadership models as the scope of school leadership responsibilities have increased. It is accepted that the involvement of deputy principals and other senior staff enhances the quality of decisions that can be expected to improve outcomes for students (Bush, 2012). It is asserted by Bush and Glover (2012) that effective leadership by Senior Leadership Teams provides an opportunity or vehicle for the exercise of distributed leadership. Cultivating leadership in others enhances leadership depth, and sharing responsibilities and tasks creates a greater impact than that achievable by a single individual.

According to Youngs (2013) the uptake in education of distributed leadership is likely to have more to do with its fit to reforms in education than providing a deeper understanding of leadership practice. He describes it as a "slippery and elastic concept, used loosely in the field of education" (p. 2). He asserts that it is impossible to achieve a clear unitary understanding of the concept to make it useful as a construct of educational leadership. He claims that a hybrid configuration of "concentrated and dispersed leadership" (p. 3) in which formal organisational leadership and informal or dispersed leadership co-exist, presents a more convincing interpretation of the reality of educational leadership. To be effective, distributed leadership practice requires leaders to have wide-ranging capabilities, well developed people skills, ethical values, problem solving abilities, conceptual skills, and sound judgement (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004).

Relationships underpinned with trust, integrity and respect emerge as a significant theme from research that affects team processes (Bush et al., 2012; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006; Robinson et al., 2009; Wheelan, 2016). The quality of relationships within a team has a major influence on the ability of individual team members to work as a team. When working closely together it is important for team members to participate in relationship building processes. The ability of a team to discuss key complex issues is adversely affected when there is a lack of trust and respect (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004). This is illustrated by Robinson et al. (2009) in the Best Evidence Synthesis when they state, "Trust is critical in contexts where the success of one person's efforts is dependent on the contribution of others" (p. 183). Among the qualities and behaviours that engender trust are respect for others, personal regard, competence and personal integrity. Of these, respecting the importance of each individual and that person's role is the most fundamental. Trustworthiness is linked to leaders who care about others and exhibit personal regard and has the effect of strengthening social affiliations and reducing vulnerabilities. Competence is an important factor in determining whether a leader is trustworthy as team members need to be able to depend on each other. Competence in dealing effectively with proficiency issues has been strongly correlated with sustaining collective school improvement efforts. Finally, integrity relates to the consistency between what a person says and what they do because it concerns the values and principles that underpin the actions a leader takes. Relational trust is key factor for developing and sustaining a professional community, commitment and innovation that makes cultural and organisational development possible (Robinson et al., 2009).

Leithwood et al. (2008) have synthesised evidence gathered from both school and non-school contexts to provide leaders with core principles that assist them with their leadership tasks. By including these principles in their practice, school leaders have a range of strategies that will enable them to improve staff performance. The first principle is that of *building a vision and setting goals and direction*. Included in this principle is forming and clearly defining a shared vision, promoting acceptance of collective goals and an expectation of high performance as a stimulant for work. Second, is *understanding and developing people*. This relates to the motivation of people through building their knowledge, skills and dispositions leading to competent performance needed to achieve organisational goals. This is achieved by giving team

members individualised support, providing learning opportunities and role modelling these values and behaviours. A third principle is that of *redesigning the organisation* to establish working conditions that motivate commitment of which establishing a collaborative culture is an example. Fourthly, is *creating productive working conditions*, which relates to promoting organisational stability, ensuring communication is effective and bolstering the infrastructure of the school (Leithwood et al., 2008).

There is a large body of literature that describes the complex and changing role of the principal as they enact leadership but very little that throws light on their role and function as the leader of a primary school Senior Leadership Team. Leadership is becoming more distributed across the team and as asserted by Hall and Wallace (1996) that this creates ambiguity for the role of the principal as they are both leader and a follower depending on the context. They represent the hierarchy of the school in their position as principal and must also create the conditions which encourage all team members to fully contribute and at times take a leadership role themselves. My study is seeking to understand the complexity of the principal's role, the leadership processes occurring among members of the team, their context, and the consequences for the development of the Senior Leadership Teams I am investigating which will contribute to the understanding of leadership of a Senior Leadership Team.

TEAM DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

The concept of team development is well documented in the general organisational literature (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004; Tuckman, 1965; Wheelan, 2016). Cardno (2002) identified a low emphasis on team development in a baseline survey of team prevalence and practice in New Zealand schools. More recently this deficiency has been observed by Bush et al. (2012) when he writes, "While there is a raft of literature on professional development for leadership, there is comparatively little on the development of teams" (p. 25). In his research he found that most of the Senior Leadership Teams focused on such things as the significance of the time they had been together, social activities, meetings, days planning together, coaching, mentoring and individual professional development. In their extensive research Wallace and Hall (1994) note that Senior Leadership Team development was both unplanned and structured. Time spent working together was considered important, collegial support, humour and social activities featured. Structured activities included individuals

attending training courses, residential courses, review days, meetings and the use of outside facilitators. Bell (1997) views team development in terms of how a team understands its objectives, clearly understands operating procedures, has processes in place for task achievement and effectively monitors and reviews the team's tasks. Bush and Middlewood (2005) link team development to team effectiveness and briefly introduce the model from Tuckman (1965) but do not provide any elaboration of the stages of development. Cardno (2005) in her paper on leadership and professional development states that professional development of middle and senior leaders is a critical focus for leadership to be effective across the organisation. In this holistic model she asserts that the development of leaders is the most unrecognised dimension of professional development. My research on the development of Senior Leadership Teams in New Zealand primary schools seeks to address this gap in the literature.

To successfully transform a heterogeneous group into a high performing team requires all members of the team working through an all-inclusive development process (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006; Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004). For people to become acquainted with team members' values and beliefs, their strengths and weaknesses and to assess their own role within the team takes time as team members adapt their behaviour to optimise their individual involvement in the team (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004). Several models have been developed to explain this process of team development. Representative examples include the four stage model of Hensey (2001), the punctuated equilibrium model of Gersick (1988), the integrated model of group development of Wheelan (2016), the team and leadership framework of Sheard and Kakabadse (2004) and the classic model of Tuckman (1965). The models of Hensey (2001) and Wheelan (2016) have close similarities to the *forming, storming, norming and performing* stages of Tuckman (1965). The landscapes of Sheard and Kakabadse (2004) is an extension of the Tuckman (1965) model. The model of Gersick (1988) describes teams as developing rapidly to their midpoint at which point they go through a dramatic reorganisation. This model is often regarded as being in opposition to that of Tuckman (1965) but recent research suggests that aspects of both can be functioning during the process of group development (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006).

The most widely recognised model of group development is that of Tuckman (1965) with the model of "*forming, storming, norming and performing*". "Developmental

Sequencing in Small Groups” was published by Bruce W. Tuckman in 1965 as a review of literature on interpersonal relationships and task activity and the developmental sequence that occurs in small group development. In this review he proposes a four stage model that follows a developmental sequence from team formation through to effective functioning of the team that he summarised as “*forming, storming, norming and performing*” (Tuckman, 1965) and which was later expanded to include a fifth stage of *adjourning* (Tuckman & Jensen, 2010). This model was not based on original empirical data but conceptualised existing research data and theoretical principles which he believed required further research. It is noteworthy that in a review of articles to establish whether this model had been empirically tested Tuckman and Jensen (2010) found few studies that reported empirical data and most were written from a theoretical framework. For the purpose of this research I am also making the assumption that while this research concerned team development it is also applicable to the development of Senior Leadership Teams.

The five stages of the Tuckman and Jensen (2010) model are:

Forming – In the first stage the team forms and there is uncertainty about the nature of the team’s task, members are anxious, concerned about acceptance, are polite and enthusiastic. Members may not know each other so mutual trust is minimal and they are guarded with their thoughts and ideas.

Storming – This stage is characterised by conflict and lack of cohesion around interpersonal relationships as members begin to compete for influence, identify their role, process expectations and how they will work together. Members may respond emotionally against the viability of the task and resist the efforts of the leader to manage the team.

Norming – Cohesion starts to develop as members establish protocols, norms of behaviour, resolve differences, and clarify roles. Communication, closer relations and mutual support develops and they begin to co-operate to perform the group’s task.

Performing – Group energy is channelled into performing the task and members are interdependent, motivated and conflict is addressed without the consequences of earlier stages. The team has high morale and is performing effectively.

Adjourning – For project teams the completion of the project will bring a sense of satisfaction at completing the task, but sadness due to the dissolution of the team.

The four stages of the Hensey (2001) model are: *Stage I – Collection*, *Stage II – Group*, *Stage III – Developing Team*, *Stage IV – High-Performing Team*, with each stage having very similar characteristics to those of Tuckman (1965). He sees great value in the team self-assessing their current stage of development in order to discuss practical ways in which they can improve their level of teamwork and develop further as a team. Typical tasks that can assist teams to develop and move through the stages include defining the team's mission, vision, and goals which are incorporated into a written charter; discussing the team's norms, barriers to development and the roles of team members. He recommends teams create specific and practical ground rules and problem solving and conflict resolution processes (Hensey, 2001).

The integrated model of Wheelan (2016) is a development model of groups into teams based on research from a number of studies. This model also has four stages with *Stage 1: Dependency and Inclusion*. In this stage members display dependency on the leader and have concerns about their safety and acceptance by other group members. Group members expect leaders to be confident and provide structure by being clear about the group's goals. Leaders should involve members in discussion of the group's goals, values and the task, provide positive feedback, set performance standards and provide training in group participation and task related skills. During *Stage 2: Counterdependency and Fighting*, the group seeks independence from the leader and interpersonal conflict develops over goals and procedures. The group begins to clarify goals and member's roles. If the group is to move on they must resolve conflicts so trust and cohesion can develop. The leader can facilitate this process through the use of conflict resolution strategies and by slowly distributing power to empower group members to participate in the management of group functions. Working through these conflicts increases member's commitment, cooperation, trust and commitment to the task. During *Stage 3: Trust and Security*, team members are more willing to cooperate, there is greater trust and cohesion, and communication becomes more open and focused on the task. The leader becomes more consultative and less directive. *Stage 4: Work*, is the stage at which the group becomes a high performing team and its energy is focused into being productive, effective and achieving the team's goals. The

team is highly cohesive and utilises effective strategies to manage conflict. At this stage a leader's role is to monitor team processes and continue to provide organisational support (Wheelan, 2016).

The model of Tuckman (1965) has been expanded by Sheard and Kakabadse (2004) from their research on team development in a multinational engineering company (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2002) to provide a detailed and complimentary *Integrated Team Development Process, Team Landscape* and *Leadership Landscape* that can be applied to team development and leadership. The *Integrated Team Development Process* has the features of the Tuckman (1965) model with a predictable and reoccurring progression through *forming, storming, norming and performing*. They have introduced a *Forming Opt Out stage*, after the *Forming* stage, to describe the process whereby some members of the team do not enter the *Storming* stage, refuse to let go of the past and become disengaged when they realise what will be required of them. This opting out may not be apparent to other team members as they enter the *Storming/Norming Stages*. As the team moves towards *Performing* the opting out becomes apparent, thus sending the team into another *Storming/Norming* cycle. Breaking out of this cycle is very difficult and requires a skilled leader to identify defensive processes, create common understandings and rebuild team relationships.

During a twelve month research period with team members and team leaders, extensive data were collected from the organisation by Sheard and Kakabadse (2002) which were analysed and the results graphically represented on *The Team Landscape*. Based on the work of Adair (1997) they identified three elements common to the needs of teams: *task* (the team goal), *individual* (aspects associated with team membership relevant to each individual member), *group* (factors influencing the ability of a team to perform), and which was extended to add a fourth, *environment* (factors underpinning the work of a team in an organisation). Further research allowed nine lower levels of granularity to be identified, resulting in the generation of nine key factors relevant to the transformation of a group into an effective team. These granular key factors related to each of the four elements are:

- Task
- (1) clearly defined goals – clearly articulated goals.
 - (2) priorities – organisational priorities identified and pursued.

- Group (3) roles and responsibilities – complementary roles and responsibilities clearly understood.
 (4) self awareness – the impact of a team member’s behaviour on the team’s functions.
- Individual (5) leadership – all aspects of leadership related to the team’s performance.
 (6) group dynamics – the social system required for a team to function.
 (7) communication – the effective flow of information concerning the team’s the task and performance.
- Environment (8) context – the impact of the environmental context on the team.
 (9) infrastructure – all macro organisational issues.

The key factors are linked to the four development stages of Tuckman (1965) - forming, storming, norming and performing, to form a nine by four matrix. Each link was empirically established and its significance is represented in direct proportion to the height of the link (see Figure 2.1). The significance of each link is categorised from Category One (least significant) to Category Four (most significant).

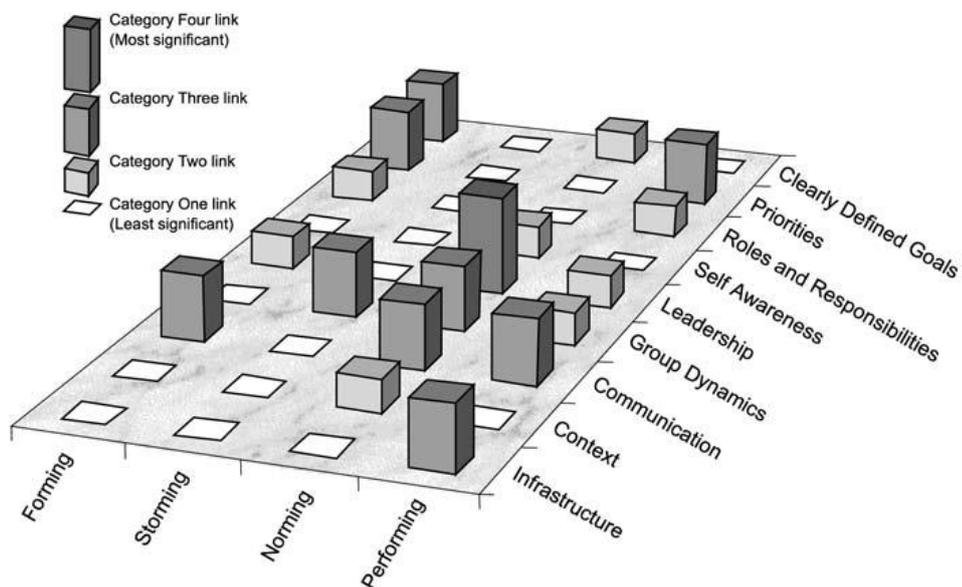


Figure 2.1. The Team Landscape

Source: Sheard and Kakabadse (2002, p. 146)

This framework depicts the key factors Sheard and Kakabadse (2002) assert are important at each stage of the development process from forming through to performing and therefore enables leaders to prepare for the changes needed to assist

the team to move on. At the *Forming Stage* Clearly Defined Goals, Priorities, and Communication, followed by Leadership and Roles are the most significant key factors. Critical to the formation of a team is the clear definition and articulation of goals and task by the organisations senior management who identify the task as a priority and must provide adequate resourcing for the team to carry out the task. At the *Storming Stage* Group Dynamics is the only significant key factor. Storming is associated with developing a social system supporting the team to function. During the *Norming* stage it is Leadership, Communication and Group Dynamics that are the most significant factors. Leadership is the single most important link of the entire Team Landscape. It was seen as important there be timely support of the team leader by the organisations macro leaders and for the team leader to continue to communicate the team's goals and to publicly assign specific tasks to members of the team. Team Dynamics is related to a member of the team carrying out a social leadership role. During the *Performing* stage, Priorities, Communication and Infrastructure have the greatest significance. The objective at this stage is to support the team to perform and providing them with the information and resources to do this becomes important.

From The Team Landscape, Sheard and Kakabadse (2002b) observed leadership to be "the most important key factor influencing the speed of transition" (p. 130) through the development stages. Further research revealed that leadership itself had four key roles: (1) *S - Social Leader*, (2) *T - Task Leader*, (3) *L - Legitimate Leader*, and (4) *M - Macro Leader*. The *Legitimate Leader* is described as the official appointed leader of the team responsible for accomplishment of the team's objectives; *Social Leaders* have the role of maintaining relationships amongst the team; *Task Leaders* are allocated the role of completing specific tasks by the Legitimate Leader; and *Macro Leaders* were the organisations senior staff who acted on behalf of the macro organisation's position.

Negotiating the boundaries from one stage of the team development process to the next created five critical points which were found to be significant leadership challenges. These five critical transition points being: (1) Into Forming, (2) Forming into Storming, (3) Storming into Norming, (4) Norming into Performing, and (5) Maintaining Performance. It was observed that the transition from one stage to the next in the development process required different combinations of the key leadership roles to ensure a smooth transition. Combining the four key leadership roles and the five critical transition points formed The Leadership Landscape (see Figure 2.2) consisting of 20 “links”. Each link was empirically established and its significance is represented in direct proportion to the height of the link. The significance of each link is categorised from Category One (least significant) to Category Four (most significant).

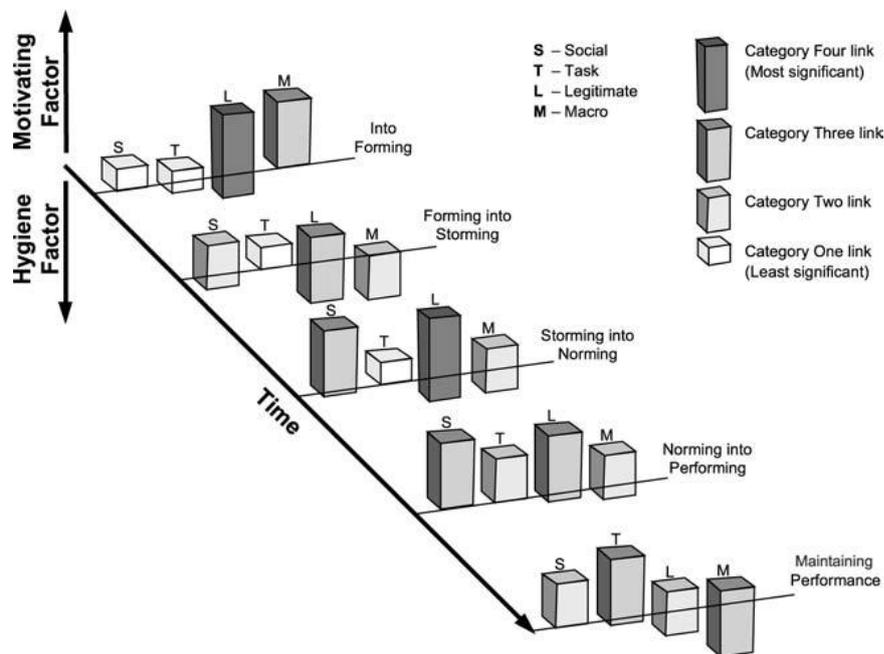


Figure 2.2. The Leadership Landscape

Source: Sheard and Kakabadse (2004, p. 65)

Furthermore, The Leadership Landscape identifies two factors that help establish the relative importance of each key leadership role. Their research indicated that the presence of a key role was motivating and its absence demotivating and therefore they were named *Motivating Factors*. By contrast a *Hygiene Factor* was a key role that would not motivate a team if present but was demotivating if absent.

