AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT FOR TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN NEW ZEALAND POLYTECHNICS

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DECLARATION

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This thesis entitled: “An Investigation into the Current Environment for Technical Vocational Education and Training Leadership Development in New Zealand Polytechnics” is submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the Unitec degree of Master of Educational Leadership and Management.

CANDIDATES DECLARATION

I confirm that:

• This Thesis presents my own work;

• The contribution of supervisors and other 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 Ethic Committee Approval Number 2015-1052

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the professional development needs and leadership development opportunities for New Zealand technical vocational education and training (TVET) leaders. It also considers the significant responsibilities placed on the shoulders of vocational trades leaders as they respond to the demands of their institutions, the external funding agency, industry training organisations and government policy makers. Whether in the public or private sector, it is assumed that the current state of technical vocational education and training (TVET) leadership development in New Zealand polytechnic institutions has been found to be wanting. The drive for efficiency has contributed to the development of a business focused middle management infrastructure. The gap between senior management and technical vocational education and training (TVET) leaders has widened. This gap effectively limits those leaders with potential to gain the experience of on the job training and career advancement into full management positions.

This qualitative study investigated the perceptions of TVET leaders in relation to their professional development needs and leadership development opportunities in two New Zealand polytechnic institutions. Two focus groups of TVET lecturers were conducted to identity their perceptions with regards to their role, opportunities, challenges and barriers. Both groups were questioned for their professional development needs in relation to leadership progression in the future. Two data gathering methods were employed as six middle leaders and one senior leader were interviewed and two groups of TVET lecturers were interviewed in focus groups.

The findings of this research showed a number of difficulties faced by TVET leaders as they struggle to come to terms with the complexities of their roles. The research also indicated a
number of inconsistencies in the vocational trades leader’s role, even though their contributions are becoming increasingly important. The study highlighted that vocational trades leaders were generally ill prepared and require support in order to fulfil their roles as managers, leaders and in many cases, educators. Hence, there is a need for institutions to organise leadership and prepare TVET leaders with the provision of opportunities for leadership development.
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CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

In New Zealand polytechnics, the technical vocational education and training leader must perform their duties under unprecedented levels of accountability (Marshal, 2012). In order to achieve successful outcomes, vocational trades leaders must behave with professionalism while exhibiting the attributes of effectiveness and efficiency (Coates, Meek, Brown, Friedman, Noonan & Mitchell, 2012). Therefore, there is a need to investigate the professional development needs and leadership development opportunities for New Zealand TVET leaders and to build an understanding of the accountability agenda in relation to leadership capability and institution support. Considering the role played by vocational educational leaders, it is also important to identify the visibility of institutional succession planning and to identify the criteria for progression of trades tutors into formal institutional leadership roles. It is important therefore, for institutions to provide professional development and leadership development opportunities for current and potential vocational trades leaders (Callan, Mitchell, Clayton, & Smith, 2007).

1.1 Background

Vocational trades education makes a significant contribution to learners, society, and the economy (Lettmayr & Nehls, 2011). Considering the importance of this strand of education, there is a remarkable lack of research and general knowledge that surrounds the work of vocational trade leaders and their peers (Coates et al., 2012). This has negative connotations for the development of TVET leaders who are under considerable pressure to perform efficiently and effectively. Conceptually, the term effectiveness is linked closely with
productivity, targeting and delivery. The expression has strong business management connotations on its own and highlights the tensions that exist in tertiary education between institutional management and TVET leadership (Coates et al., 2012). According to Gleeson and Knights (2008), this has created a rift between senior management and TVET leaders which, as a consequence, has served to increase tension. The research will consider what it means to be a TVET leader in New Zealand tertiary education organisations (TEOs) and examine how effectively current and future leaders are prepared for the role. For the purposes of this study, I use the terms TVET leaders to encompass programme leaders, programme managers and course coordinators. My working definition for a TVET leader is that of a supervisor of a cohort of staff who are engaged with training, teaching and learning in a specific curriculum area. James (1995) has commented on the significant shortage of research conducted with vocational trades leaders in this area and this study aims to contribute new knowledge to the field.

TVET lecturers are appointed to leadership roles with no preparation or training, the expectation that they will perform their duties commendably (Callan et al., 2007). In order to meet targets, institutions currently demand that TVET leaders, attain and effectively utilise a suite of leadership skills with limited access to on the job leadership development opportunities (Collinson & Collinson, 2009). Consequently, underdeveloped TVET leaders often find themselves in a state of confusion with feelings of inadequacy.

Managerialism, has become common place in tertiary institutions which according to West-Burnham (2002), is detrimental to an education organisation because its focus is mainly concerned with systems and structures, at the expense of pedagogical values. The consequences
of which place extra pressure on vocational trades academic leaders as they find themselves distracted from the organisation’s core purpose, resulting in an increasingly stressed environment. Further still Coates et al. (2012), argue that vocational trades leaders are distracted by the need for compliance, rather than performing the essential function of leading their staff in the creation of teaching environments that are contributors to effective vocational trades learning.

Tertiary education has witnessed increased levels of accountability. Further, quality concerns in New Zealand education have spawned several high-level reports. For example, the fourth New Zealand Labour Government commissioned a task force that comprehensively reviewed the administrative efficiency of the education system. The resulting report *Administering for Excellence* (1989) gave an account of an education system which was inefficient and with a critical inability to respond to a rapidly changing global environment (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2011). The *Hawke Report* (1988), advised of the need for significant changes in tertiary education. The report encouraged decentralisation while recommending that institutions be less reliant on public funding in return for greater freedom in financial decision making (Tolofari, 2005). The resulting increase in political intervention conspired to inadvertently create institutional structures that are buckling under the weight of managerialism (Thomas & Watson, 2011).

### 1.2 Rationale

My interest in this area comes from two different professional contexts. The first, my experiences as a TVET leader, I have worked in the tertiary sector for many years, both in the United Kingdom and in New Zealand respectively. During my employment as a TVET lecturer
in automotive engineering, I have also held various TVET leadership positions stretching over a ten-year period. My leadership titles have been course coordinator, curriculum leader and programme leader. Secondly, my recent experiences as a programme leader triggered this research as I received no training prior to accepting the role. These professional experiences confirmed a realisation that there is little research in this area to support understandings about leadership and the need for leadership development opportunities in New Zealand polytechnic institutions.

There appear to be three educational problems regarding TVET leadership. One is how the tertiary sector and in particular, polytechnic institutions have responded to the accountability agenda, which has inadvertently imposed managerialistic structures while at the same time removed the autonomy of TVET leaders (Gleeson & Knights, 2008). The second problem to be considered is the quality, readiness capability and competence of newly appointed leaders. The way in which TVET leaders move into their roles in general, the educator over time absorbs extra duties to which a reduction in class contact hours may be awarded (Bush, 2011). Briggs (2011), suggests that through experiential learning the TVET lecturer will begin to make sense of some of their leadership duties but in general their experiences are only of limited usefulness as they are faced with more complex leadership challenges. Callan et al. (2007) further outline that managers will need to develop opportunities for leaders to learn the complexities of their new role and be mindful of the future. Leader replacement initiatives are becoming more essential as a counter to an aging workforce and those that simply choose to relinquish their roles an issue. It is necessary to avoid the potential turmoil of having to develop replacement leaders at short notice so a commitment to institutional leadership succession planning is essential (Callan et al., 2007).
Tertiary institutions require a robust approach and good developmental opportunities for their TVET leaders; they must create conditions that will give leaders the knowledge and skills to help their institutions achieve its aims and objectives (Adams & Gamage, 2008). However, institutions must also realise that their success is largely still based on the core functions of teaching and learning and therefore will endeavour to generate conditions that will support the TVET leader in their dual role of academic and team leader (Callan et al., 2007). Leadership development practice and the resulting evaluations should be leveraged, thereby creating a pool of new knowledge that could increase levels of learner retention and attainment, the ultimate role of the TVET leader (Lettmayr & Nehls, 2011). By clarifying the expectations of the leader through professional development will consequently, witness a rise in willingness of other members of other staff to engage with leadership development (Callan et al., 2007).

The turmoil that is associated with TVET education is not entirely the product of government policy or the accountability agenda. There are a sizeable number of other factors that conspire to feed the tertiary whirlwind, as beyond the social and political context tertiary education has the added duty of fulfilling a wide range of client group expectations. The ever-increasing volume of stakeholders necessitates customisation of delivery that includes a wide variety of assessment methodologies tailored to individual needs (Adams & Gamage, 2008; Coates et al., 2012; Lettmayr & Nehls, 2011) while not impeding financial efficiency. A productive relationship between the institution, academic staff and trades tutors is essential. Therefore, the TVET leader has to delicately balance the requirements of the institution with the needs of their teaching staff and students (Callan et al., 2007; Coates et al., 2012).
A collation of espoused best practice in professional development will assist New Zealand polytechnics in determining to what extent TVET lecturers are prepared to engage with development activities and higher professional qualifications. The literature notes that many TVET leaders have little formal training before or during their leadership tenure and still perform well (Ladyshewsky & Flavell, 2012; Lettmayr & Nehls, 2011). Ultimately, the TVET leader is expected to look after the day-to-day administrative elements of their programmes and courses while leading others to achieving satisfactory outcomes for learners (Cardno, 2013; Southworth, 2004). This represents a strong challenge as TVET leaders have to maintain their artisan relevance and academic credibility while having to lead teams without any line management authority (Ladyshewsky & Flavell, 2012).