This framework depicts the major factor involved in moving into the Forming Stage is associated with the leadership of the *Legitimate Leader* and the support of the

individuals who represent the *Macro Leaders* of the organisation. At the Forming into Storming Stage it was found there was little *Legitimate* and *Macro Leaders* could do to motivate the team and this function fell to the *Social Leader* who assisted the team members to build relationships. It was observed that teams passed through this critical transition point more quickly if the *Social Leader* provided the *Legitimate Leader* with important feedback enabling them to attend to issues seen to be significant to team members. Storming into Norming was achieved most successfully when the *Legitimate* and *Social Leaders* continued to work together to communicate team objectives and address issues. For Norming into Performing it was found that *Legitimate Leaders* role reduced but they should continue to work with the *Social Leader*. At this point the role of the *Task Leaders* increased in importance. *Task* and *Social Leaders* become the primary motivational roles at the Maintaining Performance point as the team is clearly focused on achieving its goal.

Sheard and Kakabadse (2002b) assert that the leadership landscape offers crucial understandings on “leadership as a network of relationships” (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004, p. 37). They demonstrate that leadership key roles do not focus on a single individual; it is possible that everyone within a team might have a key leadership role; self-management and managing relationships with others is essential; and each critical transition point involved a significant relationship between two of the leadership roles. Sheard and Kakabadse (2004) assert that the application of these landscapes provides leaders with a greater understanding and insight into the dynamic processes at work within a team and what leadership behaviours and actions are most appropriate to move the team through the team development process.

In recent research, Wheelan (2016) found that 60% of leadership teams were in Stage 1 and 2 of her integrated model of group development, 40% at Stage 3 and none at Stage 4. One can assume that given the link between team development and team productivity that a large percentage of Senior Leadership Teams are not working as effectively as they should. This highlights the need for leaders and leadership team members to be more informed, enlightened and up-skilled so they can effectively perform their roles and responsibilities as Senior Team Leaders. It has been a revelation to locate research that has taken the conceptual work of Tuckman (1965) and through empirical research developed an academically comprehensive foundation

to clearly define what leadership action means for leaders and team development. This is in contrast to how authors such as Bush and Middlewood (2005) and (Cardno, 2012) have referred to the theory of team development without developing it further in educational settings.

The initial work of Tuckman (1965) generated a multiplicity of models to explain team development processes of which the Integrated Team Development Process, Team and Leadership Landscapes of Sheard and Kakabadse (2004) and the integrated model of group development of Wheelan (2016) are examples from the general research. My interest in teams and their development has been demonstrated in my research of the Senior Leadership Teams in five New Zealand primary schools and I will consider the applicability of this research to my findings on team leadership and development.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with an examination of my research methodology and an explanation of the rationale underpinning the subjectivist epistemological position I have taken for this research project. My research follows an interpretive approach and thus conforms to qualitative methodology (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

The two data collection methods used: semi structured interviews and focus groups will be examined along with the central principles for determining the participant selection for each method. Next, factors related to data analysis are discussed. To complete this chapter, validity, triangulation and ethical considerations relevant to the study are discussed.

MY APPROACH TO THIS RESEARCH

When designing social research Creswell (2002) suggests that three philosophical questions are fundamental to a research proposal:

1. What epistemology, assumptions or paradigms does the researcher make about how they will learn and what they will learn during the inquiry?
2. What methodologies or approaches to the research will be used to inform the methods used to collect data? and
3. What methods or tools will be used for data collection and analysis?

Together the answers to these three questions informed the design framework for organising my research project.

My ontological stance has been to view the participant's behaviours, attitudes, experiences, and interpretations through a subjectivist lens, taking the approach that individuals perceptions shape their reality and therefore "different people construe it in very different ways" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 10). The assumption is that when people are interacting they are subconsciously making judgements and assessments to establish their position within the interaction. How they interpret these interactions leads to the construction of their social world (Bryman, 2012). My role as a researcher was to discover how the members of the Senior Leadership Team interpreted and

made sense of the nature of their Senior Leadership Team, their perception of the team's development and the role that each member played in constructing this social property.

A subjective ontology is typically aligned with the interpretive epistemology (Bryman, 2012; O'Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015). Epistemology is the philosophic stance taken to describe what constitutes knowledge (Bryman, 2012; Lichtman, 2013). Through my research I have endeavoured to interpret and understand the subjective meaning of my research participants multiple realities. Therefore, I have adopted an interpretive epistemological approach to my research. I collected rich data from the participants that can be analysed and interpreted and I have sought to understand the social world of the Senior Leadership Team "through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants" (Bryman, 2012, p. 380).

An interpretive paradigm rejects the notion that humans are governed by universal laws and argues that people develop multiple and varied meanings of their experiences as they interact with others, which can only be understood within the context of their wider social world (Creswell, 2002; Davidson & Tolich, 2003). To understand people's subjective experiences and actions requires the researcher "to get inside the person and to understand from within" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 21). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) develop this concept further when they describe it as a process in which the researcher uses what the participants say about their life experiences as a view into their inner lives to discern their interpretation of the meaning they bring to these experiences. The interpretive research approach was particularly relevant and suited to my study of Senior Leadership Team development as it is typically used in research projects which are described by Cohen et al. (2007) as having the following features:

1. Small scale and non-statistical;
2. Dynamics are constantly changing and evolving over time due to the interactions of participants;
3. The researcher is seeking to understand the actions and meanings of participants and how they make sense of their multidimensional and complex reality;
4. A study of the individuals' perspectives, their personal constructs, negotiated meanings and definitions of situations;

5. Peoples' actions are a consequence of their interpretation of events and situations;
6. In which the researcher is seeking to understand participants meaning system, how it evolved and is sustained; and
7. The study is of personal interest.

The success of my research depended on my ability to interact with the participants during the interviews and focus groups and to listen closely to gain insight and understanding of the experiences of the Senior Leadership Team, how they changed and evolved as a team, and the multiple and varied meanings they constructed and attributed to their experiences. Crucial to my success was the depth and breadth of my questions and my ability to establish rapport so the participants felt comfortable and confident to talk unreservedly (Creswell, 2002).

While interpreting and generating meaning from the data the participants provided, it was necessary for me to acknowledge that my interpretation and sense making is shaped by my "own personal, cultural and historical experiences" (Creswell, 2002, pp. 8-9). I had to be aware and take into account the impact of my background as a principal and Senior Leadership Team leader influencing my interpretation and imposing my understanding on the participant's experiences and having the effect of putting artificial boundaries around their experiences and not seeing them in the context of the participants real world (Cohen et al., 2007).

METHODOLOGY

The methodology most closely associated with interpretivism is qualitative research which rejects the premise subscribed to by positivists that human behaviour is governed by universal laws (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2002; Davidson & Tolich, 2003). Qualitative research involves researchers collecting data from people in their own specific situations that can be analysed qualitatively and attempting to understand or interpret the meanings of their experiences as understood by or from the point of view of the participants (Creswell, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lichtman, 2013). This is described by Bryman (2012) as placing stress "on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants" (p. 380).

My concern as a researcher was to establish the meanings people attribute to their experiences with the view of identifying emerging themes from the data (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2002) because it is these that influence the actions people take (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). According to Bryman (2012) the application of inductive reasoning to the perspective of the participants worldview enables the researcher to discover and ground their understanding of this world while retaining the integrity of those who provided the data. This process allows the emergence of theoretical ideas from the analysis of data collected through the course of the research. My use of semi-structured questions enabled me to hear their individual and collective voice and collect data that can be analysed qualitatively.

The qualitative approach is not free from criticism and is disparaged by quantitative researchers for its lack of scientific rigor, reliability, consistency and ability to be generalised to multiple settings. Qualitative researchers would argue that research can only be done within “its own social and cultural location” (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 35), and using methods that allow for flexibility are valued for their capacity to provide a compilation of useful understandings of peoples’ experiences. I have chosen to collect data separately from each of the Senior Leadership Teams of five different primary schools and in doing so have respected the ‘social and cultural location’ of each team.

The notion of ‘fitness for purpose’ is used by Cohen et al. (2007, p. 78) to describe the methodology or particular approach in which a piece of research is conducted. Therefore, I determined that qualitative semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews of the Senior Leadership Teams of five different primary schools was appropriate for my research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Through the use of two instruments – semi-structured interviews and focus groups, I was able to gather data from differing perspectives. Semi-structured questions provided the flexibility to investigate the experiences described and explore people’s thoughts, feelings and motivation for doing what they did.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

I used a combination of convenience and purposive sampling approaches to select the Senior Leadership Teams from which to collect data and report on my findings. These

sampling approaches are very common in organisational and social research and they were used because of the difficulty and costs associated with other forms of sampling (Cohen et al., 2007). Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling approach in which the sample is “simply available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility” (Bryman, 2012, p. 201). With purposive sampling the sample is chosen because of “their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought” (Cohen et al., 2007, pp. 114-115). Davidson and Tolich (2003) describe these approaches as an intentional and rational selection of who to include in the sample based on the information needed and from where it can be found. The problem with these sampling approaches is that it is not possible to make generalizations from the findings because the sample may not be representative of the possible sample population.

I approached primary schools in a geographic region within a New Zealand city to participate in my research. I personally contacted the Principals and members of the Senior Leadership Teams of primary schools in the selected area to obtain their agreement to participate in the study prior to obtaining agreement from five schools. The composition of primary school Senior Leadership Teams traditionally include the Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal and in some situations Senior Teachers. The Senior Leadership Teams of primary schools work very closely together creating an extremely difficult situation to keep individual decisions confidential. To achieve this I spoke to the Senior Leadership Team (including the principal) together and explained the nature of my research project and what involvement in the process would require them to do. I left the appropriate information sheets (see Appendices A and B) and my email address with them so they could respond independently by email to my request, therefore ensuring their decision to participate or not was kept confidential. Only schools where all Senior Leadership Team members agreed to participate were contacted to formally complete the written consent forms (see Appendices C, D and E). I made it clear during the recruitment conversation that the school/team would participate in the study only if all members replied to agree to participate. Also, I made it clear that the Senior Leadership Team’s continuation in the project would be conditional on all team members choosing to remain in the project and if they choose to withdraw there would be no negative consequences attached to

this decision not to participate, or to withdraw; and that no reason for declining to participate or to withdraw had to be provided.

In the next sections, I will critically examine the literature to explain and address the key issues related to my two data gathering methods of semi-structured interviews and focus groups, explain the choice of sample and examine the principles and practices of method application.

RESEARCH METHOD ONE – SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

I made the decision to use a semi-structured interview as the most appropriate method to collect data from the principal. Interviews are commonly used by qualitative researchers when detailed data is being sought from interviewees with specific knowledge or experience and the subject material could be of a sensitive nature (Lichtman, 2013). The semi-structured interview provided me with the opportunity to explore and clarify issues and gain a deeper understanding through the use of follow-up questions (Hinds, 2000). I was able to explore perspectives and directions taken by the principals and to gain insight into what was important and significant to them (Bryman, 2012).

The interview schedule contained a mixture of specific questions while providing the additional flexibility to prompt and probe to gain clarity and deeper understanding of the principal's experiences which were both complex and subjective. A key characteristic was the ability to obtain descriptions of specific circumstances and experiences (Cohen et al., 2007). Semi-structured interviews were well suited to my research methodology because they provided sufficient structure to retain the focus of the research and yet were flexible enough to clarify the meaning of experiences.

Interviewing is considered one of the most common and effective means of understanding other human beings (Fontana & Frey, 2005). It is a collaborative process involving the interviewer interacting with the interviewee(s) in an exchange about a topic of interest to both, that creates knowledge and generates data (Cohen et al., 2007; Fontana & Frey, 2005). The interviewer can be neither objective or subjective and is thus described by Cohen et al. (2007) as "intersubjective" (p. 349). These interviews created an environment in which the principal and I could converse about

how we understood the nature of Senior Leadership Teams in New Zealand primary schools, the perceptions the principal had of his/her leadership role and the level of development of Senior Leadership Team in their school as they perceived it. I was also able to gain an insight of their interpretation of how phenomenon impacted on the Senior Leadership Team from their perspective. Interpersonal interactions occur within a context in which factors influencing human behaviour such as power relationships between the researcher and participants cannot be removed or controlled. The motivation to participate may differ but the common desire is to create a transaction where information is sought by the interviewer as the interviewee supplies the information asked for. (Cohen et al., 2007).

Adequate preparation and planning was required for the interview to successfully achieve my objectives. The setting for the interview in all cases was the principal's office and a date and time was negotiated and they were assured of confidentiality issues. To guarantee accuracy all interviews were recorded. Prior to the interview recording equipment was checked and the principals reminded that the interview was being recorded (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2007).

An interview schedule was prepared (see Appendix F) to provide a framework for undertaking the interview, making a written record of the interview, and to facilitate transcription of the recording and analysis (Hinds, 2000). The interview schedule included the topic for discussion, specific questions informed by the literature related to each topic, possible questions concerning issues within the topics and prompts and probes designed to illicit information related to the topic, issues, and primary questions. Both substance and process questions were carefully framed and prepared to explore the participants experiences, attitudes, opinions and beliefs about the nature of their Senior Leadership Team. Substance questions asked the interviewee to describe their experiences, knowledge and behaviour and process questions enabled me to prompt and probe the interviewee to clarify their responses and elaborate and provide additional detail. Carefully written open ended 'how' and 'what' questions mixed with prompts and probes gave the interviewee the scope to reply with a minimum of restrictions (Cohen et al., 2007).

Interviews were conducted with care and sensitivity and required that I be knowledgeable about the topic, have capable communication and interaction skills and adequately set the scene for the interview. For the interviewee to feel comfortable and confident to talk unreservedly I had to ensure the interviews took place in a relaxed atmosphere. To make certain this occurred it was necessary to address the “interpersonal, interactional, communicative and emotional aspects” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 362), be a skilful active listener and to be aware of non-verbal responses. Researcher and respondent bias, poor recall, poor or inaccurate articulation or misrepresentation of what was said can create opportunity for subjectivity and bias. During the course of the interview I had to be aware not to reveal bias, values or make judgements concerning responses, by professionally building rapport, working to establish trust with the interviewee and paraphrasing responses back to them if they needed to check their understanding (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

At the conclusion of the interview I provided opportunity for the principals to provide anything else they wished to add that they didn't have the opportunity to address through the questions asked. I also informed them that once the interview had been transcribed it would be returned to them so that they could amend or add additional information they felt was important. Finally, I thanked the principals for their participation and provided them with assurances about confidentiality and arrangements for them to review the transcript of the interview (Hinds, 2000).

RESEARCH METHOD TWO – FOCUS GROUPS

Group interviewing is a rich qualitative data gathering technique found within the methodology of interviewing “that relies on the systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously in a formal or informal setting” (Fontana & Frey, 2005). A form of group interviews, focus groups have more commonly been associated with market and political research (Fontana & Frey, 2005). In contrast to their role in one-to-one interviews, the interviewer plays the role of a facilitator (Hinds, 2000) who provides the group with a topic and relies on the interactions between group members to obtain a collective understanding of the topic rather than those of the individuals alone. Data surfaces from the interactions that occur amongst members of the group rather than with the interviewer (Cohen et al., 2007; Lichtman, 2013). A focus group can often provide a context in which participants will challenge the views of others.

This process can result in the researcher gaining a clearer understanding of what participants think as they are challenged and rethink their responses, thus providing a more reflective insight into their opinions (Bryman, 2012).

It is suggested that focus group research can be an effective tool to determine a team's sense of collective identity (Bryman, 2012). The participants in the focus groups for this project are the deputy principals, assistant principals and in some circumstances included other senior teachers, but excluding the principal. For my research, focus groups were used to gain insight into the nature of Senior Leadership Teams in primary schools. The perspective of these Senior Leadership Team and the information gained strengthened my results and created method based triangulation.

The advantages of group interviews include their ability to generate a wide range of responses as participant's answers stimulate new ideas and create a chain reaction of valuable discussion to generate rich qualitative data (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Krueger, 1994). This approach also assists group members to recall commonly shared experiences which I was able to use to triangulate data collected from the interviews with the principals (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Group interviews had the advantage of being cost and time effective (Cohen et al., 2007).

Similar skills are required to conduct a focus group interview as those required for individual interviews and include being organised, professional, flexible, not showing bias, sensitive and a good listener. As the focus group facilitator I also had to manage the dynamics of a group and prevent one person dominating and skewing opinion, able to draw out reluctant participants, ensure honest and open responses from the whole group and be sensitive to developing or changing group dynamics and interactions (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

The reasons described in the previous section for the choice of the sample for interviews, applied equally to the choice of those to be involved in focus group interviews. The Senior Leadership Team of each school formed a natural focus group through which to explore their common understandings and experiences of the conditions, practices and processes that lead to the development of a robust working synergy and high performing culture within the Senior Leadership Team that supports

collaborative practice. Similarly, adequate preparation and planning was required for the focus group interview to successfully achieve the projects objectives. Written permission from the school was obtained prior to beginning my research at the school. As the principal was aware of Senior Leadership Team members' involvement in the research project I organised with the members of the team directly, to conduct the focus group interview at a time and place which was mutually convenient for all participants. In each case I was fortunate to be provided with a school meeting room free from interruptions and distractions in which to conduct the interviews which were of approximately one hour in duration. Prior to commencing the interviews participant's consent was obtained and assurances of confidentiality provided (Cohen et al., 2007).

A focus group interview schedule (see Appendix G) was required to provide a framework for performing the focus group interview. To ensure that what was said was accurately recorded for later analysis, all interviews were recorded and prior to the interview recording equipment was checked and the interviewees reminded that the interview was being recorded (Bryman, 2012; Hinds, 2000).

Quality questions that were informed by the literature were essential for the success of a focus group interview and required forethought, careful preparation and phrasing. Krueger (1994) suggests that a typical focus group interview will comprise about a dozen questions. I used open ended questions as the preferred type of question as they stimulate the interviewees to freely express their responses to the questions. Providing the participants with the general information regarding the topic of focus, sufficient background information and context prior to the focus group enabled them to mentally prepare. Logically sequencing the questions from the general and funnelling into the specific also assisted me to establish the context (Krueger, 1994). Krueger (1994) describes five categories of questions applicable to a focus group interview schedule. Firstly, participants were asked factual *Opening Questions* designed to quickly identify characteristics mutually shared by participants. Secondly, *Introductory Questions* introduced the focus for the discussion and allowed participants to make connections from their personal experiences. Thirdly, *Transition Questions* were used to link the introductory and key questions and assist participants to become mindful of how others regarded the topic. Fourthly, *Key Questions* followed. These were the most crucial questions to the study and respondent's answers required the greatest focus

during analysis. Finally, *Ending Questions* enabled the participants to clarify what aspects they believed were most important and to add anything that might have been missed. He also suggests the facilitator makes an oral summary of the discussion and ask if the summary adequately reflects the discussion (Krueger, 1994). Prior to finalising the questions they were trialed with my own Senior Leadership Team and changes made to eliminate problems with the wording to improve clarity (Bryman, 2012).

Focus groups are not without difficulties as it may not be possible to generalise from the data obtained and group think may prevent divergent views from being expressed (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Since the Senior Leadership Team members are colleagues and the matters raised could be sensitive it is possible “antagonisms may be stirred up at the interview” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 373) or they may collude to withhold information. I made provision for the focus group members to have the option to be interviewed briefly on an individual basis, in the event they would like to express views outside of the focus group context, in order to reduce the potential for interpersonal or reputational harm. They were also informed that when the interview had been transcribed it would be returned to them and they would have an additional opportunity to amend or add information they felt was important.

In the following sections issues related to validity, data analysis and coding are identified, discussed and addressed.

VALIDITY

For the outcomes of research to be authentic and capable of being acted on requires the research to have validity (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). The uniqueness of each setting in qualitative research makes replication difficult and therefore a contentious issue (Cohen et al., 2007). Guba and Lincoln (2005) suggest that no one method or group of methods is capable of providing total certainty and one of the concerns of validity is the “conflation between method and interpretation” (p. 205). This raises the notion of rigour as applied to the research method, as well as interpretative rigour which concerns the dependability or reliability of the researcher’s interpretations and analysis of social phenomenon (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

A number of measures of validity applicable to qualitative research are pertinent to my study. For research to be valid the expectation is that the researcher is faithful to a paradigm's principles. My research aligns with the interpretive paradigm using qualitative research methods which includes such principles as the data are socially, culturally and contextually bound (Cohen et al., 2007). As the researcher, I entered into the world of those I researched and described and presented the meaning of phenomenon from the participant's perspective using clearly specified processes. Through extensive reading there is coherence with existing knowledge and carefully consideration of its impact (Bryman, 2012). The term *reflexivity* is used by Bryman (2012) to describe the researcher's awareness of these concepts, their own values and biases and a realisation of the potential impact and influence on their research methods and findings.

Validity in interviews is affected by bias or the propensity to over or understate the value of a particular attribute. By minimising bias, greater validity can be achieved. It is suggested by Cohen et al. (2007) that the three main sources of bias are "the characteristics of the interviewer, the characteristics of the respondent, and the substantive content of the questions" (p. 150). Because these interviews were interactions between people, the dynamics of the interview provide opportunity for power relationships to influence and affect the veracity of the data collected. Other factors potentially causing bias include my attitudes and beliefs, level of rapport with participants, an inclination to pursue answers to confirm preconceived views, misunderstanding by the interviewees of the questions asked and conversely my misunderstanding of what was said by the interviewee (Cohen et al., 2007). To reduce the likelihood and impact of my values and biases and ensure the validity of my research and findings I applied a range of strategies described below, which are highlighted in the literature.

Multiple methods were used to collect data to achieve *triangulation* and to establish concurrent validity of findings and reduce the effects of bias (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2007; Keeves, 1997). It is Keeves (1997) contention that the complex nature of educational research benefits from "the examination of the problem through the use of more than one method of inquiry" (p. 283). I was able to compare the data collected from the individual interviews with that collected from the focus group interviews to find

similarities and differences and identify categories and themes. Through *method integration* greater understanding is achieved, bias is reduced and findings triangulated. Using the two methods of semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews enabled *combined levels of triangulation* to be applied where data were collected from individual and group levels (Cohen et al., 2007). For the purposes of my research project a “*triangulation within methods*” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 143) approach of replicating the research in five primary school Senior Leadership Team settings was also used. Data collected from each of the five schools participating was compared and contrasted which again added rigor to my findings.

It has been suggested by Bryman (2012) that *trustworthiness* is a criteria that can be used for assessing the validity of the qualitative approach and which is applicable to this study. Trustworthiness is made up of four criteria – *credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability*.

Credibility has parallels to *internal validity* and highlights the need for data to be authentic, acceptable to the participants and not selected to fit preconceived notions (Cohen et al., 2007; Keeves, 1997). Through the use of *respondent validation*, which is the process of providing each participant with their transcripts for validation it was my goal to ensure greater accuracy and provide them with the opportunity to amend any aspect of the recorded interview (Bryman, 2012).

The small size of my study limits the *transferability or external validity* of this study. For the purposes of this research the aim is not to generalise the findings to the total population of Senior Leadership Teams but to provide a detailed and rich account of what the participants in each of the five schools expressed (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). The depth and richness of information provides an depth record of my research from which readers will be able to make judgements about the applicability of my outcomes and findings to other school contexts (Bryman, 2012).

Dependability refers to the completeness of my records detailing my research and the availability of them to be audited and *confirmability* that I have endeavoured to be unbiased and to have behaved in good faith. I believe the supervision provided by my

supervisor has helped me to achieve these two aspects in my research (Bryman, 2012).

MAKING MEANING OF THE DATA

The first step was to transcribe the interviews and return the transcripts to the interviewees for verification. To ensure confidentiality the transcribers were required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Data analysis is the process of reducing vast amounts of information derived from the interviews into a form that I could make sense of. For qualitative data this is a process of classifying the information to identify patterns, themes and categories that make interpretation possible (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2007). Analysis is defined by Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006) as a process of transforming the raw data into findings or results and the kind of analysis that is undertaken comes back to the “principle of fitness for purpose” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 461). Transcribing interviews is regrettably an inadequate process of transforming a dynamic social interaction into written language and results in the inevitable loss of many aspects of the interaction.

While my qualitative research using interviews involved a smaller sampling of participants, enormous amounts of detailed data was generated. Bryman (2012) describes qualitative data analysis as “finding a path through the thicket of prose” (p. 565) where there are few established and accepted rules to guide the analytic process. My data analysis was skewed towards an inductive approach (Bryman, 2012; Lichtman, 2013). Lofland et al. (2006) describe the inductive emergence of theories from the data as a process “of emerging from the ground up rather than being called forth by prior theoretical constructs” (p. 195). Similarly, Bryman (2012) stresses “the importance of allowing theoretical ideas to emerge out of one’s data” (p. 387). Other features of this process include the central location of the researcher in the analysis procedure. Due to the inductive nature of qualitative analysis the researchers are the principal analytic drivers of the analysis process. It therefore required me to interact intimately with the data using a systematic and methodical approach. It follows that this process of immersing myself in the data and engaging with it to allow the patterns,

themes and theories to emerge inductively so as to discern patterns and themes which I could then interpret was both demanding and time consuming (Lofland et al., 2006).

DATA CODING

Coding was the initial mechanism used in the work of data analysis to identify categories and emergent themes as they related to the literature. Coding entailed closely examining interview transcripts to organise and sort the data into significant concepts and categories that made it meaningful (Cohen et al., 2007). This process was completed using Microsoft Word to record a five step approach outlined by Lichtman (2013).

Step 1: Initial coding. The literature describes coding as an integrated process of *initial coding* followed by *focused coding* (Bryman, 2012; Lichtman, 2013; Lofland et al., 2006). Initial coding was an open minded process involving reading through each transcript in detail and allocating codes to each response that provided a generalized impression of the data in relation to my research topic.

Step 2: Revisiting initial coding or focused coding. The next step was to selectively sort the initial codes in order to focus the coding to identify those codes which categorized the data most clearly. This involved deleting redundant codes or renaming others.

Step 3: Developing an initial list of categories. Using my research questions as guides the codes were organised into categories in which related codes become subsets of that category.

Step 4: Continuing the iterative process the initial list of categories were modified.

Step 5: From concepts to categories. The final step was to identify and logically sort the concepts into rich and powerful categories reflecting the meaning I attached to the data collected.

To assist me through this dynamic process I made use of memoing to track my thinking and record my reflections and ideas. Memos were a key instrument used to facilitate

reflective thinking about the concepts, categories and their interconnections during the coding process and a first step in writing the completed analysis (Bryman, 2012).

Diagramming was another strategy used to assist me to analysis the data I collected. Presenting my data visually enabled me to develop analysis frameworks to diagrammatically display concepts and categories and the connections existing between them (Lofland et al., 2006).

ETHICAL ISSUES

There is general agreement in the literature that the primary concern of ethics is how we treat people and respect their individual dignity and rights (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2007; Lichtman, 2013; Wilkinson, 2001). In applying ethics to research Cohen et al. (2007) uses the term costs/benefits ratio to describe the tension that exists between a researcher's desire to pursue truth and advance knowledge, as against the rights and personal costs to the participating individuals. Ethical dilemmas are not black and white and a balance is required between the assumed benefits and potential harm to the subjects of the research. It is contended that non-maleficence, or not harming the subjects, is a core principle and must take precedence (Cohen et al., 2007; Wilkinson, 2001).

A paramount principle for achieving non-maleficence is that of informed consent (see Appendices A, B, C, D and E). The underlying premise of informed consent is that a participants' permission is a prerequisite for participation in a research project and equally so, implies informed refusal to participate. This principle results from the belief that individuals are autonomous and are free to make their own decisions about what is good for their own well-being. Application of this principle provides protection to both the participants and the researcher (Cohen et al., 2007; Wilkinson, 2001).

Four elements have been identified with the term informed consent and have been incorporated into my research project: competence, that consent is voluntary, full disclosure of information and comprehension. In all interviews and focus groups the participants were competent to understand both the potential benefits and harm and possibilities of these occurring. Full disclosure of information implies the participants were fully informed about the research project and were not being manipulated to

consent (see Appendix A, and B). Voluntary consent means that coercion or force was not applied to the participants to participate (see Appendix C, D and E). Comprehension means that participants understood and comprehended the likely benefits or risks that can result from their involvement (Cohen et al., 2007; Wilkinson, 2001). This process involved personal discussions with the participants, opportunity for them to ask me questions, providing them with written information sheets and was formalised with participants signing consent forms.

Following the process described above, schools where all Senior Leadership Team members agreed to participate were contacted to do so. For situations where there was not complete agreement I contacted the principal and Senior Leadership Team members to thank them for their time and informed them they had not been included in the research project. As I knew some of the participants as professional colleagues there was the potential for this to create a conflict of interest and I was cognisant that I would have to manage this in a professional manner. As part of the recruitment process I discussed the potential for conflicts of interest openly with participants in order to reach an agreed understanding of how any potential conflict would be managed. In the event that an agreed understanding could not be openly achieved I was prepared for this to be grounds for this person to withdraw or not take any further involvement in the research project. It eventuated that this was not a circumstance with which I had to act upon.

Other important considerations included the need for the researcher to respect participants' rights to privacy, anonymity, confidentiality and protection from betrayal and deception. To ensure participants privacy was not violated responsibility was taken to safe guard personal information and not release it into the public domain without their permission. Anonymity refers to not identifying participants' identities primarily by not using their names or identifiers enabling them to be identified. Confidentiality was achieved through assurances not to publicly identify participants. Betrayal, concerns situations in which data disclosed in confidence is publicly disclosed, thus breaching the participant's trust. Deception, relates to knowingly misrepresenting the research to the participants and concealing the truth and purpose of it to them. Suitable arrangements were made to ensure all information was stored and dealt with

appropriately and that access to the information was only permissible to authorised people (Cohen et al., 2007; Wilkinson, 2001).

Potential conflicts of interest between focus group members and principals were mitigated during the write up of my research project by giving the name of the school and all participants a pseudonym in order to make participants anonymous. As an additional measure I did not make direct links between what is said by the principal and/or other Senior Leadership Team members from the same school when discussing my findings. I ensured that direct quotes from participants included in my thesis did not enable the participant to be identified and that they did not include personal criticism of either the principal or other Senior Leadership Team members. I obtained permission from participants to use direct quotes in my write-up to ensure that participants agreed they were not identifiable.

In honouring commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, advice and guidance was sought from the Unitec Department of Education Kaiarahi Pouako to ensure my research was conducted in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner and that appropriate protocols and processes were complied with (Unitec, 2014).

To ensure research complies with ethical standards and best practice my research proposal was approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee before commencing. Unitec Research Ethics Committee approval provided a safeguard that the research project complied with ethical standards, had the appropriate protocols in place and were a source of advice and guidance in relation to appropriate ethical standards (Unitec, 2013, 2014).

There was the potential for interpersonal or reputational harm in circumstances where senior leadership team members were discussing the functioning of their teams amongst themselves as part of the research project. In the Focus Group Schedule I listed guidelines for guiding the interview process of which: ' Please also keep the views of everyone in our discussion confidential so that everyone feels they are able to express their opinion openly' was relevant. I believe that by asking the participants to keep the content of the discussion confidential that I have mitigated against the possibility of views being expressed being used to cause harm. Another of the

guidelines was that opportunity should be allowed for everyone to answer the questions if they wish. As part of the introduction to the focus group I discussed with the participants that the views they expressed were their personal experience and we would all respect their right to express them or not to do so as the case may be, respect the confidentiality of the discussion, and that they agreed to these protocols when they signed the consent form. I made provision for the focus group members to have the option to be interviewed briefly on an individual basis, in the event they would like to express views outside of the focus group context in order to reduce the potential for interpersonal or reputational harm.

It is my view that the potential benefits of this project outweighed the potential for harm as this project provided school leaders with a greater insight into the nature of teamwork. Even though this project had the potential to create conflict and disagreement in a Senior Leadership Team there is equally the likelihood of the creation of a desire to grow teamwork capacity which this project is designed to support. Gaining insight and understanding into the nature of teamwork within Senior Leadership Teams, the identification of the conditions, culture and structures likely to lead to the development of collaborative learning which enhances team development, has the potential to provide a profound and positive benefit on outcomes for pupils, staff school and the wider community.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have provided an examination of my research methodology and an explanation of the rationale underpinning the subjectivist epistemological position I have taken for this research project. I have demonstrated how my research follows an interpretive approach and thus conforms to qualitative methodology. I have described the two data collection methods used: semi structured interviews and focus groups, along with the central principles for determining the participant selection for each method. The factors related to data analysis have been discussed as have validity, triangulation and ethical considerations relevant to this study.

In the following chapter I present the significant findings from the data collected from the interviews and focus groups of the five schools participating in my research.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings gathered from the principals of five New Zealand primary schools and the remaining members of the Senior Leadership Teams of those schools. This research is focused on understanding the nature and function of New Zealand primary school Senior Leadership Teams, the principal's leadership role within these teams and the development processes that lead to a group of individuals becoming a high performing team. Gathering data from the principal and Senior Leadership Team members enabled me to compare the perspectives of each. Analysis of the data meant I was able to identify similarities, differences and aspects that were surprising or unexpected. First I provide a description of the Composition of the Schools' Senior Leadership Teams from each of the five schools. Findings from the Principals' Perspectives are presented next, followed by the Senior Leadership Team Members' Perspectives (the remaining members of the Senior Leadership Team excluding the principal).

The findings from both groups' perspectives are organised using three headings: The Nature of Senior Leadership Teams; The Development of Senior Leadership Teams and Consolidated Findings.

The Nature of Senior Leadership Teams includes the following sub-headings:

- The purpose of senior leadership teams;
- The principal's leadership role: Findings within this theme are grouped within the sub-themes of - Forming and clearly defining a shared school vision; Understanding and developing people; Redesigning the organisation; and Creating productive working conditions; and
- The Development of Senior Leadership Teams has the following sub-headings: Forming; Storming; Norming; and Performing.

This chapter will conclude with Consolidated Findings which brings together the findings from the principal's perspectives and the senior leadership team member perspectives.

COMPOSITION OF THE SCHOOLS' SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAMS

For the purpose of the study I have used a pseudonym for each school to protect interviewees and each school's identity. The composition of each primary school is described in Table 1.

Table 1: Senior Leadership Team Composition

Name of School	Principal	Deputy Principal (DP) Assistant/Associate Principal (AP)	Senior Teachers	Total Members
North School	1	1	3	5
East School	1	2	5	8
South School	1	2	1	4
West School	1	3	1	5
Central School	1	2	0	3

Schools were of varying sizes and while the schools with higher rolls and therefore numbers of teachers tended to have larger Senior Leadership Teams, this was not always the case. The structure of the Senior Leadership Team was closely related to the organisation of the school and the roles and responsibilities the principal had decided should be included on the team. Each of the principals and the individual members of the team were very clear about the roles of each member and their position and responsibilities within the school. Central School was unique in that it has both a Senior Leadership Team and a Senior Management Team. The Senior Management Team included the Senior Leadership Team and additional team leaders.

PRINCIPALS' PERSPECTIVES

Five principals participated in my research project. Four of the principals were external appointments and one had been the school's Deputy Principal prior to being appointed into the principal role six years ago. Four of the principals have been at their schools from 6-20 years and one principal who was an external appointment, has been in the position for just over one year.

The nature of senior leadership teams

The purpose of senior leadership teams

When asked to explain their understanding of the purpose of a school's Senior Leadership Team all five principals were able to provide a clear and detailed explanation of the multifaceted nature of the purpose and role of the Senior Leadership Team in their school. A common thread was to link the purpose of the Senior Leadership Team with responsibility for learning in the school and for ensuring that students achieved. As this interviewee stated:

The purpose of the senior leadership team is primarily to lead their team of teachers that is going to enhance the learning and achievement of their students. That is the prime role. (North School Principal)

In their explanations, various terms were used to describe their responsibility for student learning. The North School principal used the term 'lead', the East School principal said it was 'overseeing' student progress, for the South School principal it was to 'improve' student's achievement, while the Central School principal said it was about 'driving' the learning. Each of these terms denotes an action on the part of the Senior Leadership Team and places the student and their learning central to, and the focus of, their purpose in the school.

A second major issue was that of the Senior Leadership's responsibility to support the teachers with their responsibility for student learning. Teaching, learning and student achievement was considered a shared responsibility of the classroom teacher supported by the Senior Management Team. Support implies there is a significant relationship with the one being supported as is demonstrated by this interviewee's statement.

It's about supporting the members of their team to improve teaching practice. (East School Principal)

The principals considered it important for the Senior Leadership Team to have a strategic role in implementing the school's vision. They believed it was essential for the team to have a clear and cohesive understanding of the vision and model and communicate the strategic direction to the staff. One principal develops this aspect further believing the development of the schools direction should be a shared process

with input from a range of contributors. This quote exemplifies this common understanding.

I think the importance of a senior leadership team is to guide and support and lead the staff in the directions that a school is set, as far as the board with its strategic plan, its annual plan, its goals and values and vision... (West School Principal)

The importance of ensuring accurate reciprocal communication between members of the Senior Leadership Team and to other members of the staff was expressed by this principal. As well as communication of the school's vision and direction, the importance of communication of important information that will assist the smooth operation of the school was described.

I think the purpose of a school leadership team is to ensure that communication across the school to all different people within the organisation is shared but well communicated... you've got to make sure you've got good two way communication. (West School Principal)

Two principals stated how difficult it is for one person to do everything and to keep up in a school on their own. The workload is such that it has to be shared with a wide range of people.

So you are not alone! You know the job is busy enough, you can't do everything by yourself. It is the workload, probably the biggest thing is sharing that workload, the job is getting bigger and bigger. You just can't keep up. (Central School Principal)

Effective operational management is necessary to ensure the school runs smoothly and efficiently. Within the context of sharing the workload one principal expressed the importance of individuals reporting back to the Senior Leadership Team and then to the wider school and ensuring everyone is informed of what is happening. The Senior Leadership Team is the forum in which school policy and procedural changes are discussed. Coordination and planning within the school is also seen as an important function of what a Senior Leadership Team does. This is expressed by this principal when he says:

I think about delegating responsibility and then people coming back to the main group, not going off and making a decision that effects may be a part of the school but not actually informing the whole school... the important things that need to be discussed are brought to the table so that if we're changing policies or we're changing procedural stuff, that that comes back to the leadership group. (West School Principal)

Finally in commenting on the roles of the members of the Senior Leadership Team the principals in two schools state members had set roles which were interrelated and allowed for overlaps. This was to ensure that the members of the team were accessible to staff and that access wasn't a barrier or frustration. A third principal took a broader approach to team member roles when she states that all the team members require a range of skillsets and knowledge. In their team they were not confined to particular roles and were required to have a range of responsibilities and lead across a number of different roles.