1.3 Research Aims and Questions

The overall objective of this research is to investigate the vocational trades professional development needs and leadership development opportunities for TVET leaders in two in New Zealand polytechnic institutions.

This study aims to identify challenges faced by New Zealand TVET leaders and their professional development needs. This research should provide an insight into the work of vocational trades leaders and contribute to gaining a better understanding of their role, institutional requirements and development opportunities.
1.3.1 Research aims

1. To identify the leadership development opportunities for TVET leaders in two polytechnic institutions.

2. To identify institutional requirements of their TVET leaders.

3. To explore the personal professional development needs of TVET leaders.

1.3.2 Research questions

1. What are the leadership development opportunities for TVET leaders in two polytechnic institutions?

2. What do polytechnic education institutions require from their TVET leaders?

3. What are the professional development needs of TVET leaders?

1.4 Thesis Outline

This thesis is organised in five chapters as follows:

Chapter One briefly provides the research background, the rationale for the study and research aims and questions. This chapter also provides a thesis outline.

Chapter Two critically reviews a wide range of literature with regards to perceptions of the role of vocational trades leaders and leadership development. In this chapter I have reviewed literature relating to technical vocational education and training, concepts of educational management, concepts of leadership, professional development needs and leadership development opportunities.
Chapter Three provides an overview of the research methodology and the rationale for the selection of the two methods, interviews and focus groups. The validity of the results and ethical considerations are also examined.

Chapter four provides the findings from the interviews with focus groups and programme leaders, centre managers and curriculum leaders and one senior leader’s perspective of the current landscape in relation to TVET leadership and promotion. This chapter also provides the findings from two focus groups, conducted with vocational trades lecturers.

Chapter five contains discussion of the findings with support from the literature reviewed. This chapter also presents conclusions and considers further recommendations for practice. The recognised limitations of the research and recommendations for future research are discussed.

1.5 Summary

This chapter laid the foundation from which the subsequent thesis was developed. It introduced the research background and presented an outline of the research aims and questions. The role of the vocational trades leader in the New Zealand polytechnic was described as complex. They faced the challenges of increased accountability, institutional demands, inadequate preparation and lack of training for the role. The TVET leader’s is also portrayed as complex, often disconnected with their institution’s aims and objectives. In the next chapter, relevant literature will be reviewed to provide a background to the study.
CHAPTER TWO:
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews literature relating to technical vocational education and training, concepts of educational management, concepts of leadership, professional development needs and leadership development opportunities.

2.1 TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Marope, Chakroun, and Holmes (2015) were commissioned to report for the United Nations on technical vocational education and training: *Unleashing the Potential. Transforming Technical and Vocational Education and Training* which was aimed at determining the factors that make technical vocational education and training a success. Vocational education and training has tremendous potential but as Marope et al. (2015) suggest, there are a number of critical factors which determine the success or failure of a TVET establishment such as economic, social and cultural determinates. Falk and Smith (2003) consider that the success or failure of a TVET establishment will depend on a number of critical factors, including the quality of teaching staff, the ethos, the organisation of teaching and learning, the implementation of the curriculum, the links with the community and the leadership.

In order for TVET institutions to achieve success, particular attention must be paid to the quality and readiness of those in leadership positions (Callan et al., 2007). As Guthrie (2010) asserts, within the tertiary sector, TVET leaders will be key actors in the development of
successful vocational departments within their institutions. Despite the widespread acknowledgement of the critical role of these educational leaders, Briggs (2011) highlights in the context of further education in the United Kingdom, a concern for the distinct lack of literature regarding the activities of TVET leadership. Written in the context of the United Kingdom further education sector, Briggs (2011) highlights a number of major concerns such as the increasing levels of compliance and accountability causing middle leaders and managers to pursue clarity surrounding their roles while simultaneously, the resources to professionally develop themselves as both a leader and an educator.

2.1.1 External Factors and Influences

In the past, TVET was regarded as the ‘Cinderella’ of education which according to Lettmayr and Nehls (2011) is typified by the United Kingdom’s further education sector.

Traditionally regarded as the ‘neglected middle child’ of UK education, having low status resulting from its vocational focus. However, during the past decade, FE has expanded to become a significant economic and training driver for the modernisation of learning and skill sector and the UK economy overall (p.82)

It has been acknowledged by many nations that TVET has an important role to play in society (Marope et al., 2015). Despite this, Australia’s technical and further education institutions have had over two decades of intense conversations on the role and effectiveness of TVET. Since the 1974 Kangan Report, TAFE institutions have been subjected to a series of radical transformations (Smith, 2003), that has caused confusion surrounding the role TVET plays and its overall purpose (Thomas, 2001).
According to Adams and Gamage (2008), Australian funding bodies became increasingly conscious that private training providers would be a more financially viable alternative to large tertiary institutions. The effect, according to McMillan (2007) was for the Australian TVET to transform into a marketable commodity that could be sold and measured in the same manner as the private sector. This was a change from the more traditional teacher - learner centred approaches to learning and teaching.

Howse (2013) notes that a major catalyst for the reform of New Zealand tertiary education was the 1987 market collapse.

Treasury strongly influenced the government to conduct successive reviews of tertiary education 1987 to 1995 and to conduct radical and comprehensive reform of the then 25 New Zealand polytechnics, mandated in the Education Amendment Act (New Zealand Government, 1990). (p.103)

In 2000, the incoming New Zealand Labour Government established the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission. It is from this Commission that the Government would receive recommendations in relation to steering and funding New Zealand tertiary education. Once such recommendation was the requirement to form a new central agency because:

A tertiary education system left to the dictates of the market would not deliver desirable outcomes and was not delivering desired improvements in quality.

(p.17)

The new entity, the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) would incorporate many extended functions previously held by the Ministry of Education (Crawford, 2016). As a Crown entity, the TEC is responsible for the formulation of investment plans and contracts with New Zealand
tertiary education organisations while providing New Zealand’s Government with information about the performance of the New Zealand’s tertiary education institutions.

According to Saunders (2016), in New Zealand, vocational education and training institutions are expected to contribute to national human capital and workforce development. The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) in 2015/2016 received and allocated $2.8 billion of funding to the tertiary education system. This money was distributed between 8 Universities, 16 Institutes of Technology, 3 Wānanga, 235 Private Training Establishments, 11 Industry Training Organisations and 400 other organisations (Spencer, 2016).

For a relatively small population, the investment made by the New Zealand Government is an indication of the importance of tertiary education, and in particular technical vocational education and training, that has a unique place since it plays the important function of socially mobilising through the preparation of individuals for the world of work (Lettmayr & Nehls, 2011; Marope et al., 2015). This sentiment is echoed by Spencer (2016) who is explicit in the strategic priorities of the TEC, the delivery of skills to industry, getting at risk youth into employment, boosting the achievement of Maori and Pacific peoples and improving adult literacy and numeracy.

McMillan (2007) notes that vocational education and training is in a constant state of change reflecting the fluidity of the world of work. While Callan et al. (2007) comment on the complex interplay within vocational education and training, such as tensions between business strategy and education, national policy and local reality, entrepreneurship and accountability, managerialism and professionalism. Muijs, Harris, Lumby, Morrison, and Sood (2006) state
that global shifts in cultural values are pressurising the tertiary sector. Tertiary institutions it appears, are facing a number of complex issues. Further still, value for money is being increasingly scrutinised. This is manifested by the New Zealand TEC requiring tertiary education organisations (TEO’s) to set performance commitments and to demonstrate how they will respond to Government priorities in return for Government investment (Spencer, 2016).

In tertiary education in New Zealand, there is the requirement for institutions to implement quality control, quality assurance procedures and submit investment plans:

An Investment Plan is an accountability document that sets out how each tertiary education organisation will respond to the Government’s priorities (p.9).

The investment approach to funding demands that TEO’s offer better value for society, learners and the economy. This takes place in a self-regulating environment where performance is rewarded (Spencer, 2016).

Jones, Lefoe, Harvey, and Ryland (2012) describe with higher education institutions how a plethora of rapid changes influenced by both internal and external factors, have resulted in increased levels of managerialism within organisations and, competition between qualification providers. Further still, Jones et al. (2012) state that within this environment of increased competition, educational leaders are still working towards understanding their role within their organisations. While Callan et al. (2007), outline that in spite of the lack of formal authority and the reluctance of their peers to engage with compliant practices, the TVET leader must still execute leadership and ensure that quality is not compromised.
2.2 CONCEPTS OF LEADERSHIP

According to Ramsden (1998), management without strong leadership contributes towards feelings of disempowerment and irritation as the focus is shifted toward compliance rather than innovative change. Falk & Smith (2003), argue that leadership can be the focus of a group process, an instrument to achieve goals, a function of personality, a matter of inducing compliance, the exercise of influence, particular behaviours, a form of persuasion, a power relation, an effect of interaction, a differentiated role or the initiation of a structure.

The characteristics as outlined above, can be either discreet or a combination and therefore, limit the ability to attach a singular definition to the leadership term (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Lashway (2006), considers that leaders are considered to possess the ability to inspire peers so that they may reach their full potential. However, management may be considered to be a mainly procedural activity which is steeped in organisation routine.