So we have people who have set roles, but those roles are quite interrelated. There are a number of people that they can go to... (West School Principal)

This statement by the principal of East School sums up the very broad and wide ranging purpose of a school's Senior Leadership Team and the importance of this team in the school.

That's what I think the job is, to support the students in our school to have the best possible learning outcomes over a school year, over all the years and to do that they need to support families, to support students, to support teachers, to support learning support staff. It's quite a big role. (East School Principal)

In conclusion, principals described the purpose of the Senior Leadership Team was to be responsible for student learning and achievement and to support teachers to improve teaching practice. In their various roles they shared the work load, implemented the school's vision, were responsible for operational management and were responsible for communication within the school.

The principal's leadership role

Principals were clearly aware of their leadership role in *forming and clearly defining a shared school vision*, promoting acceptance of collective goals, expecting high performance from the staff and providing strategic direction. All five principals described their role as leaders in the school. They describe the dichotomy between their team membership and being collaborative, and being the team's legitimate leader who has the authority to make decisions without reference to the rest of the Senior Leadership Team. These two principals stated:

I see myself as one of the team, but at the end of the day if I have to make a decision I will. (Central School Principal)

I think that my role is to lead the school – I am the visionary explorer, the chief visionary explorer, but I can't do it on my own. I need a team of visionary explorers to come with me... (West School Principal)

Underpinning their leadership were very strongly held personal values that principals believed guided and influenced their practice. This principal expressed these beliefs in the following way:

...faith, commitment, honesty, openness, trustworthiness, respect, mana, inclusiveness, acknowledgment, compassion, cooperation, dedication, resilience – all those things. I have ethical and moral practice and my compass is very visible. (West School Principal)

They acknowledge that they are not the only leader in their schools and others have leadership roles. At times it is appropriate for them to recognise that another member of the team is right and concede their view is the correct one. This aspect is described by this principal:

Sometimes it takes a little while for us to come to the same conclusions, and sometimes one of us has to bite the bullet and just say – well that is how it is going to be. It could be either one of us, the three of us. (Central School Principal)

One principal described the importance of sharing leadership in terms of distributing leadership. Through distributing leadership this principal believes that he is supported, more is accomplished and he becomes more effective.

Well the benefits are, from my leadership perspective, distributive leadership – which is incredibly important. Providing me with support. Making me more effective in my leadership... (North School Principal)

They see defining the school's vision as a shared process where they take a leading role. It is significant that the principal of South School made the connection of the vision and school's shared values with student development. The challenge for the principal was for the students, staff, parents and community to all hold these same values.

It's everybody having shared understanding about...for us it's a shared understanding about what is our vision for our children at South School. How we are going to support our teachers and support our students, so that they can get to where we'd like them to be, and where they'd like to be. And also making sure that all of us, the students, the staff, and the parents, and our community, that we're all speaking the same language. (South School Principal)

One principal directly linked the staff's understanding of the school's expectations to the way in which they 'walked the talk' and were seen to be a role model in the school.

My main job is to ensure that I lead by example. I have ethical and moral practice and my compass is very visible. My staff know that there are high standards because they see how I walk those standards. They know the expectation around here. (West School Principal)

Understanding and developing people by building their knowledge, skills and dispositions, providing them with individualised support and learning opportunities, and role modelling these values and behaviours was very strongly articulated by all of the principals interviewed. Principals strongly advocated that a key function of their role was to develop their staff and support them to build their capabilities. This view is supported by West School principal who describes the importance of having effective skills for dealing with people. An important factor is for the principal to know their people well enough that they know which approach is best for each individual. This principal stated that building relationships with staff was a means of developing trust which resulted from being a good listener, acknowledging them and making them feel valued.

It is having good people skills to deal with people. Some people you can be firm with and some people you can't. Some people you have to be careful if you are

too direct with them, and some people you can tell them how it is. I think that I have to build relationships with people ... I think I'm a really good listener. I get to know people well, I find out what their strengths and their expertise are. I find out what they like. I find out what they love. I make sure that they feel acknowledged, appreciated and valued and with that you get people's respect. (West School Principal)

Two other principals spoke about being willing to have 'difficult' conversations with staff when necessary. Being prepared was a prerequisite identified by South School principal. North School principal felt the reason few of these conversations were necessary was that there was clarity concerning staff expectations and that staff lived up to these expectations.

I would talk with them. I've had instances when I've had to have those conversations, and it can't be a hunch. You can't talk to your hunches. You have to have evidence. (South School Principal)

East School principal spoke about the challenge for the principal to provide appropriate support for the team. Forms of support were interpreted as being directing, coaching, mentoring and delegating. Knowing which type of support to provide was viewed as challenging.

I guess the challenge is trying to get the support right for them. When do you direct? When do you coach? When do you mentor? When do you delegate? Do you get that right all the time, no. (East School Principal)

Preparation of the next generation of leaders is a feature of principal's responsibilities as they lead their Senior Leadership Teams. Growing future leaders is viewed as a deliberate and considered action that includes planning, empowerment and challenging them through the opportunities provided. It was observed by one principal that our education system is inadequate at systematically supporting young teacher's development into leaders. This is to the detriment of our education system which ultimately will affect the teaching and learning of the students.

And also part of my role is to empower them to be future leaders and to be leaders, so they then can take that mantel on as well, so I am providing them that opportunity to do that. (North School Principal)

The importance of providing the Senior Leadership Team with professional development was expressed by principals. North School principal states that the development provided is focused and designed to empower and equip the leaders and includes their involvement in a cluster initiative. West School principal describes development as an ongoing process of upskilling, professional growth and exposure to new experiences.

So it is really setting a direction and a focus and making sure we are on that and not trying to do it all, and then empowering the leaders to do that, but by empowering of course, I make sure that they have appropriate development – that is why I'm part of WAPA 2020, so I provide them with that opportunity. (North School Principal)

The principals were very aware of their leadership role of *redesigning the organisation* to establish working conditions that motivate commitment and establish a collaborative culture. For West School principal their objective was to ensure all staff saw themselves as having a school wide responsibility and not to insulate themselves in their syndicates and refuse to be collaborative.

I would say that some of the challenges are about ensuring that we create a school focus, not a school within schools focus... sometimes in some environments syndicates can be their own little domains and think that they're only answerable to themselves, so it is important that all of us are responsible school wide. (West School Principal)

South School principal was unique in that she was the newest member of the Senior Leadership Team and inherited an established team with an established culture and norms for performing as a team. However, this principal said she will be making adjustments and revising responsibilities within the existing team structure.

...but like I said these roles had already been in place when I came. They know the hierarchy if you like about what happens. That's pretty much already been established in the school. Yes there'll be responsibilities within those that will be revamped. (South School Principal)

Recognition of input and contributions from the team, acknowledgement of their skills and ability to contribute was an important consideration. Staff are encouraged to

implement agreed plans and with it, accountability and responsibility for their implementation. Equally, East School principal saw part of the principal's leadership role was also to connect staff with opportunities. North School principal comments:

I believe in giving them the responsibility to do it. I don't micromanage, and I think they realise if they come up with an idea or a development in their team – go for it... They throw ideas out and then we discuss those – right, that is your idea, go ahead and do it. So they feel empowered... (North School Principal)

Change of Senior Leadership Team membership was viewed as an opportunity as well as a destabilising factor. Preparation for succession was an aspect of organisational design that East School principal states requires careful consideration and planning.

That whole thing about change is opportunity but certainly you can have things happen and when you destabilise and lose too many in one hit, that can be tricky as well. If you try to think also about succession planning and leaving a school strong, like say if I was going to leave, you want to have a school not fall over just because I walked out. (East School Principal)

Creating productive working conditions to promote organisational stability, ensuring communication is effective and bolstering the infrastructure of the school was also an important aspect of principal's leadership. Communication was described as a key to creating productive working conditions and failure to do so has a serious negative impact. A communication strategy used by North School principal to assist him to be aware of what is happening is to receive minutes from meetings held by members of the Senior Leadership Team. The importance of communication is reflected in these two quotes.

Talking lots. Communication. Being organised. (Central School Principal)

We have to keep the lines of communication open. So that is really what causes most of the tension ... (North School Principal)

This principal identified new initiatives as having a positive effect on a school but it was important to choose the change initiatives thoughtfully. Their role is to decide what initiatives will have a positive benefit that will improve teacher's effectiveness and to carefully manage their implementation.

Bringing in new ideas is great, but sometimes you have to decide if those new ideas are going to be the best for the school or not. (Central School Principal)

School systems and documentation play a role ensuring organisational stability, communication is effective and creating productive working conditions that strengthen the school's infrastructure. West School principal highlights the need for principals to nurture a culture that invites staff to enquire when they are unsure and for leaders not to assume everyone knows.

I think we've got fairly good structural systems and documentation that supports staff. People are told if you're not sure about something ask, and never assume or presume anything. (West School Principal)

While principals advocate flat management structures, as this principal expresses, team stability necessitates the principal has clear processes in place so the team know who is acting principal when they are not there. This concept is linked to legal aspects associated with accountability for the school.

There's also an interesting hierarchy thing that happens in teams. There is a hierarchy, if I'm not here then [DP] steps up and she becomes the principal. So there is a hierarchy and there are legal aspects around that but most of the time you try and work flat. (East School Principal)

An interesting observation by the principal of East School was the effect their leadership style had on the team. As she reflected on her leadership she realised her lack of interest in detail was a cause for frustration to the team. The principal recognised the need to adapt her leadership practices in order to cater for the needs of other Senior Leadership team members.

You need to be reflective and you need to be reflecting yourself on what you can do better. My team have been frustrated at times because I don't do enough of the detail. My way of operating can be frustrating for a senior leader if they don't operate that way. They're wanting more detail. (East School Principal)

To sum up, principals were able to describe practices and strategies they used in their leadership role to form and clearly define a shared school vision, understand and develop people, redesign the organisation and create productive working conditions.

The development of senior leadership teams

Forming

A striking result to emerge from the data related to the forming of teams is that changes to the composition of the Senior Leadership Teams happens infrequently and usually only involved one of the team at a time and that principals stated this resulted in relatively small disruptions to the team culture. The schools in my research had relatively long serving principals of six to twenty years for four of the schools and just over one year for the fifth school. The principal from East School described how the infrequent appointment of new members to the Senior Leadership Team had little noticeable impact on the team.

We haven't had that stage for a while because it's such a stable team. A new person coming in doesn't actually create enough ripples for it to be ... the forming part. (East School Principal)

An important consideration for principals when appointing a new member to their Senior Leadership Team was to find the right person, someone who shared similar values and would fit in with the existing culture and dynamics of the team. The principal of North Primary School expressed concern about the detrimental impact on the harmony of the team of an appointee not compatible to the team.

I'd look to see that the person coming in shares the same values that our current has, but also adds something. Someone that's going to bring in a positive change for our children, but still is able to work alongside the team, and acknowledge what the current team has done but add value. (South School Principal)

Interpersonal skills or the ability to break down interpersonal barriers and develop cooperative relationships was valued by the principal of West School. He expresses an appreciation of the importance of these 'people skill sets' as much as knowledge and expertise when appointing new team members.

Really what was important is people skills. Some of these people we needed the right personality for the job set, it is not just all about knowledge, some of it is around about what people skill sets did they bring, what expertise did they have? (West School Principal)

Having a member of the team resign does provide the principal with an opportunity to do a skills inventory and identify any gaps in the team. This presents the principal with the potential to consider what skills will be brought by an external appointment who can complement those developed internally as described by this principal.

... people do leave and then you do have gaps and then there's an opportunity to advertise and sometimes when people come in they have skills that are going to be really complementary to other skills you have in the school. (East School Principal)

It is recognised by principals in the following quotes that new members to the Senior Leadership Team require support to integrate into the team and they identified a number of strategies to aid this process. One strategy was to provide them with a mentor. Secondly, Principals meet regularly, often informally with them, and they also ensured they were available if the new member requires time for discussions. The principal of West School believes the individual differences related to each new team member's needs makes a formal induction process difficult.

We normally have people that walk beside them. I tend to have had lots of little informal meetings with my people when they come on board. I try to keep an open door policy that if something comes up they can come and talk to me... I don't know if we actually have what I call an induction process, because everybody is different. What we do have is we have a staff and a family information booklet ... (West School Principal)

In contrast, the principal of North School provide new appointees to the Senior Leadership Team with a more formalised induction process.

People coming from outside, there is a bit of an induction. We've got a couple of lists that we track through, just nuts and bolts of where things are and keys and alarms. (North School Principal)

It is observed by the principal of East School that the situation for external and internal appointments is different as internal appointments are already familiar with the culture of the school and it was just a matter of providing them with information that fills gaps in their knowledge of school systems.

Obviously if they're part of a school, they know a lot about the school and so what tends to happen is you start filling in gaps in their knowledge about how different layers of the system work. (East School Principal)

To summarise, principals described changes to the team happening infrequently and when they did they tried to appoint new members who would fit into the existing team culture, have similar values and capable interpersonal skills. Principals supported new members by providing them with a mentor and by having frequent discussions with them. New appointments provided the opportunity to bring new skills into the team and if they were internal appointments it was felt they already knew the school's values.

Storming

Reflecting on the impact of the most recently appointed senior teachers to the Senior Leadership Team, the principal of West School was aware of a process of storming that was part of their acceptance into the team. This involved feelings of apprehension and nervousness about interpersonal relationships and the effects of their influence on others.

I would have said that for [ST] and for [ST] they went through the baptism of being accepted as part of the whanau, and that is where people are a little bit weary. They are just concerned about how you cast a shadow over their place in the school, and how will you be connected and how will you be disconnected, how will you threaten or intimidate me, how will you undermine me – because people do feel undermined sometimes. (West School Principal)

This principal recognised that her appointment to the school had a deep effect on the existing culture of the Senior Leadership Team and that it took a period of time for trust to develop. As the new member to the team, she felt it important to find out what was working effectively and only then as a team decide together what changes they would make, thus gaining team agreement to the evolution of the team culture and reducing relationship and task conflict.

It took probably about six months to gain that trust. It wasn't nasty... So it was about not changing things too quickly – it was about going with what was already going that was good and then, us as a team, looking at what wasn't going good and what were we going to do as a team. (Central School Principal)

The principals were aware of power relations in team situations and how the desire for power to influence the team's goals or to have power over other members of the team can have a negative effect. This factor is expressed by this principal:

Sometimes people have their own agendas, and I've been lucky I haven't had that. Power. Sometimes it is power. (Central School Principal)

Effective leaders understand that it takes time for teams to work through conflicts and establish roles and functions within the team. This principal recognised that for people to develop relational trust and a coherent team culture they needed to understand other member's viewpoints. The role of the principal is to facilitate situations in which this can happen.

It is about giving people time to get to know each other. It is about educating people that there are different perspectives on life, and that your view point is not the only view point. (West School Principal)

South School principal supports the necessity for teams to engage in open robust discussions but was aware of the danger of team members opting out, acting passively, refusing to cooperate or not fully committing to the team.

I think robust discussions are really important ... and I think conflict if it's open, that's okay. It's the ones that are not expressed, those are the tricky ones. (South School Principal)

This principal's observation was that the storming process was 'gentle' because the majority of the team already had a well-established team culture and shared values that the new person was assimilated into. There is a perception that this is quite a different situation to forming a new group and the process of development that team would go through.

...yeah, they come in, the storming part is usually quite gentle. There's some understandings of this is how we do it here but not in that sense, it's more these are the beliefs that drive our practise so this is why we operate in that way. Because the majority of the team stay the same, the norming part probably ticks along anyway ... There's probably quite a strong sense of shared values that everyone has and a clear vision for our place that everyone has. (East School Principal)

To review, some principals were aware of the process of storming and that it could involve feelings of nervousness about interpersonal relationships and influence but that this was minimised in well-established teams who would assimilate new team members more gently. Principals expressed how the desire for power could have negative effects on teams and it was their role to facilitate the development of a cohesive team. Storming could take time to work through and there was always the danger of team members refusing to fully commit to the team and its goals.

Norming

Having worked through the storming stage principals spoke of the strategies they had in place to build trust, co-operation, commitment to the team and a focus on achieving the work of the Senior Leadership Team. The areas identified here by the principals were: communication, closer relations and mutual support, protocols and codes of behaviour and performance agreements.

The principals from Central, South and East Schools described the important role of communication practices they use in their schools to clarify team understandings so they can work together effectively. At Central School they problem solve meeting practices together as a team. The principal at South School describes the team having conversations to define and have a clear understanding of the team role. Finally, the principal of East School buddies newer team members with more experienced members who they can go to for advice and guidance while making herself available if the issue is such the principal needs to be involved.

As a team. We sit here and we all say what do we think our meetings are going to look like. (Central School Principal)

People have go-to people they're comfortable with. Most of our younger team leaders have a more experienced go-to person that is their sounding board. (East School Principal)

The importance of building relationships to enhance team cooperation, commitment and cohesion were expressed by the principals of East and West Schools. East School principal explained the use of mentors and the occasional use of outside professional

development providers. Here West School principal describes how he created opportunities for relationship building.

So I provide opportunities for people to create relationships. My job is try and create opportunities for people to get to know each other and work together.
(West School Principal)

Several school principals explained how they have developed and use protocols and codes of conduct to document the team norms that have been established. They found these helpful to reduce ambiguity, provide consistency and assist the team to maintain expected standards. Central School principal explained the use of performance agreements and the appraisal process as a means of defining and clarifying roles and responsibilities. The following is typical of the principal's responses.

We have a code of conduct for staff ... So there is an expectation of high standards and excellence. (West School Principal)

In conclusion, principals viewed communication as an important factor in clarifying team understandings and defining roles and relationship building enhanced team cooperation, commitment and cohesion. Practices that facilitated this included budding new members with experienced team members, using facilitators for professional development, developing and documenting protocols and codes of conduct and the use of performance agreements.

Performing

Sustaining effective Senior Leadership Team performance enables the achievement of team goals. The principal's focused on creating settings for getting the team's work done, dealing with conflict constructively, and maintaining performance over time. All principals had regular weekly Senior Leadership Team meetings where the team meets to plan, deal with school issues and make decisions. Principals also described times where the Senior Leadership Teams meet for forum days to deal with strategic issues, solve problems and make decisions.

We have leadership meetings, so a lot of the things can be discussed at that point when there is something that comes up that people aren't aware of. We have a leadership forum day, usually once a term, where we get together to deal with

some big issues around our school. That is a great time to be able to clarify things.
(West School Principal)

Discussion, debate and robust conversations were welcomed and viewed as healthy but within the appropriate setting of the Senior Leadership Team meeting and that once agreement had been reached 'cabinet rules' applied. Once agreed positions were decided they were supported by everyone outside of the meeting. Other principals also considered robust discussions to be constructive because they led to better quality decisions. They inspired reflection, in-depth thinking and decisions based on quality information

We are welcome to discuss and debate and to disagree, but there is a formal professional setting for that to happen in, and once we leave that whatever the consensus that is decided, that is what we support... I think sometimes we have open debates, arguments and conflict and that is healthy to get to a point where we can agree. (West School Principal)

Principals observed that when the Senior Leadership Team was performing effectively there was a flow on effect throughout the school, with a central focus on student learning, the school was orderly, everyone was learning and relationships enabled humour to be shared.

I think that there is a good feeling within the school. When they have got their head on data and where kids are at and where they need them to be. When they can share a joke and move on. That they are organised. (Central School Principal)

In summary, principals described using team meetings and forum days as venues for discussion where the team could discuss, plan and support each other to achieve the team's goals focused on student learning and achievement. Debate could be robust and was viewed as healthy because it led to better quality decisions.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBER PERSPECTIVES

For the purpose of the study I have used a pseudonym for each Senior Leadership Team member to protect their identity. Each quote is labelled with the school name

consistent with those used in the principal's data, followed by a numeral to identify individual Senior Leadership Team members.

The nature of senior leadership teams

The purpose of senior leadership teams

When asked to explain their understanding of the purpose of a school's Senior Leadership Team respondents from all five Senior Leadership Teams described how their role was to support the principal to lead and manage the school. The following quote is an example of what was expressed by Senior Leadership Team members:

Support to our principal, I think that is one of the main things. Because you have to support your principal. If you don't agree with everything that she says, that is OK. But the bottom line is she is the boss and that is it. (Central School 2)

Interestingly, in several schools it was evident there was a recognised hierarchy within the Senior Leadership Team with the principal and deputy principal and/or Assistant principal forming an inner dyad or triad of the Senior Leadership Team who had greater influence.

...it actually does make the job easier for [Principal] and I [DP] because there is no micro managing. (North School 1)

For us, we have our principal who is the one behind the wheel and [DP] is in the front seat and a little one right in the middle where [Team Member] is. They're the drivers. (East School 4)

One team member spoke directly about their role in contributing to the development of the school's vision and strategic goals. However, this concept was implied at another school when the respondent spoke of how they were included in Board of Trustees meetings.

I think to bring your strengths to meet the school's vision, and after that the school's particular strategic goals. I think to bring your strengths to that. (South School 1)

Common to all Senior Leadership Teams was linking the purpose of the Senior Leadership Team with the learning and achievement of the students in the school.

Senior Leadership Team members saw themselves as having responsibility for learning in the school and for ensuring that students achieved. This thought was articulated by the following interviewee.

We have probably all got different styles, but teaching and learning is at the hub of it. I think, as a leadership team, we do all have that very much in common.
(West School 1)

What was very evident was that members of the Senior Leadership Team considered themselves the interface between the other members of staff and the principal. The work load of the principal meant that they were not able to address many of the day-to-day issues that occur in a school and this was an important aspect of team member's roles. Members expressed how they were trusted to make relevant decisions. As this interviewee stated:

[Principal] has such a heavy work load. She always knows everything that is happening, but often we can help them and support them and if it is syndicate issue or a teacher issue. So from that perspective we support our senior teachers and the teachers as well. Piggy in the middle. (Central School 1)

Senior Leadership Team members perceived themselves as an important conduit for ensuring communication occurred within the school. They fed back information between the principal and their own teaching teams as well as issues from the staff to the principal. A formal opportunity for this feedback to occur was at the weekly Senior Leadership Team meetings that were a feature of all schools.

And also to find out from the DP and principal, what is coming up and what is happening and that kind of thing, to share back with our team, so the voice between as well. So we take concerns from the teachers to the principal and then the other way. We feedback. (North School 4)

This interviewee describes how the members of the Senior Leadership Team are empowered to be innovative and initiate some of what happens in the school through their actions. Other team members expressed how they felt they had ownership and buy in and it was their motivation and energy that helped to drive what happened in the school.

We drive the school and motivate the school. Things that we view as a team are heard and then valued within our leaders. If we have a goal or vision, we try it out in the school as well. We're more the engine to keep it going. (East School 4)

Within the Senior Leadership Team the members supported each other. There was a sense they were responsible to each other and they did not want to let their team members down. When one member was struggling the others willingly assisted them.

If there is anything that is impacting on anybody else, then they have the conversations. That is what makes it easy. Everybody is pulling their weight and doing their share. If somebody is having more of a difficult time then everybody sort of jumps in to help out. (North School 1)

To summarise, Senior Leadership Team members described the role of the team was to support the principal to interface between the staff and principal, participate in the development of the school's vision and strategic plans and as a conduit for communication. They were responsible for student learning and achievement, supported each other and were innovative. There was a recognised dyad or triad of more senior members within some teams.

The principal's leadership role

Senior Leadership Team members were clearly aware of the leadership role the principal has *forming and clearly defining a shared school vision*, promoting acceptance of collective goals, expecting high performance from the staff and providing strategic direction. All five Senior Leadership Team members described the principal's role as leader in the school. A team member from West School saw the principal's role as being a leaders in the wider education community. This interviewee from Central School expressed how big the role was for the principal on their own and therefore they needed to share the load with people within the school as well networking with others outside the school.

It is too hard to do on your own. It is a huge job. I think you need a sounding board. I also think a principal needs people outside of the school to talk to, a confidential person. (Central School 2)

East School Senior Leadership Team member saw their principals as being role models of the culture they wanted to develop in the school. Principals were explicit about their expectations of the staff and expected that others would follow their lead.

I think also she models what she wants to see as well. I see her as a role model. She's quite explicit in the type of culture she wants to develop amongst the team. Once again those high expectations and aspirations for doing a really good job ... (East School 3)

Different facets of principal leadership were experienced by Senior Leadership Teams. They experienced collaborative approaches as well as situations in which the principal used their role as the legitimate leader to make the decisions they felt were necessary for the school. A team member from East School labelled it as a hybrid form of leadership. Senior Leadership Team members described principals sharing decision making with their senior leaders and providing opportunity for distributed leadership as well as being directive as described by these two interviewees.

He is very forward thinking and allows us that freedom, like we've already said, to go with our ideas. He doesn't put brakes on, he doesn't stop things. (North School 4)

There are times also where he says, well this is where it needs to go, so this is what we are going to do. (West School 4)

Senior Leadership Team members were aware of the values held by the principal that underpinned their leadership and guided the vision and their practice. As described by this interviewee from West School these values were regularly articulated by the principal.

[Principal] talks about it often. He will talk about whanau, aroha, respect, love, trust and it is the vocabulary that is around our school. (West School 1)

Understanding and developing people by building their knowledge, skills and dispositions, providing them with individualised support and learning opportunities, and role modelling these values and behaviours was a strong theme articulated by all of the Senior Leadership Team Members interviewed. The following quote was typical of the viewpoint expressed by members of the Senior Leadership Teams.

[Principal] has been very good at mentoring and developing and giving you the opportunities to take something that you are passionate about and run with it and develop your skills as you go along. (West School 1)

Principals were seen to provide and encourage both individual and team professional development opportunities to build capability within the staff. Team professional learning allowed for a shared and cohesive understanding, while encouragement to develop personally allowed for individual differences. It was expressed by a team member from South School that the principal has a great deal of influence determining what professional development the Senior Leadership Team will be offered. These views are represented by the following interviewees.

I think it is having that PD together, so you don't just have one of us or two of us, it is the four of us or the five of us including [Principal]. (West School 1)

...we are recognised as individuals within that team so we are allowed and supported to develop as individuals... (East School 2)

This interviewee from East School describes how the principal was viewed as a lead learner in the school and ongoing professional learning was role modelled. They describe how the principal was an active participant and learner in staff meetings alongside the staff.

Most staff learnings here are professional learning and [Principal] is very much part of that too. She is seen by the whole staff to be a learner as well. That's what she considers herself to be, the lead learner. (East School 4)

The Senior Leadership Team were very aware of their principal's leadership role *redesigning the organisation* to establish working conditions that motivate commitment and establish a collaborative culture. Regular weekly team meetings were organised by the principals and considered valuable opportunities to ensure operational and strategic issues were shared and discussed in a collaborative manner. The following quote conveys the essence of these observations.

I think our Thursday meeting is a really important time because it can be the practicals of "have these things been done? Remember we've got this happening next week". But also the big picture stuff we talk about as well and where do we

want to head or those core values or things that are of concern or to celebrate. That connecting is very valuable every week. (East School 3)

At North and West Schools the Senior Leadership Team members articulated how they valued the opportunities provided by their principals to show leadership and this encouraged their commitment to perform. At West School the interviewee compared this relationship with that of being part of a family. Another respondent at West School describes how changes over time to the principal's role has resulted in an environment where reciprocal trust has grown and the team member felt a sense of commitment and not wanting to let the principal down.

I think that is the difference for me in this position here, is that you are actually given an opportunity to step up and say, actually I want to follow that one through. (North School 1)

Senior Leadership Team members respected and admired the collaborative culture, collegiality and relational trust developed by their principals and valued the opportunities provided for personal opportunities to learn. One interviewee from East School understood from her own study, the responsibility the principal had to support an individual to succeed when they were promoted into a leadership role. She describes how developing a culture where new leaders are supported to be successful is an element of principal leadership. This interviewee expressed her admiration of collegial relationships in teams in this quote.

I see the collegiality in this school within the leadership team is really something that I admire. Lots of opportunity for me to learn. There is a lot of good relationship trust. (North School 2)

There were differing practices by principals concerning senior leader's job descriptions. Interviewees in one school stated they do not have formal job descriptions which contrasted with the norm in the other schools. At East School formal job descriptions were thought to restrict staff's development.

We don't actually have job descriptions which I initially found perplexing because there's no clear set list of tasks that you can tick off. I now see it as a positive because it does actually mean that that whole chance of leaving attestation stuff to one side and the aspirational stuff can flourish. (East School 2)

At Central School the Senior Leadership Team members valued the authenticity and genuineness of the principal. They expressed how they valued her sense of humour and honesty about her limitations.

Having fun. A sense of fun is important. Being able to have a laugh. Not admitting that she knows everything. She will often say, I haven't a clue! (Central School 2)

Creating productive working conditions to promote organisational stability, ensuring communication is effective and bolstering the infrastructure of the school was also an important aspect of principal's leadership valued by the members of the Senior Leadership Team. Providing opportunities for communication was described as an important feature of the principal's leadership. All teams confirmed that principals organised weekly team meetings where they ensured everyone was aware of school activities as well as engaging in deeper discussions about school direction. A new team member at North School expressed how she found meetings helpful for clarifying the details she read in school documentation.

For me personally, being a new member on the team, so the senior leadership team meetings has been really helpful because there are certain things that, no matter how much you read in the prospectus or whatever you read, when you come together with the people you learn more. (North School 2)

An interviewee from North School explained that informal meetings were also a common occurrence and considered important for promoting organisational stability. In this quote the interviewee explains that informal meetings are used by the principal to discuss their development.

She has conversations with each of us at times too about one thing or another. She has that role with us as well in development. (East School 1)

Openness and honesty were valued by both the principal and Senior Leadership Team members, but the expectation was that people were constructive and showed each other respect, as is expressed in these two quotes.

And that is what [Principal] does as well. He won't stand for gossip. Won't stand for people putting each other down. (West School ?)

I think the communication, the honesty, we are not great for car park conversations – we do all our talking face to face, a real sense of openness. (South School 2)

The Senior Leadership Team members of Central School were very aware that principals endeavoured to be open with their teams and keep everyone informed. Conversely as expressed in this quote from West School is that principals also expected team members to keep them fully informed.

I think some of our success too is keeping [Principal] informed and [Team Member] mentioned this before, that [Principal] will totally empower you to do things, but he needs to know. (West School 3)

An aspect of principal leadership described at East School was how the distribution of leadership promoted organisational stability and sustainability.

It's also about sustainability because leadership is not centralised around a small team or an individual, it does actually mean that nobody is indispensable. If you do have someone leave, even the principal, it does actually mean there's an element of sustainability there. (East School 2)

To conclude, the members of the Senior Leadership Teams were able to describe practices and strategies used by principals in their leadership role to form and clearly define a shared school vision, understand and develop people, redesign the organisation and create productive working conditions.

The development of senior leadership teams

Forming

The data from the Senior Leadership Team members reveals that changes to the composition of Senior Leadership Teams happens infrequently and usually only involves one of the team at a time. Senior Leadership Team members frequently identified that new appointees should fit into the existing team, have inter-personal skills and be collaborative, as is expressed in the following quote.

I think you need a team player. Somebody who is collaborate, somebody who will listen, but also be prepared to give their point of view, but also accept others and

be prepared to debate it, but to all at the end come to a common understanding.
(Central School 1)

Senior Leadership Team members appointed externally described how difficult it was being the new member on the team. They described feelings of shock, feeling overwhelmed, isolation and it being a daunting experience. For the member from North School it was difficult being new to an existing team and this generated feelings of inadequacy and acceptance. This quote from the North School member describes how deeply she was affected. All members described how they found the support of the other team members helped them through these initial feelings.

As a new member, because I think I was one of the only new ones then, and coming in as a DP, it was a little bit daunting actually, It was a little bit difficult being the only new kid on the block and being new to senior management because the team had been so settled before I arrived. So I was definitely the newbie on the block and it was like, holy hell. But [Principal] made it easy for me.
(North School 1)

In contrast this appointee felt a sense of belonging and inclusion as she joined the team because she had worked in the school previously and as a consequence did not find the process threatening but rather gave her the feeling of returning to her family.

My experience is quite different to [Team Member] experience ... I was a known quantity and I came back to the team. I knew people... For me it was just coming home to family. (West School 3)

Senior Leadership Team members from East School described how leadership was grown in the school which enabled gaps in the Senior Leadership Team to be filled internally from this pool of developed leaders. A member described how she attended Senior Leadership Team meetings for a term before she was appointed and received coaching from an existing member.

...so we looked within the school. They were appointed within. There are people that have been in our school who we've seen grow into the roles. (East School 1)

I came to leadership meetings for the first term every week just to get a feel of what happens. That was before I was appointed. [Team Member] and I were

together for two terms working together to coach me through it and set me up.
(East School 5)

At South School the principal was the new member to the school and the Senior Leadership Team. At the beginning the Deputy Principal had many discussions with her and she spent time observing what was happening.

But when [Principal] joined the team, [DP] and [Principal] – and you would have informed her of many processes. You had quite a few talks at the start, I think... So part of her beginning and linking with us was she observed a lot and walked around a lot and had a look and then, yes, after a bit of time, has started to look at different things. That was a bit of induction for her really. (South School 2)

To sum-up, changes to the Senior Leadership Team happened infrequently, but if new members were appointed to the team they were expected to have effective interpersonal skills, be collaborative and fit into the existing team. Leadership was frequently grown within the school which made the process easier. External appointees spoke about feeling overwhelmed, isolated and inadequate and to support their integration into the team they received coaching from existing team members.

Storming

Reflecting on the impact of the most recently appointed senior teacher to the Senior Leadership Team, this West School team member describes how she found the process difficult and she felt apprehension because it seemed like the person was wanting to take over the school and others outside the Senior Leadership Team were aware of what was happening. This highlights how difficult it can be for competition for influence to be contained and not affect other people within the school.

That was a little bit hard with some things. Wow, she is taking over the school. And I know it came across like that to a few people outside of management ...
(West School ?)

This quote describes a very emotional experience and the strong feelings generated that cause people to do or say things they later regret having done.

There were times when I went into [DP] office and just let it all out and went, what did I do? But it is change that happened to me. (West School 4)

This quote exemplifies how this team member went through a process of identifying the tasks she would be doing. She was conflicted by the advice she had been given to be circumspect and the desire to make the contribution she felt she could make to the school which caused feelings of uncertainty and confusion.

And the advice that I got was take your time, go slow, don't make any changes this year and so I was lost. I had initially thought I'm ready to start a new chapter and experience in another school – woohoo, I hope they're ready for something different. I just wanted to not have any brakes on because I needed to keep rolling. (West School 4)

The process led this interviewee from East School to have a deeper understanding of herself, her place in the school and the skills required to relate to others in the team. These thoughts were supported by another member of this team who described her appreciation for the learning she developed around communication styles and relationships with others.

I think you're also learning about yourself as well quite a lot and the skills that you have that relate to people as well and who you are is a big thing and where you fit in the scheme of things. (East School 5)

It would appear from this comment that some issues are still latent and that the potential for storming has not yet been resolved at South School where the new member to the team is the principal. The interviewee describes how the principal has joined a team with a strong, existing and cohesive culture. They are now waiting for the principal to communicate to them her opinion of them as a team.

We know what we think of her, but we don't know really what she thinks about us. We are very cohesive and we are quite strongly in a culture of doing things a certain way. (South School 1)

This interviewee felt that it was an easier process if the new members of the team were internal appointments who knew the other team members and presumably knew the existing values operating in the team. Another member from this school who had been a recent external appointment counted herself lucky that it had been an easy transition to becoming a part of the team and did not feel there were issues with conflict.

I think we just all get on. I have been in teams where there is always one bad apple and it is just very hard. But before these two the team leaders were appointed like I was, they tended to have been there a long time. You knew everything, you knew everyone. (North School 3)

In short, team members described storming as a difficult process that generated strong emotions and feelings, where existing members could feel threatened by the arrival of new members as their arrival created competition for influence. Importantly, issues were not always manifested and could remain latent.

Norming

Senior Leadership Team members spoke of the strategies they had in place to build trust, co-operation, commitment to the team and a focus on achieving the work of the Senior Leadership Team that is the norming stage of team development. The areas identified here by the Senior Leadership Team members were: failure to norm, communication, protocols, codes of behaviour, performance agreements, values, closer relations and mutual support.

This team member from West School was aware that norming did not always occur within a team. They explained how ongoing storming can interfere with the team becoming cohesive and achieving the team's goals which inevitably had a negative impacted on the school's operation.

That is where it starts, if you have got a management team or a leadership team that is at loggerheads all the time, that is soon going to filter through. (West School 1)

Senior Leadership Team members described the important role of open communication practices between team members. The team member from North School describes how it is a discussion of equals where new ideas can be raised for discussion but they do not feel their discussion is at all combative. A team member from South School emphasised how their conversations were around the table and it was inappropriate to discuss matters in the "carpark." The importance of communication is expressed in this quote from a North School team member.

I don't think we've been through that, as I say everybody just sort of fits. Nobody is above anybody else. Everybody talks. We don't argue, we talk, we bring new ideas in. (North School 3)

Senior Leadership Team protocols featured amongst the strategies teams had to develop and to establish. Norms that created trust and co-operation assisted them to clarify their roles within the team. Teams varied as to whether they were written down in the form of meeting protocols (Central School), policies and guidelines in the policy folder (West School), code of conduct (West School) or they were integral to the whole school and not exclusive to the Senior Leadership Team as was the case at East School. This quote from Central School is typical of interviewee's comments concerning protocols.