The psychologist Bruce Tuckman 1965 in an article, *Development Sequences in Small Groups*, introduced the phrase “forming, storming, norming”. The article aims to map team development through phases. During the forming stage teams are courteous and positive, at this point the leader plays a critical role by clarifying responsibilities. Boundaries set during the forming stage are challenged as personalities and differing values can spark internal conflict which if not carefully managed by the leader, can cause frustration amongst team members causing indicative failure of the team. It is at this “storming” phase, team members can experience significant stress as they look for processes to support them. At the norming stage of team development, differences start to be resolved with signs of developing collegiality. This leads to a commitment to the team goal but, the leader should always be wary when
introducing new tasks and procedures. The result can be the team reverting back to the storming stage of team development (Tuckman, 1965).

In an attempt to conceptualise leadership in an educational setting, Blase and Blase (2000) describe it as a process of directing and mobilising people, it is independent of formal titles and positions of authority. They also caution with the need to look beyond leadership as a noble art and challenge the generally accepted assumption that management is a less glamorous bureaucratic, simplistic and unnecessary process which damages academic endeavour and autonomy. For Elkin, Jackson, and Inkson (2007) leaders are considered to be constructive or even adaptive, and they identify leadership as something that enables people to adapt to change. Nevertheless, Falk and Smith (2003) comment that despite attracting significant amounts of scholarly attention, leadership theory has blank spots (unaddressed issues) and blind spots (biases). These according to Lashway (2006), combine to form an incomplete or distorted picture of leadership which according to Falk and Smith (2003), is especially prevalent in the leadership of vocational education and training institutions.

According to Glover (2000), one of the critical functions of a TVET leader, is to clearly identify how to best serve teaching and learning by clearly understanding the direction that their institution is taking and the development of a plan of how to support their organisational goals. Whereas Mulcahy (2003) notes that leaders of tertiary institutions and commercial enterprises are continuously facing the daunting task of being able to stay one step ahead of their competitors. This is essential to ensuring continued prosperity and viability of TVET institutions (Marope et al., 2015).
In their review of New Zealand and international research, Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd (2009), concluded that an effective educational leader will set goals and inspire other teachers to meet educationally significant expectations. While Gunter (2005), emphasises that the educational leader will tend to focus most of their energies on first order changes (dealing with existing structure and more or less involving the restoration of balance) and may also strive to implement second order changes (fresh perspectives which requires new learning, often begins informally). These changes are dedicated toward improving the technical and instructional activities of the learning environment and therefore require the close monitoring of teachers and students.

2.2.1 Concepts of Educational Management

According to Callan et al. (2007) behaviours of VET leaders and managers become a focus of scholarly study. They inform the reader that there is an emerging picture as to the attributes required for successful VET leadership. These include an extensive range of leadership and management capabilities, with attention given to a series of professional and more generic skills. In a generic educational and leadership context, Waters et al. (2004) consider the leadership and management development of New Zealand education practitioners and consider them as a key component to enable educational institutions to meet the ever-changing needs of their stakeholders, government and learners. Callan et al. (2007) consider the many leadership challenges faced by TVET leaders and their institutions as they change, adapt and innovate to create a sustainable TVET sector.

Gleeson and Knights (2008), note that in the United Kingdom further education system, the manager is required to bring consistency and conformity to comply with regulations. The manager is also required to convey information in the form of detailed plans and organise staff
accordingly. The success of which is measured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), through Her Majesties Inspectorate are required to compile evidence, evaluate and release a performance report on a specific further education institution into the public domain (Ofsted, 2016). Despite the work of educational managers being strongly related to satisfying the requirements of regulation, Gleeson and Knights (2008) consider that it is these functions which conspire to promote the educators’ negative perceptions of the management role. Spillane and Coldren (2011) note, that this negative image of management, has a consequence with the bulk of scholarly attention being focused on leadership. This view is supported by Bush (2003) who from a generic educational leadership perspective notes that in the literature there is a definite bias towards leadership rather than management.

The differing values of the educator and the manager are discussed by Weber (1987) who contends that the functions of management are opposed to the foremost concerns of a teacher. The teachers view of professionalism is marked by a number of key values and beliefs. Primarily the teacher desires the need to practice their profession in an exemplary way while striving for continuous improvement. Secondly, they wish to practice their craft toward a social end. Thirdly, they value the profession itself and their own identities as vocational trades practitioners (Chan, 2012).

Elkin et al. (2007) comment that for many educators, management is a discipline where the profession of learning and teaching is marginalised in favour of managerialism. Bush (2007) is clear in the view that education leadership and management should be centrally focused on education:
This link between purpose and management is clear and close, there is a
danger of ‘managerialism’, a stress on procedures at the expense of
educational purpose and values. (p. 391)

Ramsden (1998) notes that educational professionals are in general uneasy with the concepts
of management and do not align with the values of education professionals. Therefore,
management is steeped in strong business connotations and therefore considered as a threat to
academic autonomy. In a TVET context, Guthrie (2010), reinforces these views and comments
on the number of reports exposing the tension that exists between TVET practitioners and the
management of their institutions, especially, when considering the marketisation of TVET,
resulting in tensions between teaching staff and their institutional management.

According to Busher (2006) there is a strong contributing factor in the current trend for New
Zealand tertiary institutions to recruit managers from the business sector. He comments further
on the education professionals’ uncomfortable perceptions on the concept of management.
Staratt (2003), argues that underpinning business management theory assumes that
administration is a science and proves management techniques can therefore be easily applied
to educational establishments. Whereas Bush and Middlewood (2005) also warn that
encouraging manager’s to see themselves as administrators rather than educators can lead to a
managers efforts being directed to structures, procedures and prioritising the administrative
arm of the organization. The manager who operates in this mode is more concerned with the
mechanical operation than the social aspect of the tertiary environment and thus risks alienating
themself from their teaching staff. While Elkin et al. (2007) recognise a number of critical
managerial functions such as the requirement to control, organise and comply. However,
Spillane and Coldren (2011) argue that the compliance component of management may also
be viewed as a critical component of leadership.
2.2.2 The Role of TVET Leaders

The TVET sector is complex (Maurice-Takerei, 2015), the influence of stakeholder and organisational demands combine to create a wide system of accountability. This complicates the role of the TVET leader partly due to their positioning between senior management, and lecturing staff. To senior management they are accountable; to their lecturing teams, they hold the responsibility for maintaining their morale and helping them implement institutional initiatives (Marshal, 2012).

According to Gunter (2005), leaders exist by the recognition of others and do not exist in abstract. It is only when they are recognised by followers that leadership occurs. This can lead to the unusual situation where an appointed TVET leader’s success will depend upon recognition by their departmental staff. As a consequence, followers themselves have an indirect impact on the leader. In essence, the leader needs to be validated by their followers and to some extent is dependent upon them. This demands that the educational leader, according to Brundrett and Rhodes (2011) has the foresight to consider the effects of their decision making on their lecturers. This will require the education leader to tailor an approach which provides individuals with appropriate levels of professional support.

The activities of the educational leader had a change in focus when leadership for teaching and learning has become secondary to leadership models that are more akin to business management (Marshall, Orrell, Cameron, Bosanquet, & Thomas, 2011) especially within the TVET sector. In addition, TVET leaders are responsible for maintaining the responsibility for creating and supporting an educational environment that is conducive to teaching and learning.
(Bush, 2011). Yet as Maurice-Takerei (2015) notes, training and support offered to TVET lecturers in relation to teaching is relatively minimal.

Due to the complexities associated with TVET, it is difficult to pinpoint the specific function of middle TVET leaders. Often their roles and responsibilities are unclear, and this lack of clarity can result in an excessive workload that brings with it feelings of despondency (Marshal, 2012). However, as Marshall et al. (2011) explains, educational leaders in general tend to struggle with the concepts of leadership and are therefore unclear about how they make a positive contribution to their organisation.

Furthermore, Marshall et al. (2011) suggest that amongst educational TVET leaders there appears to be a general lack of understanding of the role of and nature of leadership with all of its complexities and ambiguity. There also appears to be a lack of people with the capacity for leadership for the immediate and future (Callan et al., 2007). Without effective programmes to develop educational leaders, institutions have limited their competitive advantage. An effective leader is a key institutional strategic asset that elevates the institutional core capability and competencies (Callan et al., 2007; Marshall et al., 2011).

Marshall et al. (2011) believe building leadership competencies will be essential if institutions are to avoid being in a state of perpetual confusion as they struggle to differentiate the functions of leadership from management (Marshall et al., 2011). However, limited institutional finances may restrict investment in the development of leaders. However, those institutions committed to leadership development may find that their investment will yield mainly positive returns (Ladyshewsky & Flavell, 2012).
2.2.3 Identity Issues

The identity of the vocational trades educator is usually strong and the strength of this association can for many complicate the difficult transition into a teacher role. The potential difficulties of transition are contemplated by Chan (2012) who informs of how a strong vocational identity can challenge TVET tutors entering an academic and teaching environment. For the new TVET entrant, the realities of working in a New Zealand polytechnic can be daunting.