So we have protocols for our meetings. We always have our protocols that we follow. Everyone's opinion is valued and listened to. Those types of things. (Central School 2)

It was common for there also to be unwritten protocols amongst team members that determined how they acted as is explained by this interviewee from North School.

We do have protocols I suppose, informal and not written down. (North School 4)

Team members also explained how they had role clarity because roles and responsibilities were attached to the positions they held and defined in their job descriptions, as this interviewee states.

We have our roles and responsibilities attached to our positions. (South School 2)

At Central School, the development of Senior Leadership Team values were important for building trust, co-operation and commitment to the team. Trust was considered very important for relationship building and respect and empathy were other values specified. The principal was seen as a major influence on team values but as expressed by this interviewee, other team members also felt they contributed meaningfully.

Respect. The empathy. I think we are all influenced to a degree. [Principal] definitely is a big, big influence, but I think we all bring to the table something. We've evolved. (Central School 1)

With the principal being the new member of the Senior Leadership Team at South School the existing team members stated how they accepted the principal as the team leader. However, this team member had a strong expectation for the principal to be sensitive to what was working well in the school and while they expected change, that it was thought through before changes were made.

And then change will come, but it is considered change too. It would be anyway, but it is about knowing and soaking up the stuff that is going really well and not throwing the baby out with the bath water. (South School 2)

South, East and West Schools all stated how new members to the team were supported, coached or mentored by other members of the Senior Leadership Team. Through these approaches new team members were instructed in team norms and provided with information about how to perform their roles in various settings. They describe how it was other members of the Senior Leadership Team who carried out these functions and not just the principal.

I know when I joined it was [Team Member] and [AP] who said "this is what team leaders do and this is how you do it" and lots of modelling at leadership meetings of how you'd lead a team meeting as well. That way the clarity came to me by modelling rather than it being a set list of jobs that you have to do. (East School 2)

A team member from West School describes how after two years in the Senior Leadership Team she still feels new to the team and does not feel she is fully integrated into the team exemplifying that in some situations norming may take some time.

I am new so I am still finding my feet, and though it has been two years, I feel like I still haven't done enough to show that I'm a part of the leadership team. (West School 4)

Summing up, communication was considered important to the norming process and team members described this as a time roles were clarified, protocols and job

descriptions established and trust developed. Norms were underpinned by agreed values and new team members were mentored and instructed in these by existing members. It was recognised that norming took time and in some situations did not occur in the team.

Performing

Sustaining effective Senior Leadership Team performance enables the achievement of team goals. The Senior Leadership Team focus was on achieving the school's goals, creating settings for getting the team's work done, dealing with conflict constructively, and maintaining performance over time. As expressed by this team member the primary focus of the Senior Leadership Team and the context for their work was on student learning and achievement.

We know that the kids are always at the centre of it, so that is not an issue. We know that whatever we do or any decisions that we make have got to be for the betterment of the kids. (North School 1)

The teams felt that they were effective achieving their goals. It was important to the teams that they were productive and they took pride in being able to successfully complete their tasks. This quote is an example of this aspect.

I think we are quite good at getting things done. We meet deadlines. I think that is important and that is what we expect, and it is annoying if things don't happen. (Central School 2)

It was evident from interviewee's responses that at this stage they felt confident in their role and did not have to rely on principal direction for everything they did. An East School team member also said how she was encouraged to be more innovative and continue her own learning. The following quote exemplifies this concept.

I know in my role I used to feel like I had to check in with [Principal] to make sure about things, but now I don't. (West School ?)

In the following quote the team member describes the principal monitoring team achievement of goals and making decisions about the kind of support required by team members if goals were not being achieved.

If expectations aren't being met then she will question why and then she tries to identify what's going on and put in the supported needed. (East School 6)

All Senior Leadership Teams had regular weekly meetings to plan, deal with school issues and make strategic decisions. They considered it an important opportunity to connect with each other.

I think our Thursday meeting is a really important time because it can be the practicals of "have these things been done? But also the big picture stuff we talk about as well and where do we want to head ... That connecting is very valuable every week. (East School 3)

High performing Senior Leadership Teams were described as teams that had effective relationships that enabled them to debate ideas, support and be open with one another, non-judgemental and present themselves as a cohesive group to the rest of the school. Differences were dealt with in a timely and professional manner that did not interfere with effective relationships. Central School also described it as a time where the team could have fun together.

We never argue. We have debates about things and at the end of the day we often have come to the same conclusion anyway, but we both go down very different paths to get there. (Central School 1)

To sum up, a high performing Senior Leadership Team was described by team members as focused on student learning and achievement, productive and confident in their roles. While the principal monitored their performance and ensured they had the resources to achieve their goals they were cohesive and quickly dealt with differences that arose.

CONSOLIDATED FINDINGS

I have consolidated my findings in Table 2 in order to present and compare the similarities and differences in the findings from the principal's perspectives and those of the other Senior Leadership Team members.

Table 2: Comparison of principal and team members' perspectives

	Principals	Other Team Members
Purpose of Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for student learning and achievement. - Support the teachers to improve teaching practice. - Implement the school's vision. - Conduit for communication within the school. - Sharing the work load including. - Have set roles but roles often overlap and interrelated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was a recognised dyad or triad of more senior members within some teams. - Responsible for student learning and achievement. - Support the principal and each other. - Interface between the staff and principal. - Participate in the development of school's vision and strategic goals. - Conduit for communication within the school.
Principal Leadership	<i>Forming and clearly defining a shared school vision</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dichotomy between legitimate leadership role and desire to be collaborative. - Values underpin leadership practice. - Shares leadership. - Defining vision and role modelling expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The leader in the school and the wider education community. - Role models. - Shares decision making - Is values driven.

<i>Understanding and developing people</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develops and supports the team to build their capabilities. - Develops trust by building relationships with the team, valuing them and being a good listener. - Supports the team and grows new leaders by directing, coaching, mentoring and delegating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentors staff. - Encourages individual and team professional development. - Role models learning.
<i>Redesigning the organisation</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensures all team members understand their responsibilities are school wide. - Recognises team input and contributions and acknowledges their skills. - Connects staff with opportunities. - Prepares for succession. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organises regular weekly team meetings to discuss operational and strategic issues. - Provides team members with opportunities to show leadership. - Develops a collaborative culture, collegiality and relational trust. - Develops team job descriptions.
<i>Creating productive working conditions</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creates productive working conditions through effective communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organises regular team meetings to discuss operational and strategic issues.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uses school systems and documentation to create clarity and order. - Has clear processes for chain of command. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meets with informally with the staff for open, honest and constructive discussions. - Ensures there is a regular flow of information. - Distributes leadership.
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Team Development	<i>Forming</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes happen infrequently causing relatively small disruptions to team culture. - New appointees should fit into the existing team culture and have similar values. - Incompatible appointees are a concern. - Interpersonal skills valued. - New appointees supported with a mentor, and frequent meetings with the principal. - Internal appointees are familiar with the school's culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes happen infrequently. - New appointees should fit into the existing team and be collaborative. - New appointees require effective interpersonal skills. - External appointees felt feelings of shock, being overwhelmed, isolation, and inadequacy. - Leadership is often grown within the school. - New appointees receive coaching from existing team members.

	<i>Storming</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some principals aware of the process and that it may involve feelings of nervousness and impact on interpersonal relationships and influence. - Power relations, the desire for power or influence can have negative effects. - It takes time to work through conflicts and establish roles and functions in the team. - Principal's role is to facilitate development of a cohesive team culture. - There is a danger to team development when team members refuse to fully commit to the team and its goals. - Well established team cultures assimilate new team members more gently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficult process, existing members feel threatened by arrival of new member. - Creates competition for influence. - Is an emotional experience where strong feelings are generated. - Created learning opportunity for development of communication and interpersonal skills. - Issues are not always manifested and can remain latent. 	
	<i>Norming</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication is important for clarifying team understandings and defining roles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Norming does not always occur in a team. - Open communication practices important and occurred 'around the table'. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationship building enhances team cooperation, commitment and cohesion. - Protocols, codes of conduct and job descriptions reduce ambiguity and document expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protocols and job descriptions formulated to establish trust, cooperation and role clarity. - Agreed values important for relationship building and development can take time. - New team members instructed in team norms by existing team members.
<i>Performing</i>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weekly team meetings and forum days held to discuss, plan and support each other to achieve goals. - Discussion, debate and robust conversations were welcomed and viewed as healthy within the appropriate setting. - Effective teams focused on student learning and achievement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primary team focus was student learning and achievement. - The team is cohesive and confident in their roles and effective achieving their goals. - Principal monitored team's achievement of goals and provided necessary resources. - Weekly team meetings to discuss, plan and support each other to achieve goals. - Differences dealt with quickly and effectively.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DISCUSSION

The prominence of Senior Leadership Teams in education settings is evidence that they are an essential element of schools organisational structure. They have become a means of sharing the burden of leadership to ensure effective learning and teaching occurs in schools. This chapter presents a discussion of the findings on Senior Leadership Teams presented in Chapter Four in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

The research questions for my study were to investigate:

1. What is the nature of Senior Leadership Teams in New Zealand Primary schools?
2. What are the perceptions of the principal's leadership role in Senior Leadership Teams in New Zealand primary schools?
3. What team development processes lead to a group of individuals becoming a cohesive Senior Leadership Team?

From the process of writing the discussion of findings, conclusions have been made and recommendations proposed. The findings of this study are discussed under three main headings: The nature of primary school senior leadership teams; Leadership practice; and Team development. This chapter concludes with sections discussing the Conclusions and Recommendations.

The nature of primary school senior leadership teams

Findings from this study confirm that New Zealand primary schools are organised so that Senior Leadership Teams perform a significant role in the school's achievement of its teaching and learning goals (Cardno, 2006; Walker, 1994). No significant differences were found between principal's descriptions of Senior Leadership Teams and those provided by the other team members. These descriptions were also consistent with the definitions of a team found in the literature in which those in a team: (1) are an identifiable number of people working interdependently, (2) are all committed to a common purpose or goal, (3) delineate the roles and contributions to be made by

team members, (4) hold themselves accountable for effective performance, (5) develop positive synergies, (6) are empowered to accomplish specific tasks, (7) work within a larger social system or organisation (Cardno, 2012; Katzenbach & Smith, 1993; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006; Sheard et al., 2009).

The composition of Senior Leadership Teams consisted of *an identifiable number of people working interdependently*. Each Senior Leadership Team consisted of three to eight members which corresponds to the recommendation of Sheard and Kakabadse (2004) and Thompson (2014), who state that teams should have the fewest number of members required to achieve the job and suggest the optimum number of three to six. This study shows there were variations between schools in how the Senior Leadership Team was structured. All Senior Leadership Teams consisted of the school's principal, deputy and assistant principals and in all but one school, other senior teachers or team leaders. Achieving a balanced team was an important consideration when appointing members to the Senior Leadership Team and principals described how they sought to achieve a balance of personal qualities, skills and relevant competencies (Gilley et al., 2010; Wallace & Hall, 1994). Principals and other members of the Senior Leadership Team considered there to be significant advantages to making internal appointments as opposed to external appointments. Growing existing staff into leadership positions meant they were a known entity and they were already immersed in the values and culture of the school (Bush et al., 2012).

Central School were unique in that they had a two tiered arrangement. A Senior Leadership Team of three was supported by a Management Team that included Senior Teachers/Team Leaders who were largely responsible for operational matters. In contrast, the other schools in the study had a single Senior Leadership Team. A second observation is that West and East Schools Senior Leadership Teams members described a recognised dyad or triad of the principal plus two or three deputy/assistant principals, who had greater influence within the Senior Leadership Team. All the teams in this study considered they worked interdependently, collaboratively and described how they supported the principal and each other (Barnett & McCormack, 2012). This commitment was explained by one senior leader when she described how everybody pulled their weight, did their fair share and everyone helps the one who is having a difficult time. Both principals and other senior leaders acknowledged the legitimacy of

the principal to make unilateral decisions and as expressed by a team member from Central School, this was expected of them in some circumstances. While schools espoused distributed leadership and a flat management style it was evident from the data they had what Youngs (2013) asserts is a hybrid configuration in which formal organisational leadership and informal or dispersed leadership co-exist.

Principals and members of the Senior Leadership Team were *all committed to a common purpose or goal* and consistently expressed that their primary focus and responsibility was implementing the school's vision concerning student learning and achievement. Bell (1997) and Wheelan (2016) state that teams need to know and understand the relevance of its purpose and goals, and believe they are important. A variety of terms (lead, overseeing, and driving) were used by the principals to describe how they enacted their focus on student learning as the school's central purpose. The South School team member also specifically spoke about their role contributing to the development of the school's vision and strategic goals.

The findings of this study are that there was a common practice of *delineating the roles and contributions to be made by team members* which was consistent with findings found in the literature (Goodall, 2013; Thomas, 2009; Yukl, 2010). It was common for team members to have multiple roles including syndicate and school wide responsibilities. Team members had clarity about their functional roles (Cardno, 2012) and there was little evidence in the findings of representation of Belbin's (2010, 2012) relational roles. It was stated by principals and other members of the Senior Leadership Team that while roles were delineated, they were interrelated and sometimes overlapping.

For Senior Leadership Teams *holding themselves accountable for effective performance* meant that they were open and honest in their communication with each other within the team. When they wished to introduce a new initiative or have an input into decisions their ideas were listened to, but they were expected to explain and justify themselves (Thompson, 2014). Ongoing professional learning (Bush et al., 2012) featured in all school's Senior Leadership Teams and arose because of the individual members reflecting on their performance and learning needs, or were identified by the principal as an aspect requiring development.

The findings from principals and team members provide strong evidence to support they have a very clear understanding that team member relationships and culture are underpinned by communication, trust, openness, collaboration, mutual support and commitment for the team and these were necessary to *develop positive synergies* within the team. Principals expressed how it was impossible for one person to do everything alone and team members stated their commitment to supporting their principals and each other. Team members attributed the development of a collaborative culture, collegiality and relational trust in their teams to the leadership of the principal (Bell, 1997; Cranston & Ehrich, 2005).

While principals are accountable for the management of the school (Barnett & McCormack, 2012) there was ample evidence that members of the Senior Leadership Teams were *empowered to accomplish specific tasks*. An East School team member describes how they were encouraged to be innovative and initiate projects. Other team members expressed how they valued opportunities provided by their principals to show leadership and this encouraged their commitment to perform and help drive what happened in the school.

Principals and Senior Leadership Team members clearly understood they did *their work within a larger social system or organisation* and their needed to be linkages across all levels (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Principals and team members expected there to be effective operational management to ensure the school ran smoothly and efficiently. Therefore, planning and coordination was an important function of the Senior Leadership Team. Communication, information sharing and collaboration were identified as factors that enabled this to happen. Senior Leadership Team members considered themselves as the interface between the staff and principal as the demands on the principal precluded them from addressing day-to-day issues that occur in a school.

From my findings, I conclude that the Senior Leadership Teams in my study were generally structured and performed in ways that were consistent with the literature. I conclude that schools should continue operating with the same structure and in the same manner as is currently happening.

Leadership practice

Two important concepts about leadership practice stand out from my findings and are supported in the literature. First, within schools there is leadership resulting from the principal's legitimate leadership role; and secondly, leadership is shared and enacted with other members of the Senior Leadership Team. It is together they perform key leadership roles in the team and wider school (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010; Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004). Principals and team members shared responsibility in an inter-dependent process and thereby created an effective team. However, in certain circumstances the principals did not necessarily take a major role (Wheelan, 2016). Both principals and Senior Leadership Team members recognised the legitimacy of principals making unilateral decisions which would suggest that schools are enacting a hybrid form of distributed leadership (Youngs, 2013).

The findings identified ample evidence of the four core leadership principles identified by Leithwood et al. (2008): (1) building a vision and setting goals and direction; (2) understanding and developing people; (3) redesigning the organisation; and (4) creating productive working conditions. Examples of these four leadership principles being used by principals inter-dependently with other members of the Senior Leadership Team to assist them with strategies to enact leadership were found in my research.

Teams had a clear understanding of the importance of *building a vision and setting goals and direction*. This is an aspect of leadership practice that principals and Senior Leadership Team members were well versed in. While the findings validate the primary role principals have forming and clearly defining a shared vision, promoting acceptance of collective goals and articulating and modelling an expectation of high performance, there is evidence of the contribution Senior Leadership Team members have in this process. Secondly, *understanding and developing people* was achieved through such aspects as providing team members with positive feedback, developing trusting relationships between team members, being a good listener, supporting and mentoring individuals, and role modelling being a learner by participating in professional development opportunities. Thirdly, principals and team members were aware of the need to *redesign the organisation* to establish working conditions that motivate commitment and a collaborative culture. There was a common understanding between

the principal and Senior Leadership Team members of each member's responsibilities. In the majority of schools these were documented in job descriptions. When necessary these responsibilities were adjusted and revised within the team. Team member contributions were recognised, individuals connected with leadership opportunities and preparation was made for succession. Fourthly, *creating productive working conditions* was achieved when principals and team members ensured there was effective communication within the team, the implementation of new initiatives was carefully managed, documented systems were established and there was a clear understanding of the chain of command within the school.

To conclude, principals have a legitimate leadership role in the school and leadership was shared and enacted with other members of the Senior Leadership Team forming an inter-dependent process to create an effective team. Principals utilise the four leadership principles of Leithwood et al. (2008) inter-dependently with other members of the Senior Leadership Team to assist them with practices to enact leadership.

In this next section I will be making connections between the literature and my findings to develop an understanding of the development processes that lead to a group of individuals in New Zealand primary schools becoming a cohesive Senior Leadership Team. I will be exploring what principals as team leaders must know to lead team development and facilitate this process, and what team members must know and do to participate as effective team members.

Team development

Principal's knowledge

The findings from this study support the view that the complexity of school leadership practice and range of contexts encountered necessitates that principals' use a team leadership approach. On this basis, leadership must be considered from the standpoint of a team role and the contribution the team can make. The emphasis has moved to team based leadership and ownership (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010; Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004) where collegiality, participatory approaches and distributed leadership are supplementing solo leadership models (Crawford, 2012). This requires a principal to be sensitive to the context and able to use different approaches depending on the circumstances and the needs of the group at any given time

(Wheelan, 2016). The findings reveal that both principals and other members of the Senior Leadership Team have a shared understanding of these complexities and dynamics and that principals used both solo and distributed leadership approaches depending on the context.

However, the findings suggest that principals have limited knowledge of the theory and practice underpinning Senior Leadership Team development that occurs within teams when there are changes to the membership of the team. This is significant because effective Senior Leadership Teams are more productive (Wheelan, 2016), which will ultimately have an impact on student achievement and learning. Principals (and members of the Senior Leadership Team) need to know what to do to support the group to become a highly effective team that is cohesive and performing at a high level. This shortfall of knowledge of the theory and practice of team development was observed by Cardno (2005) when she states that the development of school leaders is the most under recognised aspect of professional development in schools. In her model of holistic professional development she suggests that management development should be one of four key dimensions to professional development in schools. There was a recognition of the importance of shared Senior Leadership Team professional development in the findings, but team development theory and practice did not featured as part of this process.