Maurice-Takerei (2015) considers the TVET lecturer’s place within the education system. Their role is outside of compulsory schooling, they also possess a specific skill set and specialist knowledge. Many have ‘time served’ industrial experience which is a significant advantage when seeking employment as a TVET lecturer. However, having such a strong association with their vocational identity can prove to be a significant challenge for TVET lecturers as Chan (2012) points out that many TVET lecturers struggle to align the vocational trades identity with unfamiliar aspects of their new academic role. This has the potential to cause frustration which can be further amplified by the skills, industry knowledge and experience that a TVET lecturer may bring to their polytechnic institution’s, are ignored or scarcely acknowledged (Maurice-Takerei, 2015).

To add further complexity, the TVET lecturer who transitions to a position of leadership may have to come to terms with their identity as both an artisan and the realities of their new academic role. Further, they could find themselves in a position of leading and managing more
industrial experienced and vocationally accomplished trades staff which can lead to disruptive behaviour (Cardno, 2012b; Marshal, 2012).

Falk and Smith (2003) suggest that a common theme in the educational leadership literature is a clear need for investment in leadership professional development; this should enhance career ambition and institutional participation while improving staff retention.

One thing is certain, however, and that is that the conditions under which VET leaders will have to lead in the next 20 years will continue to change (p.15)

Rodgers and Scott (2008) note that the vocational trades tutor may be challenged by the complexities of their new surroundings. TVET lecturers require time to adapt and become confident in their new environments. For TVET leadership this could require the affordance of patience and time to allow for the trades person to come to terms with the scholarly practice of teaching.

In common with educators from both the compulsory and post compulsory sectors, the TVET lecturer is expected to undertake a number of educational tasks. According to Chan (2012), this includes the development and implementation of programmes of learning while applying appropriate learning and teaching methodologies to promote effective learning. The lecturer is also faced with an obligation to engage with pedagogical principles and assessment processes.

The depth to which vocational trades tutors associate with their former occupations is considered by Chan (2012), which is above all other means of self-identification. Blase and Blase (2000), advise that the educational leader should try to build a familiar environment with a focus on team collegiality. In relation to TVET leadership, Maurice-Takerei (2015) confirms
the importance of the environment in relation to identity. The silos within polytechnic institutions can act as barriers whereas TVET lecturers identify more closely with their discipline than the teaching profession. Rodgers and Scott (2008) discuss the formation of identity in relation to learning and teaching. According to their work, identity is dependent upon and formed within multiple contexts which bring social, cultural, political and historical forces to bear. Identity is also informed through relationships with others, involves emotions, is shifting, unstable and multiple.

Tertiary institutions possess deep pools of experienced TVET lecturers (Callan et al., 2007), who have managed to assimilate elements of a teacher’s identity. It is feasible that partnering a new vocational trades teacher with such an experienced staff member could be beneficial in bridging gaps (Chan, 2012). There is little doubt according to Viskovic (2009), that new vocational trades tutors can struggle to understand the finer points of the teaching profession, find difficulty in coming to terms with their new purpose, and struggle with the meaning of the artefacts, traditions and nuances of their new institution. While Chan (2012) notes the transition from a lecturer to a management position can be a source of anxiety for the newly appointed leader who struggles to adjust to the new position with a different identity, values and beliefs.

According to Viskovic (2009) the adoption of the new management position will be influenced by the strength of their values, an internal conflict between identity, value and beliefs could manifest as a number of vexing issues. While Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2004) warn that potentially having to transform their professional identities could be a point of conjecture, potentially damaging the relationship between the institution and the newly appointed manager and those that they manage.
Newly appointed managers may be faced with the challenge of experiencing a disconnect between the requirements of their new managerial position and their own educational and vocational professional values (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Waters et al. (2004), confirm that there is a proven correlation between effective leadership and student achievement. Therefore, it is important to consider the potential effects of inadequate leadership development. An educational leader if left unsupported, may become isolated and have to face the challenge of overcoming self-doubt and the perception of being stripped of the ability to directly lead and support learning. The result of which, according to Bush (2011), can eventually lead to an incompatibility of values that in turn have a negative effect on wellbeing. Further still, demotivational issues may cause anguish and promote feelings of alienation as the manager becomes more remote from the institution’s direction, then the differences are amplified. The resulting effect according to Waters et al. (2004) could be as severe as resignation of the manager, with the institution left in the position of having to fill the leadership vacuum.

2.2.4 Challenges of Succession

Coates et al. (2012), suggest that the lack of research in relation to TVET leadership activities has had a significantly restrictive impact on the effectiveness of TVET institutions to cope with change. The demand for change according to McMillan (2007) has exerted a great deal of pressure on TVET leaders as they struggle to come to terms with an ever-changing environment. Van Velsor and McCauley (2004) comment on the internal and external influences that force the educational leader to accept projects and duties that are beyond their area of expertise. The result of which according to Bell and Stevenson (2006), creates uncertainty and confusion as the burdens of unfamiliar managerial functions are placed on the shoulders of educational leaders. There is little doubt that no matter what the sector, the topic of educational leadership is complex. However, Spillane and Coldren (2011) emphasise that
role of the educational leader is first and foremost concerned with understanding what constitutes effective teaching and learning. For Busher (2006) and Cardno (2013), effective leaders demonstrate an ability to reconnoitre their environment, clarify a situation and solve problems in teaching and learning.

According to Adams and Gamage (2008), the sourcing of future leaders is proving to be an issue for TVET institutions. Gleeson and Knights (2008) suggest that it may be prudent to fast track those who are seen to possess leadership potential. This identifies an institutional conundrum, in a desperate attempt to fill vacant positions, fast tracking does not guarantee the quality of leadership required. In many cases institutions simply do not have the resources to recruit leaders from outside of their organisations (Adams & Gamage, 2008). Whereas Groves (2007), considers the effectiveness of institutions in directing assets to support and develop individual and future leaders. The traditional models of leadership investment is based on the replacement of individual leaders, this can leave the institution in a precarious position especially if it is bereft of leadership talent. He continues, that if the resources that are allocated for leadership development continue to recede at an already alarming rate, the consequences could be dire.

Shults (2001), comments that long term leader and management succession planning has almost been non-existent, and that many educational managers and leaders are approaching retirement potentially leaving a leadership vacuum. For Waters et al. (2004), the continued marginalization of educational leadership development will have an extremely negative effect on learners with all of the associated consequences. Marope et al. (2015) offer strong advice for any educational establishment, that in order to be successful, it must place leadership
development at its core. It is only through effective leadership that conditions are created to enable educators to develop and perform most effectively.

To overcome the leadership challenge of leadership recruitment Groves (2007) advises that institutions will require the coordinated efforts of human resource managers to design and implement a series of planned leadership development activities. Van Velsor and McCauley (2004) comment that the literature is consistent when discussing the requirement for educational leaders to have the opportunity to engage in leadership development programmes that deliver a strong theoretical and practical foundation.

Jones et al. (2012), outline the significant complexities of a whole institutional response to leadership development. Considering an educational department, there are a multitude of practising leaders but there are those who are formally appointed to positions of leadership and those who are not. It is entirely conceivable that institutions could adopt an inclusive approach and engage informal leaders with leadership development activities. The opportunity for engagement in holistic institutional leadership development could pay dividends in the long term, by having a pool of staff capable and ready for appointment to future formal leadership positions in the future.

According to Cardno and Piggot-Irvine (1997), some of the problems associated with being an educational leader is bridging the gap between management and academic staff, and it is only through the efforts of effective educational leaders that the best is brought out in their colleagues as they strive to achieve greater success in attaining educational and institutional goals. Falk and Smith (2003) established that the dissatisfaction of TVET leaders and managers
in relation to their efforts being evaluated by quantitative data which conveniently forgets the true value of education.

### 2.3 OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

According to Fullan and Mascall (2000) professional development is the key to institutional success for any leadership capability building initiative. They do however, warn that any development activity must retain a link to ongoing learning of the individual and satisfies the requirements of the wider organisation. TVET institutions as espoused by McMillan (2007), exist in a dynamic era that demands previously unparalleled levels of forecasting and responsiveness to the needs of stakeholders and customers while identifying further opportunities in the marketplace. These pressures heighten the need for organisations to offer strong professional development (Briggs, 2011). A TVET institution that wishes to build leadership capability will according to Callan et al. (2007), find no shortage of advice about how to design leadership and management professional development programmes.

Robinson et al. (2009) suggest that the educational leader is expected to effectively use human and physical resources to solve pedagogic and andragogic problems, and thinking strategically about finance in education, will require the leader to focus on critical resources of time and people which are inseparable in achieving academic goals. Educational institutions develop their own unique personality, identity and strategic plans, but research has indicated a commonality. High performing institutions according to Miles and Frank (2008), tend to organise valuable resources around three guiding resource strategies, they invest to continuously improve through hiring quality staff, commit to the provision of professional development for their staff and leadership development opportunities developing, they create individual personal learning environments and strategically use student time to develop core
competencies. The effective use of resources as a major contributing factor to student success in vocational trades education has been recognised globally by various government education ministries.

From the perspective of the TEC, Saunders (2016) indicates that professional development should be a mechanism used by TVET institutions for capacity building for both TVET leaders and TVET lecturers. According to Gunter (2005), professional development has been accepted as a mechanism for ensuring policy is acted upon and therefore, is essential. Institutional investment in professional development, according to Guthrie (2010), should be considered as a key driver for success and can be a significant contributor towards the sustained development of effective staff. In a TVET context, Falk and Smith (2003) and Guthrie (2010) consider that professional development tends to focus on profiling the competencies required to operate effectively in vocational education and training.

Reviewing the generic leadership and management literature, Gunter (2005) conveys the value of institutions investing in professional development. It is argued that professional development can be motivational and can promote positives feelings within the educational leader of being valued and therefore, as a direct consequence, raises self-esteem. For Callan et al. (2007) the benefits to the TVET leader in becoming familiar with the value of professional development and adopting professional development strategies would be a positive initiative, the benefits of which according to Fullan and Mascall (2000), could potentially inspire changes in their own performance as a TVET leader. The benefits of a sustainable series of professional development activities aimed at capability development for a TVET leader, could result in a more positive attitude, improved behaviour and as a direct consequence, increased efficiency.
Leaders are frequently required to work outside their comfort zone, and Van Velsor and McCauley (2004), note that this presents both a challenge and a threat to the leader. Despite the potential opportunity for an enhanced learning experience, Falk and Smith (2003) comment that in the case of TVET, the current trend is for institutions to limit leadership autonomy and that is proving to be problematic. Institutions require their educational leaders to be continuously adapting themselves, their staff and environments to accommodate change. Van Velsor and McCauley (2004) in their discussion on the activities of educational leadership, comment that this is contradictory because the leader is consistently required to implement change while being restricted in their action.

Paradoxically, there exists a demand for leaders to be prepared to push the boundaries of their abilities (Bush, 2011). Considering this, support networks of peers and mentors are required as Van Velsor and McCauley (2004) consider:

Support is a key factor in maintaining leaders’ motivation to learn and grow.

It helps engage a sense of self-efficacy about learning, a belief that one can learn, grow, and change. The higher the self-efficacy, the more effort people exert to master challenges. (p.212)

The sharing of experiences according to Muijs et al. (2006) coupled with the provision of a safe environment may or may not allow for difficult conversations, analysis and constructive feedback. Nevertheless, Callan et al. (2007) consider that an institution’s excessive demands can stretch a leader’s willingness to continue in their role plus any failure, loss or disappointment can severely damage a leader’s fragile confidence.
From the perspective of the United States educational leadership and management literature within the community college sector, Shults (2001) establishes that whether it be within the private or public sectors, the current state of leadership development has been found to be wanting. The decimation of middle management structures according to Groves (2007), especially in the tertiary education sector, has widened the gap between human resources and institutional leadership. This gap effectively limits those with high potential, the experience of on the job training and further advancement into full management positions.

Ladyshewsky and Flavell (2012) outline the major flaws in the current practice of leadership selection. They consider the university path toward leadership appointment through an academic being deemed competent and qualified by virtue of their accomplishments within the higher education community. For Adams and Gamage (2008), this highlights a real problem that is inherent in vocational trades based departments, a significant number of staff tend to have had limited exposure to leadership in a professional context.

Jones et al. (2012) recognise that when leadership skills are developed and enhanced, leaders will be better equipped to carry out their duties. They further outline that any development programme should be presented in a manner that bridges the gap between theory and practice. The application of theory is essential to the acquisition of experience that will in turn contribute to the leader’s ability to be able to set direction while gaining the confidence of and commitment from their peers. This according to Van Velsor and McCauley (2004), will promote conditions that will align teams with institutional policy and procedure and of course promote improved conditions for teaching and learning.
2.4 Summary

In this chapter I have reviewed literature relating to technical vocational education and training, concepts of educational management, concepts of leadership, professional development needs and leadership development opportunities. This review of literature pertaining to the research topic assisted the researcher with the identification of current issues to frame the three research questions and to select the two research methods of interviews and focus groups as outlined in the following chapter three methodology.
CHAPTER 3:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

All research begins with assumptions around two important questions. How do we know and how will we ever know? (Cohen, Morrison, & Manion, 2007; Davidson & Tolich, 2003) Therefore, research such as that presented here, confronts a problem, relating to a particular issue that originates in the mind (Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 1995). In the case of this research, there is a wish to investigate the current environment for technical vocational education and training leadership development in New Zealand polytechnics. A qualitative approach has been selected to explore and develop deeper understanding of leadership needs and the development of vocational trades tutors into leaders. To answer my research question, I chose to use a qualitative research approach. A qualitative approach provides an opportunity to question the why and how of decision-making, and presents an analysis of society (Booth et al., 1995).

3.1 METHODOLOGY

3.1.1 Overview

In this case I wish to investigate the current state of technical vocational education and training leadership development in two New Zealand polytechnics. Therefore, I believe that there is a need to investigate the current environment for technical vocational education and training leadership development in New Zealand. Considering the role played by vocational educational leaders, I believe that it is also important to identify the visibility of institutional succession planning and to identify the criteria for progression of technical vocational education and training tutors into formal institutional leadership roles. Therefore, I plan to establish whether
institutions have leadership development programmes that are long term and whether there is planning for leader succession.

As Callan et al. (2007) notes:

Many organisations are using the developmental strategy of a one- or two-day staff development day or event. It was clear, however, that some VET organisations were relying too much upon development days to achieve what they hoped would be meaningful development of the capabilities of their managerial and supervisory staff. (p.27)

According to Cohen et al. (2007), there is a sequence of philosophical reasoning that gives rise to research; one’s ontological assumption promotes an epistemological belief that is followed by the methodological consideration. This will then inspire what will be the mechanisms of instrumentation and data collection. This series of highly complex actions of the mind, moves the concept of research far beyond the research question. Davidson and Tolich (2003) advise that it is important that the researcher understands their own belief system prior to embarking on any research activity. Guba and Lincoln (2005) consider that if the researcher leans toward a positivist persuasion their ontological position will bias toward ‘real’ reality which will be apprehensible. Their epistemological position will be that of the objectivist which will determine their findings as true or false. In contrast, a researcher from the post positivism school of thought will view ontology through a critical realism lens, real but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible.
Davidson and Tolich (2003), advise that the central concern of epistemology is deciding what counts as legitimate knowledge, it is deeply philosophical and culturally dependant while ontology espouses to be an inventory on items or artefacts that can exist in the real world.

My own ontological position is that I believe that the development of vocational education and training staff for leadership positions in polytechnics is a subject worth investigating. Ontologically speaking this belief stems from the researcher’s own experiences while working in a tertiary institution. Davidson & Tolich (2003), note that when engaging with ontology the researcher will engage with the philosophical complexities of knowledge in the search for legitimate knowledge. It is the search for knowledge that will demand the researcher select a paradigm, the choice of which will direct the selection of the research methodology and research method. There are two competing traditions that operate at different ends of the spectrum; the positivist will attain knowledge through organised deductive logic that demands precision to confirm a set of laws that can be used to predict human behaviour (Cohen et al., 2007; Davidson & Tolich, 2003). The approach selected for this research follows the interpretive approach outlined by Cohen et al. (2007). The interpretative approach will systematically analyse society through meaningful actions and observation of peoples in their natural habitat. The aim is to arrive at an understanding of how people create and maintain their social worlds as a basis for this research. Thus, this research project is using the interpretative school of philosophical thinking.

3.1.2 Rationale

My interest in the area of TVET leadership learning and development comes from my own professional contexts and my experiences as a TVET leader. I have worked in the tertiary sector for several years, both in the United Kingdom and in New Zealand. During my employment as
a vocational trades lecturer, I also held various leadership positions stretching over a ten-year period. Leadership titles have been course coordinator, curriculum leader and programme leader. My own professional experiences and informal research inquiry into leadership in TVET identified that there is little research in this area to support understandings about leadership and leadership development in New Zealand polytechnic institutions.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODS

3.2.1 Data Collection

According to Keeves (1997), the nature of the educational problem will determine the method of inquiry. The skills of the researcher are also an important contributing factor as is the disciplinary perspective from which the problem is viewed. To achieve the aims of the research, I selected a qualitative approach using interviews and focus groups as the key methods for data gathering activities. The reasons behind this selection is an interest in making meaning through interviewees points of view and insights. Focus groups allow for a range of responses and varying perceptions of the participants.

3.2.2 Interviews

Interviews and focus groups form the basis of data gathering activities in this research. When conducted in a professional manner interviews delivers in-depth information and as outlined by Hinds (2000), can be extremely powerful. It is acknowledged however, that despite the positive aspects of the interview as a research tool, a researcher should be careful to avoid being seen as a threat, this is especially true when interview questions are inquiring about sensitive issues. Unsuccessful management of such situations could instil feelings of vulnerability with the interviewee that as a direct consequence, could reduce the willingness to ‘open up’ (Cohen et al., 2007; Hinds, 2000). Thus, the quality of the research can be compromised.
The intention of the interview is to gain a deep understanding of the participants view of leadership development opportunities for vocational trade leaders, an understanding of institutional requirements of their vocational trades leaders and exploration of professional development needs of vocational trades leaders. It is important for the researcher to be conscious of the potentially sensitive and controversial nature of the interviewee’s responses. As Fontana and Frey (2005) note, the interview can be loaded with tension; as it has the potential to be enormously political and bound to historical and political factors.