The primary school context of the Senior Leadership Teams that formed the basis for my study has important differences to the context found in the significant literature on team development of Sheard et al. (2009) and Wheelan (2016). First, the Senior Leadership Teams in my study have predominantly stable membership and when changes do occur it is usual for the change of membership to be one team member at a time. The notable exception was South School, which had the significant change of principal as the Senior Leadership Team leader. Secondly, the research of Sheard et al. (2009) and Wheelan (2016) was based on non-school organisations and generic team development. Thirdly, much of their research relates to project and work teams. In this discussion my findings related to team development from forming to storming to norming and performing, will be evaluated against this theory and knowledge base, with acknowledgement that this theory base of team development came predominantly from research in non-school settings.

Forming

Significantly, it emerges from the data that from the principal's perspective, new appointments to their Senior Leadership Teams had a minimal noticeable impact on the team and resulted in relatively small disruptions to the existing team culture. Changes to the composition of the Senior Leadership Teams in the schools in this study happened infrequently and usually only involved one of the team at a time. The exception was South School where the principal was appointed just over a year ago. The Principals attributed the lack of disruptions by new appointments to the team to the strength of their existing team cultures and the processes in place to induct new members into the team. Also they felt that by making internal appointments they were appointing team members who were already immersed in the culture of the school (Bush et al., 2012). In cases where external appointments were made, they felt they had appointed people who had effective interpersonal skills or had similar values to those of the team.

Principals described the appointment of mentors and having frequent meetings to induct new appointees into the team. This practice suggests principals were aware of the need to communicate and define the team's direction, goals and priorities to new team members. This is consistent with the literature where it is advocated that principals should be directive, task orientated, and work to reduce members' anxiety, fears of rejection and concerns for their safety. Providing new appointees with mentors indicates principals understand the need to provide team members with support and training in group participation skills (Wheelan, 2016). What did not come through in my findings was the potential role of the school's Board of Trustees, as the macro leader within the school, supporting the principal to assist the team's development by communicating and defining the team and school's vision and goals (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004). This aspect would be particularly relevant in the case of the South School's principal who is the new leader of the Senior Leadership Team and is potentially redefining the vision and goals of that team.

External appointees described how they felt shocked, had feelings of being overwhelmed, felt isolated and inadequate, all of which Sheard and Kakabadse (2004), Sheard et al. (2009) and Wheelan (2016) describe as feelings typically felt by those joining a new team. It was expressed by team members that with some new

appointments the group structure and social order was disrupted. This would imply that principals must be acutely aware and able to respond to individual circumstances and that individual appointments have the capacity to disrupt the culture of the Senior Leadership Team. Once principals have supported new team members to overcome feelings of apprehension and communicated the direction and goals of the team, the team inevitably moves into the next stage of a team's development – storming.

Storming

Two points of view were described by principals in my findings in relation to this stage of team development. Firstly, it was expressed that well established team cultures assimilated new team members more gently. Secondly, principals spoke about the difficulties of interpersonal relationships, the emotions generated, and competition for influence and desire for power that can occur with the appointment of new team members and the disruption this can have to team functions. Principals described how it takes time for teams to work through conflicts and establish their roles and functions within the team. Storming or conflict is almost certainly inevitable before a unified team culture can be created and therefore principals must have both an understanding of conflict and the strategies for conflict management. Before a team can begin to accomplish the team's goals it must define the social system it requires to function and resolve these differences (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2002). The introduction of a new team member redefines the team, it's structure and team member relationships.

The possibility of conflict occurring existed at South School where the new appointee was the principal, as a new team leader to a team with a strong existing culture of doing things a certain way. My findings intimate that the new principal's approach to leading the Senior Leadership Team, which is seen as different to that of the previous principal, is challenging to the pre-existing shared culture, the team's goals and objectives, and is resulting in a redistribution of power, roles and tasks within the team. The principal will need to be alert to the possibility of team member criticism of the team's goals and challenges to and undermining of the principal's leadership as she assigns each team member their specific roles and responsibilities which may be different from those expected. The principal will need to be aware of the possibility of arguments erupting and team members responding emotionally. In this situation the principal and the deputy principal had frequent meetings together. The deputy

principal, who had the respect and trust of the other team members was in a position to provide the principal with feedback from the team as well as encourage the team's adoptance of the changes that were occurring. My findings are that deputy principals have a significant role in the Senior Leadership team as the Social Leaders (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2002) motivating the team and assisting the development of the social system supporting the team to function.

There was evidence in the data of principals using four strategies to manage conflict. Firstly, principals were aware to expect conflict. Secondly, they were not responding emotionally and allowed time to work through the conflict. Thirdly, there was an awareness that when issues arose they should act promptly to seek new data to assist the parties to resolve issues; and fourthly, they should be good listeners and take action based on the feedback (Sheard et al., 2009). Wheelan (2016) also states how it is important that team leaders do not take these attacks personally but view them as important to the development of the team's shared goals, integrated culture and structure. This stage is difficult for principals as they feel they are failing in their leadership. Success lies in working through this stage without damaging relationships to the point where future team performance will be impossible.

My findings show that principals were aware of storming as a stage in the development of a team but they felt that the well-established team cultures in their teams assimilated new team members more gently. The deputy principal has a significant role supporting the principal, as the social leader to assist the team develop the social system that enables the team to function. The next stage of norming begins when a majority of team members have developed a social structure and positive interpersonal relationships that enable the team to work together and reach a general consensus about the team's vision and what it has to achieve.

Norming

The findings from this study illustrate principals were focused on building trust, cooperation, commitment to the team and achieving the work of the Senior Leadership Team. The Senior Leadership Team member at West School describes how it was her desire to get on and make a contribution to the school, but that she was advised by other team members to be circumspect and go slowly and how this approach caused

her frustration. This created a simultaneous need to be part of a team and yet at the same time there was a fear of losing her personal identity as a consequence of this membership. Being a part of a team requires individuals within a team to make a trade-off between their independence (personal identity) and team membership (belonging and association). As both autonomy and team membership and affiliation are important for individuals, maintaining a balance between personal identity and group belonging is necessary for individual's emotional wellbeing (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004).

Principals described relationship building and communication as key aspects of this stage of a team's development. This is supported in the literature where The Team Landscape of Sheard and Kakabadse (2004) highlights Leadership, Group Dynamics and Communication as the key factors associated with this stage of a team's development. The Leadership Landscape identifies an excellent working relationship between the Legitimate and Social Leaders as key to effective negotiation into this stage. This would suggest that principals continue to have a clear focus on the team's objectives and work closely with their deputy principals as the key Social Leaders in the Senior Leadership Team to offset negative elements associated with team membership.

Some team members recognised that it is possible that not every member of a team will fully engage with the team and commit to the achievement of the team's goals. Sheard and Kakabadse (2009) use the term 'One step forward, two steps back' to describe this stage in a team's development in which the team's culture or "the way things have been successfully done around here" is challenged by change, often leading to irrational behaviour by team members. Change can cause individuals to doubt that their competencies and capabilities will be appropriate for the roles required for achieving the team's goal and so question the role they will be required to perform. If one or more team member refuses to let go of the past, the team regresses into conflict and splits into fractions and the failure is blamed on the team leader. The team members from South School were in the situation of negotiating a change from an existing team culture to that which the new principal was implementing under her leadership and were therefore most susceptible to this course of action. This principal will need to ensure she listens carefully to issues and concerns team members raise, musters support from other key team members, maintains a focus on the team's goals,

encourages team ownership for achievement of the goals and provides time and support for people to develop new thinking and capabilities.

In the norming stage my findings show that trust, co-operation, commitment to the team and achieving the work of the Senior Leadership Team has been developed through communication and relationship building. This has been supported by the deputy principals who take on the role of the social leader in the team. In the next section I will discuss what my findings identify as the knowledge principals needs to know to generate positive synergy and encourage sustained and coordinated team effort.

Performing

From my findings, I have concluded that principal's descriptions of high performing and cohesive Senior Leadership Teams consist of a small number of team members committed to a common purpose, set of goals, with complimentary skills who hold each other accountable for achieving the team's goals (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). The collaborative efforts of individuals in the Senior Leadership Team resulted in a level of performance that was greater than the sum of their contributions, which ultimately team members felt improved student learning and achievement. The primary focus of team members at the Performing stage was the collective pursuit of a cohesive and shared goal, often resulting from an externally imposed reality such as that created by the need to meet National Standards (Ministry of Education, 2013). Interestingly, team members described that moving into Performing resulted in their having greater confidence to perform their responsibilities, a reduced focus on the principal's Legitimate Leader's role and less reliance on being directed by the principal. This aspect was not expressly mentioned by principals but acceptance is implied by the trust principals had for team members to carry out their responsibilities and tasks. The literature describes this process as the task and social leaders having a major role as the team is clearly focused on achieving its goals (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004).

Team members had reconciled their personal agendas aimed at increasing their personal power and influence and were now focused on how to achieve the team's objectives within the constraints and choices that were available to them. The transition into the Performing stage resulted from a change in team member's attitudes and an acceptance of their role and the responsibilities associated with that role (Sheard et

al., 2009). However, principals and team members described robust and blunt conversations occurring between team members as they focused on achieving the team's goals which led to better decisions being made. Differences, when they occurred, were dealt with quickly and effectively and did not disrupt the cohesion of the team. Principals used weekly team meetings and forum days to discuss, plan and provide support to team members. As team members were given ownership they were included in decision making processes, acknowledged for their achievements, but at the same time held accountable for the results they achieved.

To summarise, what principals must know is how to share leadership and let the team get on with achieving the team's goals and objectives and assist them with this work by providing them with the support required to do so. Principals should expect robust and blunt conversations to occur between team members as they focus on achieving the team's goals.

To conclude this section, teams go through a development process and principals must be knowledgeable about what to expect at each stage of a team's development and what leadership practice is required to support the team to successfully negotiate the transition through each of the stages. It is important that principals know how to share leadership and recognise that a cohesive and high functioning Senior Leadership Team is the result of shared leadership practice.

Principal's leadership of development

In this section I will be addressing what my data reveals about what practices principals must engage in to lead the development of their Senior Leadership Teams.

Forming

From the findings it is clear that principals understood that other members of the Senior Leadership Team have a role to play facilitating the integration of new team members into the team and that it is a shared leadership role. It was described by principals and team members that the principals met with new members frequently in both formal and informal meetings and engaged them in dialogue, provided them with support from a mentor and allocated an existing team member to coach them. The role of the principal at the forming stage is to put in place supports that will reduce members' anxiety,

feelings of isolation and inadequacy, fears of rejection and concerns for their safety. The implication of this approach is that team members are being provided with training in group participation skills to improve members' skill levels and the likelihood of group success (Wheelan, 2016).

Communicating and defining the team's direction, goals and priorities emerged as a widely valued activity performed by principals and is endorsed by Sheard and Kakabadse (2004) in their Team and Leadership Landscapes. Principals in their position occupying the legitimate leadership role have responsibility to be directive, task orientated and place a focus on collectively defining the team's goals and objectives. Principals were very clear that defining the team's vision was a shared process with other members of the Senior Leadership Team, but with the principal taking a leading role. What was not recognised by principals was the potential role the school's Board of Trustees, as the macro leader within the school, could take to support the principal to assist teams to develop by defining and communicating the school's vision and goals (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004).

At the forming stage, principals should support team members to reduce their anxiety, feelings of isolation and inadequacy, fears of rejection and concerns for their safety. Secondly, principals lead the development of the team by being directive, task orientated and placing a focus on collectively defining the team's goals and objectives.

Storming

There was evidence in the findings of principals having close relationships with their deputies who performed the social leadership role within the Senior Leadership Team. Developing close relationships with the individual or individuals within the team occupying the social role and seeking their assistance to address interpersonal and sensitive issues and garner support to reinforce commitment to team goals facilitates team development through this difficult stage (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004).

Recognising that conflict was an inevitable part of team development a principal describes their role facilitating situations in which team members can get to know each other and understand others team members points of view. At the storming stage principals should expect conflict, not take it personally, but act in ways that enable

parties to resolve the conflict. They should not respond with personal counter attacks but should act promptly to seek new data to assist the parties to resolve issues themselves, definitely listen carefully and only then take action based on the feedback (Wheelan, 2016). My findings are that when principals develop a close alliance with the deputy principals who have a significant role in the Senior Leadership team as the Social Leaders, this support assists the team to be motivated to develop a social system supporting the team to function (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2002).

There was evidence in the data of principals using four strategies to manage conflict. Firstly, principals were aware to expect conflict. Secondly, they were not responding emotionally and allowed time to work through the conflict. Thirdly, there was an awareness that when issues arose they should act promptly to seek new data to assist the parties to resolve issues; and fourthly, they should be good listeners and take action based on the feedback (Sheard et al., 2009). Wheelan (2016) also states how it is important that team leaders do not take these attacks personally but view them as important to the development of the team's shared goals, and integrated culture and structure. This stage is difficult for principals as they feel they are failing in their leadership. Success lies in working through this stage without damaging relationships to the point where future team performance will be impossible.

In summary, principals should expect conflict and be prepared to utilise their conflict resolution strategies, resist feeling a failure and work to establish a close alliance with their deputy principals to enlist their support to motivate the team and assist them develop a social system supporting the team to function.

Norming

Principals identified open communication practices as being important for clarifying the team's goals, how these goals were to be achieved and defining the roles each member of the team would undertake. Principals used team meetings as opportunities to build relationships and problem solve how goals were to be achieved. Meetings provided the venue in which team members learned to adapt what they were doing and develop a shared understanding, trust, team cooperation and commitment to problem resolution. Principals describe the use of Social Leaders in the form of buddies, or 'go-to people' and mentors to support team members, deal with

interpersonal issues and build relationships within the team (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004). Principals also used job descriptions to establish role clarity and individual responsibilities. Team protocols that were both documented and unwritten also featured as a means of establishing and structuring team procedures, defining roles and regulating inter-personal relationships.

Principals built other team members capabilities, developed trusting relationships and worked toward growing new leaders within their teams. Principals acknowledged the leadership roles played by other team members and described being supported in their role as they distributed leadership within the team. The Leadership Landscape identifies an excellent working relationship between the Legitimate and Social Leaders as key to effective negotiation into this stage (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004). This would suggest that principals work closely with the key Social Leaders of the Senior Leadership Team to offset negative elements associated with team membership and continue to have a clear focus on the team's objectives.

Some team members explained how norming did not always occur in a team and how there was always the possibility of a team member not discussing issues, or undermining the principal, team members and the team's goals and objectives. Principals should expect the possibility of some team members to opt out and should therefore use their conflict management skills to listen carefully to their issues and concerns, marshal support from other key team members, maintain a focus on the team's goals and encourage team ownership for achievement of the goals while providing time and support for people to develop new capabilities.

In summary, what principals must do is continue to maintain an excellent working relationship with the Social Leaders and access the informal feedback about team members concerns and through appropriate communication and problem solving practices, address these sensitively. Principals should distribute leadership and responsibilities to team members and assist team members to apply their skills and capabilities to problem solving and achievement of the team's goals and objectives.

Performing

My findings showed that team members had an acute awareness of the team's objectives, were getting on with the work, knew their roles and were confident about what needed to be done (Wheelan, 2016). These task leaders described how they did not have to constantly check in with the principal about what, when and how to perform their roles (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2004). Principals also described how they publicly acknowledged the achievements of individual team members. The consequence of the team understanding the big picture, knowing what to do and how their individual efforts contributed to the team's goals, were engaged and productive team members. Team members described how they felt they were a genuine part of the decision making process. Principals described how they utilised regular weekly team meetings, and forum days to deal with operational and strategic issues. Shared leadership came with responsibility and accountability, which occurred in an environment where there was dialogue and a free flow of information. The importance of keeping team members informed was expressed by several principals and at East School a team member describes how the principal monitored team member's achievement of goals, questioned why expectations had not been met and identified what kind of support and resourcing they required. At this stage of a Senior Leadership Team's development, Principals as the Legitimate Leader were less observable and they shared leadership with the Social Leader who my data identified as the deputy principal, and other Task Leaders within the team (Sheard et al., 2009).

Descriptions of team meetings and exchanges between team members revealed that at times they could be brutally blunt and with high levels of conflict creating very demanding work environments (Sheard et al., 2009). The difference was that this conflict was not negative and personal. It was associated with how to achieve the challenge of the team's shared objective. It is false to think of high performing teams as "happy" places to work where everyone is "nice" to one another. In my findings it was commonly acknowledged by principals and other Senior Leadership Team members that Senior Leadership Team meetings were venues where robust discussion, debate, and arguments occurred so that better quality and informed decisions were reached. Principals required that "cabinet rules" applied and once decisions were reached they were supported by everyone outside of the meeting. It

was important for teams that they dealt with differences in a timely and professional manner that did not interfere with effective relationships (Wheelan, 2016).

At the performing stage principals shared leadership with task leaders on the team and took a lower profile. They monitored and held team members accountable for how they were achieving their goals and objectives and ensured they had the resources they needed. Team meetings provided the venue for communication, dialogue, developing a strategic picture and engaging in, sometimes robust, discussion about how to achieve the team's objectives.

To summarise this section, leadership is the single most important feature of developing Senior Leadership Teams into a high performing team. I have identified a range of shared leadership practices that are significant to each stage of a team's development that principals must engage in to lead the development of their Senior Leadership Teams. This is not a smooth process and principals should expect to have to deal with team members who are unwilling or unable to support the team's vision, goals and objectives.

For the next section I will be relating the desirable team members' practices and attitudes found in my findings to the literature on common identifiable elements of high performing teams and the literature relating to team development as I focus on what team members need to know and do for effective team development and functioning. As the principal is both the team leader and a team member what follows is applicable to them in their dual role.

Team member's knowledge

What has been written about principal's knowledge and practice of Senior Leadership Team development in the sections on principal's knowledge and leadership of development is all information that Senior Leadership Team members need to know in order to be informed and able to contribute as effective team members. Team members who have an understanding of team development processes are in a better position to take informed action to support the principal, as team leader, and other team members to work through the stages of team development more rapidly and with greater sensitivity. Much has been written about leaders and leadership, but little has

been written about team membership, and yet team development requires the participation of all members to ensure team success (Wheelan, 2016).

The next section draws on my findings to develop an understanding of what team members need to do to effectively participate in team development that will lead to a group of individuals becoming a cohesive Senior Leadership Team.

Team member's participation in team development

One of the team members said that when there are differences in team meetings it was not about personality or taking the 'nick' out of each other and it wasn't making a personal attack. My findings show that most team members believed that blaming was not helpful and all team members accepted responsibility for both team successes and team failures. Team members must not enter the realm of blaming others for problems the group encounters. Wheelan (2016) describes this tendency humans have to blame others as a "fundamental attribution error" (p. 51) in which we attribute what people do to their personality characteristics and disregard other factors. While this propensity to misinterpret what team members say and do is natural human behaviour it increases conflict and negatively impacts on team cohesion and interdependent work. Interestingly, Wheelan (2016) describes how team leaders and influential team members feel responsible for both team success and failure, while other team members take responsibility for team successes and attribute failure to leaders and other factors. They expressed an understanding that taking this attitude into conflict situations at all stages of team development facilitated a smoother transition to the team functioning as an effective team. Team members expressed how it was their practice to use situations where a team member had made a mistake as a learning opportunity for all.