To manage the interview environment and avoid any possible pitfalls I followed the suggestions outlined by Cohen et al. (2007). The researcher as the interviewer, needs to avoid conveying their own perspectives during the interview. This is an inevitable consequence of humans interacting with other humans and should act as a warning to the researcher that they should be aware of their influence and if this is not controlled, their data will not be a true reflection that in turn negatively impacts on the legitimacy of the work. From the perspective of the positivist theorists, Fontana and Frey (2005) offer the opinion that natural human traits condemn the interview as a biased tool with limited authentic value, but this opinion fails to take into account the sheer complexity and uniqueness of the individual.

My own experiences within the tertiary education sector had prepared me for potentially difficult conversations. I was conscious that at some point during the interviews, I would need to reduce the tension to attain meaningful data. Cohen et al. (2007) advise that the researcher should be prepared to continuously renegotiate their questions and be completely aware of the nature of their questioning. Merriam and Simpson (1995) add that researchers are responsible for controlling the intrusiveness of the questions and they should be mindful that they are
limited by ethical integrity and sensitivity. The purpose of the interview for this research, was to provide an effective way of gathering the required information to identify influences for leadership development and leadership opportunities for TVET leaders. Hinds (2000) advises that the interview may vary in structure; it may focus on a set of pre-defined questions that are structured and systematically answered or they may be to a pre-defined theme that will allow a semi structured approach to the activity. The intent was to use a solid and robust core of questions which was common to all leaders but was also capable of being flexible when further data was required., this allowed me to develop a deeper understanding and added a richness to the data.

Cohen et al. (2007) note that the interview has the attribute of allowing the interviewees voice to be heard and convey their lived experiences that should clarify any of the researchers unwarranted assumptions. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) note that for the qualitative researcher, the interview allows them to get closer to the interviewee and capture the individual’s point of view. According to Fontana and Frey (2005), the interview is not a passive process nor is it a neutral exchange of merely asking questions and getting answers. They also advise that it should also be considered that the answers given by the interviewees will rarely provide one correct avenue of investigation. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) consider that whether structured or semi structured interviews, the researcher will have to comprehend that the answers given will reflect a different perspective of the interviewee. The result of which according to Fontana and Frey (2005), is a context bound, mutually created story.

I was interested to know whether the duties espoused in the TVET leader’s contract or job description was reflected in practice. I had planned to achieve this by using document analysis, cross mapping leaders’ activities against the job description. However, it became evident that
due to the sensitive nature of these documents, I would not be able to engage in this aspect of data gathering. Therefore, I included questions relating to job descriptions within the interview.

### 3.2.3 Interview Sampling

The time that I had available to complete this research and the availability of participants were constraints which influenced my selection sample. I needed to adopt a sampling strategy which would ensure that I had participants that would be willing to answering my three research questions. I approached two New Zealand polytechnics, first I had to obtain permission to research, once approved, I then contacted appropriate personnel to assist me in assembling members for my focus groups and interviews. The criteria for interviewee selection was that they were to hold a formal leadership position in a TVET organisation in New Zealand. I made arrangements to visit both New Zealand polytechnics. At the first institution, I interviewed four middle leaders but due to unforeseen events, at the second institution I interviewed only two middle leaders. I had originally planned for four but two had taken leave. However, I was fortunate in being able to secure an interview with one senior leader. This was unplanned but the data gathered helped clarify the role of TVET leaders at their institution. Further still, the result of this interview provided a greater depth of analysis while allowing for a broader perspective to emerge.

Prior to the interview, I had sent each polytechnic an information sheet outlining the aims of my research and what would be required from the participants. I had also provided a consent form. Before formally starting the interview, I confirmed with the interviewee that the conversation would be digitally recorded and that the length of the interview would be no longer than one hour. I assured all interviewees that their identity would remain anonymous and that I alone would be transcribing the interview. I also confirmed that the recorded data
would be transferred to an encrypted disc after transcription and the original files deleted. Once I had confirmed the process, I presented each participant with a consent form and only began the interview once the consent form was signed.

Fontana and Frey (2005) consider that it is fair to assume that all interviews, regardless of their purpose are employed to attain biographical information and as such naturally creates a forum for the divulgence of life accounts that are a product of both direct and indirect questions. Understanding the interviewees’ world is a key component of interviewing and therefore, it is a worthwhile exercise for the researcher to perform a reconnaissance of the interviewees’ world and identify forces that might stimulate or retard responses. I understood the challenges of being a TVET leader and however, I was also aware that my experiences should not influence the interviews.

As mentioned, the interviews were recorded with the participants’ permission. I used a tablet to store the conversation digitally. The tablet was small and therefore, unobtrusive. The device was not an issue as, several times during the interviews, I was asked to pause recording so that the interviewee could speak off the record. The off the record snippets of conversation are not included anywhere in this research. However, the levels of frustration about the interviewees role is noted. As the interviews progressed, I noticed that the willingness of my interviewees to volunteer information was beyond my original expectations. I took advantage of this and prompted them to elaborate further. I made no reference to the conversation from the previous interviews.
3.2.4 Focus Groups

A key component of my research was to identify the frequency and level of support that is offered to aspiring leaders and whether these staff members are aware of any form of leadership succession planning within their organisation. To attain the desired data, I selected the focus group as the research method which according to Fontana & Frey (2005), is essentially a qualitative data gathering technique that compiles information from the systematic questioning of a group of individuals simultaneously. The core of any focus group is the question and usually consists of a maximum of ten members, for the purposes of this research the group sizes were kept between 6 to 8 participants. The number was kept low because I am a new researcher and was very worried about losing control of the groups. As Krueger (1994) advises, the focus group can widen the discussion as interviewees build on each other’s answers and broaden the conversation, therefore the focus group has an associated issue with time management and this should be closely monitored by the researcher.

The criteria for inclusion in the focus group was that participants shall be TVET staff members who currently occupy teaching roles. Focus groups were run at both participating New Zealand polytechnics. As with the interviewees, I made the intentions of my research clear to the focus group members and again, as with the interviewees, asked for consent. Merriam & Simpson (1995) consider that prior to conducting the focus group, the researcher must reassure the group that the proceeding conversation will be confidential. I made sure that both focus groups were fully aware of the process of transcription with the transfer and storage of data. I also assured them of their anonymity. This research intended to establish the extent of the gap, if any, between perceptions of the leadership requirements of the polytechnic institutions and the developmental requirements of aspiring leaders. To achieve this several key underpinning questions were formulated based on research in TVET literature. These questions were tested
in a pilot interview with my colleagues before finalising. Krueger (1994) advises that the number of questions that will be asked is of critical importance and that the success of the focus group will depend on the quality of the questions and the level of preparation, forethought and planning. It is noted by Krueger (1994) that the researcher should be aware of the sequence of their questions and if open ended, be prepared for the interviewee to determine the nature of the answer. A test run will help avoid any potential issues that may render the focus group impotent in data delivery.

A key component of my research was to gather data on the levels of professional development and establish to what purpose professional development is undertaken and if it is conducive toward career enhancement and leadership development. Krueger (1994) discusses how questions are an everyday occurrence and therefore can be viewed as a simple process of gathering information. However, questions are complex and require planning, attentiveness and in depth familiarity with the background knowledge which informed the research question.

Krueger (1994) notes that asking a series of questions around this topic without prior planning would be ill advised and unprofessional. The questions must be planned and may go through several drafts before they are ready for use, even then a diligent researcher will practise their questions with a peer group. The questions must not be excessively lengthy, the risk of the long question is that to the participant the question could be a phrase and therefore not responded to in a sufficient manner. It is the duty of the researcher to match the wording of their question to the level of participant understanding, the researcher is gathering data for analysis and use of professional language can alienate interviewees which consequently erects a barrier between the researcher, interviewee and of course, the data.
Fontana and Frey (2005), advise that the focus group has room for flexibility and therefore can take many different forms. They may be conducted as brainstorming interviews with very little structure or they may have a solid structure where the role of the interviewer is very prominent and directive. I decided to adopt a semi structured approach where I would listen to the conversation and observe the behaviour of the focus group members. My biggest challenge was including the thoughts and opinions of as many participants as possible. This was an issue with one group as one of its members was most certainly the unofficial leader. It was interesting to observe how many group members checked their answer and waited for the unofficial leader’s approval.

I was aware of the possibility of the focus group descending into group think. Fontana and Frey (2005), warn that the interviewer must be aware of ‘group think’. The possibility of one individual controlling or dominating the group, the controversial nature of the research could cause interviewees to be reluctant to volunteer information. Here the researcher must develop the skills to make the interviewee comfortable and safe within the context of the focus group.

A high importance was to ensure that the responses are balanced or share a degree of consistency which can be extrapolated during the analysis phase of the research. I overcame the threat of group think by directing questions at other group members and changing the topic before bringing the group back on task.

Krueger (1994) advises that when ready, the opening question should be planned as being factually based and will be used to identify common attributes. I had planned a series of opening questions based on this advice. For both visits to the two New Zealand polytechnics, I dressed in professional attire, and this did not appear to be an issue for the interviewees. However, it appeared that it was an issue for the focus groups. My attire was a barrier and there
was an obvious level of distrust, I found myself in a position where I had to explain my vocational background and outline my work history. Cohen et al (2007) discuss the notion of building a rapport with the interviewee and how it demands further ethical investigation, rapport can instrumental, non-reciprocal and hierarchal that in this context feigns friendship in order to achieve scientific results that conspires to devalue their human subject. Fontana and Frey (2005) add that this should not distract the researcher from approaching their interviewees with empathy. Empathy is argued as a force for virtue as it restores the sacredness of humans before addressing the research problem. Once I overcame this hurdle, I started to get rich data some of which was controversial.

Fontana and Frey (2005), note that the skills that are required to conduct focus group interviews share a commonality with those required for the individual interview. The interviewer should cultivate attributes such as flexibility, objectivity, empathy and develop their listening skills that not only focuses on the oral conversation but considers body language. Krueger (1994), advises the researcher to be prepared to provide the interviewees with context and the purpose of the study. These essential acts will set the scene and convey to the interviewee information which will help to eliminate assumptions and the nature of the questions that in turn helps them answer accordingly.
3.3 ANALYSIS

According to Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006), the analysis phase of qualitative research transforms raw data into a coherent set of findings or results that will answer the researcher’s question. De Lansheere (2007) discusses that for the researcher to successfully engage with data analysis, they should prepare themselves and appreciate the multivariate nature of their research data. Results or findings from the qualitative research activity are inductive in disposition, which is the product of a construct and therefore grounded, in essence a new creation of knowledge in its own right. Keeves (1991) writes that educational data will produce many predictor variables and also deliver many unforeseen outcomes that will have to be examined simultaneously. It follows that because of the inductive nature of qualitative research, the researcher is central in the analysis process and therefore it is not pertinent to delegate to an external analyst (Lofland et al., 2006). To reinforce this point of view it is important to appreciate that the many variables could identify and create unforeseen problems that will demand the researcher to invest time and effort examining unintended areas of research. The researcher can avoid this thorny problem by adopting research methods that will allow for differentiating factors and of course appreciating that they themselves are the key analyst and their commitment to their research, requires nothing less than full immersion with the data (Keeves, 1997; Lofland et al., 2006).

As mentioned previously, the interview process undertaken in this research was semi structured and was guided by a set of key underpinning questions. The focus groups questions were also underpinned by a series of key questions. The interview and focus group questions in this research were guided by literature on technical vocational education and training leadership. Interviews with the leaders and focus groups recordings were transcribed and were read several times to gain initial impressions and comparison. This was also part of the important process
of becoming thoroughly familiar with the data. To ascertain what is the true nature of the
information volunteered by the interviewee, I found it necessary to differentiate between
participants so I used a coding system that would be logical and easy for another reader to follow.

After completing the transcription and with the aid of text to speak software, I went through
the content of the transcripts. During this phase of reading I started to highlight commonalities
and patterns of wording used by the participants. During the second phase, I highlighted
common areas of information and then copied and pasted into a new document. This process
allowed me to group information by relevance and gain a level of clarity as to the emerging
common themes. Lofland et al. (2006) assert that the researcher will deeply reflect on the
information and determine what is being represented. During the interviews and focus groups,
I had managed to keep to my core underpinning questions, and this helped enormously during
the final analysis of the data. During phase three final analysis, I identified key themes and
reassembled the data.

3.3.1 Validity

Guba and Lincoln (2005) approach the question of validity and state that it is steeped in
controversy. This can leave the researcher in a confused state; however, validity cannot be
dismissed. Deep within the research lies conflation that could give rise to fallacies and
ambiguity, this provides fuel for the positivist - interpretative debate. The purpose of pretesting
or piloting my research questions was to ensure that the data gathered during from the
interviews and focus groups would provide valid data for analysis. I was conscious that my
deep investment in technical vocational education and training could bias my research so it was
important that my questions were carefully formulated. This reduced the risk of bias and there
was also provision for sufficient flexibility to allow participants to offer their view of TVET leadership and their place within the New Zealand polytechnic sector.

For Cohen et al. (2007), validity is an important key factor in the creation of new knowledge, it is a requirement for both quantitative and qualitative work. Hinds (2000) adds that validity performs its function as an essential tool for measuring to what extent the research has met its aims and objectives. To increase the validity of my research I made my transcripts of the interviews available to the interviewees, this was to allow for the participants to verify or correct. No participants chose to correct the transcripts of the interviews or focus groups and therefore, they validated my recordings. When conducting my research, I went to great lengths to avoid causing emotional harm and to ensure the interviewees were not being misled or misdirected. As a researcher, I viewed informed consent as a contract of trust and breaking that trust would render my work as illegitimate.

3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Mockler (2013), it is a general acceptance that research can be a force for good; however, it should also be acknowledged that research can impose burdens. Wilkinson (2001) adds that this demands ethical reasoning which challenges the researcher to think hard and clarify the circumstances that would make their research justifiable, a core idea of ethics. Therefore, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) comment that research does require policing and that is the role of ethic committees and writers of guidelines. The role of ethics is to avoid damage to others and must be considered a priority and dealt with in all seriousness in conjunction with the formulation of the research question.
Wilkinson (2001) informs that ethical considerations must continue to be of primary concern to the qualitative researcher at every phase of the research process, while maintaining awareness of the intensely political environment the researcher is further challenged by having to negotiate the complexities of human to human interaction. There exists the further challenge of who pays for the research. Merriam (1998) considers that any research method can be fraught with potential ethical conundrums, especially when conducted in the field of education. If financed by those that have a political agenda or wish to yield power, the researcher could be coerced into unethical writing that will only focus on selected pockets of research that will agree with a pre-determined outcome. A scenario of this nature would clearly violate the core idea of ethics. Unethical behaviour of this nature would render the work biased, invalid and open to ridicule.

There should also be a declaration of intentions prior to entering the field, it is feasible for a researcher to build a close relationship with their interviewees but this can be construed as exploitative, and if the relationship is hidden then it may render the data to be of no more value than a conversation between friends. An excruciating dilemma for the researcher which would deeply impact and constrain the research could be inclusion of a valued friend as a participant. Relationships could further impact on the depth of research, for instance a close relationship with a colleague threatens to be strained or perhaps the researcher is not prepared to sacrifice their empathetic relationship with their subjects (Wilkinson, 2001). However, if the researcher is falsifying the friendship in order to attain results, questions of integrity and honesty must be directed toward the researcher’s ethical position (Wellington, 2000a; Wilkinson, 2001).

An ethical consideration must include the cultural backgrounds of the research subjects; Maori for instance are unique peoples that treasure their cultural values and beliefs, in this instance
the researcher should understand and abide by Maori systems of ethics and accountability. Failure to do so could offend, be seen as deceptive and as a consequence invalidate the research (Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003).

Mockler (2013) offers the researcher sobering advice, revisiting elements of the data with the purpose of falsifying information to fill gaps in the research is at its best totally unethical, from which the researcher could be subjected to the direst of consequences. In relation to this, if the participant questions the researcher, the response must be truthful. At the same time Wilkinson (2001) considers, the researcher must be fully prepared to divulge information about the project whether it is requested or not. Ethics can be argued as a framework for quality which intends to provide a barrier between data collection and participant harm. The researcher must remain tight to the principles of their research activity and not deviate to the point where interviewee consent has become invalid (Mockler, 2013; Wilkinson, 2001).

3.5 SUMMARY

The qualitative data collection methods of interviews and focus groups with TVET leaders and TVET lecturers in two New Zealand polytechnic institutions served to provide the basis for this research. Each method has been examined and explained in relation to principles, strengths and weaknesses. The following chapter contains the findings of interview with TVET leaders and two focus groups with TVET lecturers in two New Zealand polytechnic institutions.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The findings identify the professional development needs and leadership development opportunities of vocational educational leaders in two New Zealand polytechnic institutions. For the purposes of this research I used the generic term ‘vocational’ as a descriptor for those who are an educational leader in a tertiary vocational education and training programme (TVET). This research investigates whether two polytechnic institutions offer professional development and provide leadership development opportunities for these leaders.

The two New Zealand polytechnic institutions participating in the study are coded A and B. The only senior leader interviewed has been coded SL and the six middle leaders interviewed have been coded ML1-ML6 with focus group members coded FG1-FG12. One middle leader withdrew during the transcript verification.

The findings are now discussed within the context of the nine research questions.

4.1.1 Question 1. Could you please give your job title and how long have you held your position?

Interviews

In institution A, two middle leaders (ML1 & ML2) identified their formal titles as programme leaders while the senior leader SL had the position of director. ML1 indicated an 18-month length of service in the current role. However, prior to current employment, the participant had a similar role in a Private Training Enterprise (PTE). While ML2 had been in a programme leadership role for over four years and expressed significant experience as both an educator
and real world practitioner (real world is a phrase used to describe industry practice outside of the polytechnic system).

Whereas, SL had a long history with their current organisation, the participant indicated substantial real world experience prior to entering the tertiary sector and portrayed the journey through the ranks within their institution.

*I have been with the organisation since 1990, so I have been here quite a long time.*  
*I originally started as a Sport & Recreational Tutor, moved into Programme Coordinator, Programme Management, Regional Manager, Director’s roles and some management roles within the organisation (SL).*

In institution B, the interviewees (ML3, ML4, ML5, ML6) identified their formal titles as team manager and programme coordinator. ML3 indicated a length of service of 4 years and signalled a vocational background not related to the programmes of study delivered by their department. This participant nevertheless, did portray a rich and varied working life prior to accepting their current position at their polytechnic institution.