The teams' commitment to a common goal defined the reason for each team's existence and created the focus for shared understanding and collective performance (Bush et al., 2012; Thompson, 2014). At the forming stage, which was a time when team members had feelings of shock, being overwhelmed, isolated and inadequate, the supportive team culture and the strategies they had in place to foster new members development encouraged them to ask questions and become informed without the fear of appearing inept and foolish. Team members need to know and feel confident about

asking for clarification of the team's goals, and individual's roles and tasks (Wheelan, 2016).

Principals and other members of the Senior Leadership Team frequently spoke of the formal and informal opportunities that were provided for team members to communicate and participate in dialogue where everyone had input and feedback was heard. Weekly Senior Leadership Team meetings were a feature of every school and open, honest and constructive communication was considered a key to creating productive working conditions. Team members should be aware that team performance, goal achievement and team development suffers when team members are inappropriately assigned low status and their contributions are ignored (Wheelan, 2016). The team cultures described by team members provided indicators of an increase in effective team performance (Wheelan, 2016) and more significant positive synergy (Bell, 1997; Cranston & Ehrich, 2005) as team members took responsibility for making sure that all team members participated in dialogue and their contributions were valued.

Supportive discussions were described by team members as being important for relationship building. Instances of these were when principals and members of the Senior Leadership Team described times when they cry or have a laugh together or talked about their families. However, team member's focus on achieving team goals reveals they were aware of the importance of using their time together productively, the need to take action to get back on track and to not spend time straying into unproductive conversations. Team members can hold themselves accountable for effective team performance by reviewing the time spent on supportive social conversations compared to task orientated discussions. Wheelan (2016) asserts that successful teams spend 70-80% of their time talking about team goals and tasks.

A Senior Leadership Team member at East School expressed that the team wanted to do the best that they could. Encouraging norms and values that support an expectation that the team will be successful and achieve the best result possible is an important attitude that supports team development. Interpersonal conflicts are ultimately detrimental to team performance and cohesion whereas the task conflicts teams described were necessary for good decision making, problem solving and

achieving the team's goals (Wheelan, 2016). Team members spoke about how they supported each other to assist team members to resolve conflict between team members in a way that improved interpersonal relationships. A member of the Senior Leadership Team at Central School describes the robust debates they have to reach a shared conclusion and at West School they describe having disagreements at management meetings, but the context was how best to achieve the team's task and not personal. While conflict is inevitable (Sheard et al., 2009) the findings from this research would suggest that Senior Leadership Team norms and values that encourage innovation and freedom of expression promote coordination and openness which leads to the team to develop and increase its effectiveness.

Cohesion and cooperation was important to all of the Senior Leadership Teams and described as a characteristic of high performance in their teams. Team members described how communication, support for each other, task accomplishment, commitment to the group, and increased trust and willingness to resolve conflict occurred in their teams as they became more cohesive and cooperative. While high levels of cohesion are important, team members need to know that it is possible for this to have negative effects and lead to groupthink. The desire to maintain team unity can lead to poor decision making as options are discarded because to consider them would cause stress to the team, which they wish to avoid. Wheelan (2016) states that team cohesion and trust increases when the team's goals and how to achieve them is clear, is promoted by successful conflict resolution and is associated with increased communication. While sharing personal feelings, personal friendships or socialising together is a feature of the findings in some teams and between some team members it did not feature in all teams, which would confirm the research of Wheelan (2016) who asserts these activities are not required to increase cohesion. The findings also intimate that conflict can also increase cohesion when it is associated with the freedom to express personal viewpoints without fear of negative consequences and when it leads to the clarification of the group's goals and values (Wheelan, 2016).

It is clear from the findings of this research that there is no room for team members to sit on the side-lines in a high performing team (Wheelan, 2016). Commitment to the team's common purpose, effective performance and achieving positive synergies requires that every team member takes responsibility for team outcomes and are

supportive of each other and the principal. My findings provided many examples of this support in action amongst the teams and a willingness for team members to express their support to each other and of the principal. Members felt confident to share their ideas and take responsibility for solving problems.

To summarise this section, team development is enhanced when team members understand what is expected of a member of a team, what is expected of them as a team member, the stages of development teams' progress through and that they should expect some aspects to be unpleasant. This knowledge helps team members to feel that what they are experiencing is normal, others are experiencing the same feelings too, the team is not dysfunctional, lifts some of their anxieties and gives them a greater sense of being in control. Knowledge and understanding of team development assists team members to be positive contributors to team development rather than a hindrance to the team learning how to develop and function at a high level of performance.

CONCLUSIONS

This study identifies leadership as the single most important feature of developing Senior Leadership Teams into a high performing team. A major finding is that leadership key roles do not apply to the principal alone, and it is possible that everyone within a team might have a key leadership role. Findings also relate to the importance of self-management and managing relationships, and each critical transition point in a team's development involves a significant relationship between two of the leadership role holders.

The major conclusions drawn from this study are:

1. Senior Leadership Teams in my study were generally structured and performed in ways that were consistent with the literature. I conclude that schools should continue to operate their Senior Leadership Teams with the same structure and in the same manner as is currently happening;
2. Principals have a legitimate leadership role in the school and leadership is shared and enacted with other members of the Senior Leadership Team inter-dependently;

3. Principals utilise the four leadership principles of Leithwood et al. (2008) - (1) building a vision and setting goals and direction, (2) understanding and developing people, (3) redesigning the organisation, and (4) creating productive working conditions, inter-dependently with other members of the Senior Leadership Team to assist them with strategies to enact leadership;
4. Teams go through a development process and principals must be knowledgeable about what to expect at each stage of a team's development and what leadership practice is required to support the team to successfully negotiate the transition through each of the stages. It is important that principals know how to share leadership and recognise that a cohesive and high functioning Senior Leadership Team is the result of shared leadership practice;
5. Leadership is the single most important feature of developing Senior Leadership Teams into a high performing team. I have identified a range of shared leadership practices that are significant to each stage of a team's development that principals must engage in to lead the development of their Senior Leadership Teams;
6. Team development is not a smooth process and principals should expect to have to deal with conflict and team members who are unwilling or unable to support the team's vision, goals and objectives;
7. Senior Leadership Team members need to know about team development principles and practices in order to be informed and able to contribute constructively as effective team members.
8. Team members who have an understanding of the dynamic processes required for team development are in a better position to take informed action to support the principal, as team leader, and other team members to work through the stages of team development more rapidly and with greater sensitivity;
9. Much has been written about leaders and leadership, but little has been written about team membership, and yet team development requires the participation of all members to ensure team success;
10. Some aspects of team development and membership are unpleasant but necessary; and
11. Teams leadership and team member behaviours and practices have been identified which will assist a group of individuals move through the team development process to function as a cohesive and high performing team.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The data from my research has identified and added new knowledge to the existing literature on Senior Leadership Teams in New Zealand primary schools. The findings from this research has provided a clearer understanding of the nature and function of New Zealand primary school Senior Leadership Teams, the principal's leadership role within these teams, and the development processes that lead to a group of individuals becoming a high performing Senior Leadership Team. This knowledge could assist and inform:

1. The developers of leadership programmes with the design of course content on Senior Leadership Team development;
2. Primary school professional learning and development providers with the theory and skills essential for increasing Senior Leadership Team effectiveness;
3. Principals and school leaders who are interested in developing their knowledge, skills and practice;
4. Senior Leadership Team members to assist them to understand the dynamic and complex processes involved in becoming a high performing team; and
5. Communities of learning, such as Waitakere Area Principal's Association 2020 project, who have a focus on developing leadership within their cluster and wish to increase their knowledge and skills in team development.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Information Sheet - Principal



12 October 2015

INFORMATION SHEET - PRINCIPAL

THESIS TITLE: Exploring Teamwork in Primary School Senior Leadership Teams.

My name is Keith Tetzlaff. I am the Principal at Henderson Primary School in West Auckland and I am currently enrolled in the Master of Educational Leadership and Management course in the Department of Education at Unitec Institute of Technology and seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for a Thesis course which forms a substantial part of this degree. The aim of my research project is to seek to understand the nature of Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) in New Zealand primary schools, the perceptions Principals have of their leadership role and the level of development of SLTs as perceived by Principals and other members of the team.

I would like to collect data relating to the above aims by interviewing you at a time and venue that is mutually suitable. I anticipate the time required will be approximately 45 minutes to an hour. I will also be asking you to sign a consent form regarding your participation. The interview will be recorded and a professional service will be used to transcribe the interview. The transcriptionist will sign a confidentiality agreement. Also as part of this research project the senior leadership team members will be participating in a focus group interview. I will also provide the option for focus group participants to have a brief interview on an individual basis if they wish to take it up.

Your name and that of your school will be kept completely confidential. All information will be stored in a password protected file on my computer. If you wish to withdraw from the project you may do so at any time up until the point of participation in the study and no reason needs to be provided. You will also have the right to withdraw any information you provide for this research up to ten working days after receiving my transcript to validate. Prior to using any direct quotes from participants in the right up of this research I will obtain their consent.

I am very happy to provide you with a copy of the thesis when it has been completed. The findings of this research project may also be reported in New Zealand Principal Magazine – Nga Tumuaiki O Aotearoa and in a journal paper.

If you have any queries about the research, you may contact me at keithtetzlaff@gmail.com, phone 027 290 8437, or my supervisor, Professor Carol Cardno, phone 09 8154321 ext 8406, email ccardno@unitec.ac.nz

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Keith Tetzlaff'.

Keith Tetzlaff

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2015-1063

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from September 29 2015 to September 29 2016. 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 8551). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix B: Information Sheet - Team



12 October 2015

INFORMATION SHEET - TEAM

THESIS TITLE: Exploring Teamwork in Primary School Senior Leadership Teams.

My name is Keith Tetzlaff. I am the Principal at Henderson Primary School in West Auckland and I am currently enrolled in the Master of Educational Leadership and Management course in the Department of Education at Unitec Institute of Technology and seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for a Thesis course which forms a substantial part of this degree. The aim of my research project is to seek to understand the nature of Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) in New Zealand primary schools, the perceptions Principals have of their leadership role and the level of development of SLTs as perceived by Principals and other members of the team.

I will be conducting a focus group interview of the members of your school SLT and would appreciate your contribution as a member of that group to enable me to collect data relating to the above aims. I anticipate the time required will be approximately 45 minutes to an hour. I will also be asking you to sign a consent form regarding your participation. The interview will be recorded and a professional service will be used to transcribe the interview. The transcriptionist will sign a confidentiality agreement. As part of this research project I will also be interviewing the principal. I will also provide the option for focus group participants to have a brief interview on an individual basis if they wish to take it up.

Your name and that of your school will be kept completely confidential. All information will be stored in a password protected file on my computer. If you wish to withdraw from the project you may do so at any time up until the point of participation in the study and no reason needs to be provided. You will also have the right to withdraw any information you provide for this research up to ten working days after receiving my transcript to validate. Prior to using any direct quotes from participants in the right up of this research I will obtain their consent.

I am very happy to provide you with a copy of the thesis when it has been completed. The findings of this research project may also be reported in New Zealand Principal Magazine – Nga Tumuaki O Aotearoa and in a journal paper.

If you have any queries about the research, you may contact me at keithtetzlaff@gmail.com, phone 027 290 8437, or my supervisor, Professor Carol Cardno, phone 09 8154321 ext 8406, email ccardno@unitec.ac.nz

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Keith Tetzlaff', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Keith Tetzlaff

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2015-1063

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from September 29 2015 to September 29 2016. 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 8551). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix C: Consent Form - Principals



CONSENT FORM - PRINCIPALS

..... (Date)

TO: [participant's name]

FROM: Keith Tetzlaff

RE: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

THESIS TITLE: Exploring Teamwork in Primary School Senior Leadership Teams

I have read the information sheet, had the research project explained to me and been provided with the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered.

I understand that everything I say is confidential and I understand that neither my name nor the name of my organisation will be used in any public reports.

This interview will be recorded and a professional service will be used to transcribe interviews. The transcriptionist will sign a confidentiality agreement.

I also understand that I will be provided with a transcript of my interview to check for accuracy before the data analysis is started. I have been made aware that the use of direct quotes from me in the write up of this research project will require my consent prior to being used.

I am aware that if I wish to withdraw from the project I may do so at any time up until the point of participation in the study and no reason needs to be provided. I also understand I have the right to withdraw any information I provide for this research up to ten working days after receiving my transcript to validate.

I agree to take part in this research project.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2015-1063

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from September 29 2015 to September 29 2016. 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 8551). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix D: Consent Form - Team



CONSENT FORM – TEAM

.....(Date)

TO: [participant's name]

FROM: Keith Tetzlaff

RE: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

THESIS TITLE: Exploring Teamwork in Primary School Senior Leadership Teams

I have read the information sheet, had the research project explained to me and been provided with the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered.

I understand that everything I say is confidential and I understand that neither my name nor the name of my organisation will be used in any public reports. I also agree to keep the views of everyone in our discussion confidential so that everyone feels they are able to express their opinion openly. I have been made aware that the use of direct quotes from me in the write up of this research project will require my consent prior to being used. I have been informed of the option to have a brief interview on an individual basis if I wish to take it up.

This interview will be recorded and a professional service, who will sign a confidentiality agreement, will be used to transcribe interviews. I also understand that I will be provided with a transcript of my interview to check for accuracy before the data analysis is started.

I am aware that if I wish to withdraw from the project I may do so at any time up until the point of participation in the study and no reason needs to be provided. I also understand I have the right to withdraw any information I provide for this research up to ten working days after receiving my transcript to validate.

I agree to take part in this research project.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2015-1063

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from September 29 2015 to September 29 2016. 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 8551). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix E: Organisation's Permission To Conduct Research

LETTER PROVIDING ORGANISATION'S PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

[Organisation's letterhead]

Date

Keith Tetzlaff
12A Glenfern Road
Mellons Bay
Auckland 2014

RE: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

THESIS TITLE: Exploring Teamwork in Primary School Senior Leadership Teams

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project and I give permission for research to be conducted in my organisation. I understand that the name of my organisation will not be used in any public reports.

Signature

Name of signatory

Appendix F: Interview Schedule - Principal



INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - PRINCIPAL

Introduction, Purpose and Thank You

I would like to thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview as part of my research entitled 'Exploring Teamwork in Primary School Senior Leadership Teams'. The focus of my research is to understand the nature of Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) in New Zealand primary schools, the perceptions Principals have of their leadership role and the level of development of SLTs as perceived by Principals and other members of the team.

I have a number of questions to initiate our discussion which will provide me with the data required for my research.

- 1 Can you please provide me with a description of your Senior Leadership Team (SLT)?
 - 1.1 What is its composition?
 - 1.2 How long has each member been in the team?
 - 1.3 What factors are/were important in recruiting individuals to the SLT?
- 2 What is your understanding of the purpose of a school's SLT?
 - 2.1 What are the potential benefits with SLTs?
 - 2.2 What are the potential issues/challenges with SLTs?
- 3 How would you describe the role the principal plays, especially in developing the SLT?
- 4 What conditions/factors have been important for the success of your SLT?
- 5 What happens when a new member joins the SLT?
 - 5.1 What happened when you joined the team?
 - 5.2 What was it like to be a new member of the SLT?
- 6 How are team members expected to conduct themselves as a member of your SLT?
 - 6.1 What happens if expectations are not met?
 - 6.2 How is conflict experienced in the team?
- 7 What procedures or protocols does your SLT have to clarify what is expected of team members?
 - 7.1 How were these developed?
 - 7.2 How does the SLT resolve differences or conflicts?
 - 7.3 What processes do you have as a team to ensure there is clarity about roles and responsibilities within the team?
- 8 What values are important to the SLT?
 - 8.1 Who influenced these?
 - 8.2 What process led to the SLT having these values?
- 9 How do you know when your SLT is functioning at a high level?
 - 9.1 How has the SLT developed over time?
 - 9.2 What factors do you think are critical for maintaining the performance of your team?
 - 9.3 What factors impede your team's performance?

- 10 What factors are important for maintaining a high level of effectiveness in the performance of your SLT?
 - 10.1 What do you do to develop the SLT's capacity to be effective?
 - 10.2 What are the potential pitfalls to be avoided?
- 11 Is there anything else about SLT's you would like to talk about?

Closing

Thank you for your time today and sharing your views of these questions. Your views have given me an excellent insight into the nature of the Senior Leadership Team in your school.

Appendix G: Focus Group Schedule - Team



FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE - TEAM

Introduction, Purpose and Thank You

Hello, my name is Keith Tetzlaff and I would like to thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview as part of my research entitled 'Exploring Teamwork in Primary School Senior Leadership Teams'. The focus of my research is to understand the nature of Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) in New Zealand primary schools, the perceptions Principals have of their leadership role and the level of development of SLTs as perceived by Principals and other members of the team.

It is my role to ask you the questions, encourage your participation and moderate the discussion. It is not my job to try and influence or change your opinion.

I have a number of questions to initiate our discussion which will provide me with the data required for my research. I would like to explain some procedures to guide our discussion today.

Guidelines

- This discussion is being recorded so please state your name prior to speaking to aid the transcription process.
- One person speaking at a time please.
- Please allow opportunity for everyone to answer the questions if they wish to.
- Please also keep the views of everyone in our discussion confidential so that everyone feels they are able to express their opinion openly.
- Please turn mobile phones off or to silent.

- 1 Can you please provide me with a description of your Senior Leadership Team (SLT)?
 - 1.1 What is its composition?
 - 1.2 How long has each member been in the team?
 - 1.3 What factors are/were important in recruiting individuals to the SLT?
- 2 What is your understanding of the purpose of a school's SLT?
 - 2.1 What are the potential benefits with SLTs?
 - 2.2 What are the potential issues/challenges with SLTs?
- 3 How would you describe the role the principal plays, especially in developing the SLT?
- 4 What conditions/factors have been important for the success of your SLT?
- 5 What happens when a new member joins the SLT?
 - 5.1 What happened when you joined the team?
 - 5.2 What was it like to be a new member of the SLT?
- 6 How are team members expected to conduct themselves as a member of your SLT?
 - 6.1 What happens if expectations are not met?
 - 6.2 How is conflict experienced in the team?
- 7 What procedures or protocols does your SLT have to clarify what is expected of team members?

- 7.1 How were these developed?
 - 7.2 How does the SLT resolve differences or conflicts?
 - 7.3 What processes do you have as a team to ensure there is clarity about roles and responsibilities within the team?
- 8 What values are important to the SLT?
- 8.1 Who influenced these?
 - 8.2 What process led to the SLT having these values?
- 9 How do you know when your SLT is functioning at a high level?
- 9.1 How has the SLT developed over time?
 - 9.2 What factors do you think are critical for maintaining the performance of your team?
 - 9.3 What factors impede your team's performance?
- 10 What factors are important for maintaining a high level of effectiveness in the performance of your SLT?
- 10.1 What do you do to develop the SLT's capacity to be effective?
 - 10.2 What are the potential pitfalls to be avoided?
- 11 Is there anything else about SLT's you would like to talk about?

Closing

Thank you all for your time today and sharing your views of these questions. Your views have given me an excellent insight into the nature of the Senior Leadership Team in your school.