ML4 was quick to outline significant industrial experience which spanned over two decades, and still strongly identified as an industry aligned professional. Within the tertiary sector, the participant had been in a leadership role for a considerable amount of time but due to restructuring, had officially been in the current role of centre manager for a period of five years. 

Interviewees ML5 and ML6 in common with ML4, emphasised their industry and commercial experience. It is important to note that both had significant management experience in an industry context. Within the tertiary education system, both had been appointed to their current course coordinator leadership role two years ago.
Focus Groups

Focus groups interviews were conducted in institute A and B. All interviewees identified themselves as vocational lecturers and it is significant, that a number of these have held previous formal middle leadership roles. While others indicated that they had informal leadership roles

*I’m an academic staff member. I’ve been... I did programme management in the department for 6 years so yes, I do have a role of leadership, when I’ve got the chance*  
(B FG7)

Interviews

4.1.2 Question 2. What are your main areas of responsibility and focus of activity associated with your role?

Two interviewees (ML1, ML2) both referred to having programme leadership responsibilities for several programmes of study outside of their vocational trades expertise. ML1 and ML2 reflected on the key focus of their role and concluded that the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) compliance activities were strongly considered to be the key driver. This was made more difficult by the demand for maintaining academic consistency across their programmes, spread over six satellite campuses.

The demands of self-assessment were discussed at length and proved to be a point of considerable anxiety. ML1 also stressed frustration with the sheer volume of time taken by compliance activities to the detriment of pedagogy and teacher development and these sentiments were mirrored by ML2. Both spoke of their deep concern regarding the demands placed upon them by other elements of the institution. They spoke of having to deal with issues
across the institution on an almost ‘on demand’ basis. Neither participant felt that an effective workload management strategy could assist in this area, priority had to be given to short term institutional demands at the expense of their own priorities of learning and teaching.

*I spend a lot of time on things like self-assessment. ... I should, but don’t have time to spend, a lot of time on pedagogy and teacher development, but that gets... seems to get shunted back by deadlines quite regularly* (ML1)

Whereas ML2 did admit that there are ‘big picture’ requirements and that the needs of the wider institution reluctantly, must take priority. SL reinforced the ML2 perspective and confirmed the essential requirement for their institution to meet targets as determined by Education Performance indicators.

ML3 indicated the main focus of their role was the running of a centre, this brought the challenges of prioritising and balancing the needs of day to day operations in relation to resourcing, equipping and staffing classes against the wider requirements of the institution. This participant offered a number of examples of their activities including timetabling, dealing with high level student disciplinary issues and organising technical support and material supplies. According to the participant, the role was time consuming and ‘very much operational’ and it is because of this, the participant was removed from teaching. It should be noted that this participant manages an area that is not in their sphere of vocational trades expertise and therefore indicated the role exists for purely managing people. ML3 did also articulate significant concerns of not only having to meet the requirements of their institution, but also considering and meeting the demands of numerous stakeholders while being consistently financially controlled:
they want problem solving skills; they want people who can turn up on time; they want people who are drug free; they want people who can work a full day, work a full week, work a full month, work a full year... you know? So, these are the overriding things, but then when you sit down with them and look at programme design, they cram the programme so full of skills, that you don’t have any time to work with the students to develop problem solving skills; to develop critical thinking; to develop the work ethic, if you know what I mean? So that’s... I think that’s been lost in the process (ML3).

While ML4 expressed their belief that a key priority of the role was to provide a quality education experience, putting well trained teachers in front of learners. ML4 also noted how their role had been changed and adapted over the years. When appointed as a programme leader, the role contained a teaching component with allocated time for programme leadership activities. However, they continued to describe how the institution had decided to separate the academic and managerial functions of the programme leader. The then programme leaders were afforded a choice, either to stay as academics or formally transfer duties to management.

Deciding to retain a manager/leader’s role, ML4 described how their change in role forced them to become more deeply involved with compliance and quality assurance demands. ML4 conveyed frustration with the need to prioritise and respond to institutional and external compliance activities over matters of the learner and teaching. Similar to ML3, operational responsibilities were also described which included timetabling, staff management, efficiencies reporting and organising materials for learning and teaching.

So as a Team Manager I still continue doing the timetabling here but then I’ve picked up, obviously, managing the operating budget. In my area when you’ve got a lot of
product, a lot of perishable product and a lot of commodities coming in on a regular basis it gets very demanding and time consuming (ML4).

While ML5 and ML6 explained that hypothetically, their roles were mainly academic as represented by the contract of employment. Both clarified that they had a 90% teaching loading with a 10% allowance of time for performing coordinator activities. ML5 considered how the 10% allowance of time was used, they reported that a significant proportion of the allocated time was spent responding to questions and requests for data from a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders. On occasion, this time allowance was reportedly fully absorbed by quality and compliance activities. They did stress that this was an infrequent occurrence, but when demanded, defiantly prioritised.

Similarly, ML6 did express dismay at being in the position of having to accept full accountability for the programme under their stewardship, this included quality, retention, attainment and student to staff ratios. This level of accountability was beyond the level of the role and when accompanied by the demanding nature of data and compliance requests, conspired to add significant time challenges to already fraught workload pressures.

Focus Groups

All focus group (FG1-FG12) members primarily identified their roles as academic staff delivering vocational programmes. There are common themes regarding their workloads and general duties including assessment and responsibility for teaching and learning. However, despite being vocation experts, there were a number of them who had taken on other duties. FG 2 for instance, indicated that they had taken an additional role supporting peers in implementing blended learning initiatives.
4.1.3 Question 3. Have you been offered any professional development activities that are specifically directed to advancing your leadership position?

*Interviews*

ML1 spoke with enthusiasm of attending a course titled ‘Work Flow Planning’. After the initial content was delivered, they were set a series of activities to complete ‘on and off’ over a three-month period. ML2 highlighted the value of attending such a course, it was the ‘tips and tricks’ of streamlining day to day activities that proved to be most useful. In relation to staff and their performance, the course once again proved to be extremely useful, especially when dealing with Human Resources. However, both agreed that this training was nowhere near enough and that training provided was not as effective with some of the content proving to be irrelevant to their role.

A further criticism was laid at the timing of the events, ML2 stated that at the beginning of his leadership tenure, they struggled to ‘get a grip’ of embedding extra and almost alien workload into their existing work allocation and worse, they had no clear direction of what they were expected to do.

*I wish we’d done training at the beginning, it’s hard to grasp those new processes and blend them in to an already existing workload. I definitely took things of benefit from the training. I can see, if I upped sticks and quit and started a new place tomorrow, I’d probably try and have systems right from the start, and I can see how they would be useful (ML2).*

SL admitted to have attended leadership and management training but this was not by design. They discussed how they were encouraged to take the training as part of their professional development, but this training was far later in their career and at a point, where they had already
progressed into higher leadership positions. Further training in leadership and management has been difficult because of the volume of the work load. However, by their own admittance, the participant had not engaged in any form of professional development for over three years as a senior leader.

ML3 (institution B) was very complementary on their institutions commitment to professional development, described an institution sponsored system where staff members are in the position of having one free paper funded annually. This could be redeemed either through their own institution or sourced via an external provider. The participant placed an extremely high value on this initiative and discussed the importance of feeling that the institution had invested in their future. Nevertheless, ML3 did admit to not having the available time to be able to ‘book study leave’, therefore professional development was limited to one day management workshops. When asked to elaborate on professional development in relation to leadership and management, they did recognise the importance of embedding themselves deeply within management and leadership literature to advance their knowledge and skills. They acknowledged their own ambition to become a better manager was necessitated by the desire to improve outputs through staff capability and to achieve this ambition, effective training was essential.

ML4 described an institution sponsored initiative where an outside provider was hired to deliver leadership and management training on a modular basis. They attended these organised training sessions for the better part of a year and reported that that they were of some value. They did comment however, that despite the absence of new knowledge in relation to an education leadership management context, the courses did reinforce the existing understanding
of generic principles of leadership and management taken from their experiences as a manager in industry.

ML5 and ML6 gave very similar responses, both described how they had attended a number of leadership and management seminars and training courses when they were practising in industry. During employment at the institution and subsequent acceptance of the curriculum leadership role, neither had been offered the opportunity to attend institution organised leadership and management training. ML6 acknowledged that he had managed large teams when working in industry without formal leadership development. However, on further reflection, he admitted that the management of academic/vocational staff was different and carried with the responsibility, a higher level of academic accountability. Therefore, they expressed that there was a lack of adequate professional development and leadership development for the role

\[
it's \ different \ when \ you \ step \ in \ here \ because \ you're \ dealing \ with \ five \ tutors \ that \ have \ all \ been \ managers \ as \ well. \ So, \ I \ agree \ there \ is \ sort \ of \ that \ part \ that's \ missing \ and \ I \ think \ sometimes \ it's \ the \ expectation \ that \ you \ perform, \ as \ I \ say, \ you \ perform \ in \ a \ certain \ role \ before \ you \ get \ that \ role \ (ML5).
\]

4.1.4 Question 4. Does your role accurately compare to your position description?

 Interviews

ML1 & ML2 both agreed that there was a mismatch between their job descriptions and the reality of their roles. Both indicated that they had not returned to their job description document since examining it prior to the recruitment process for their role. They stated that the original job description contained elements of work which neither of them had done during the duration
of their tenure. For ML1, this was one issue which had conspired to transform the programme leader’s role from its original intention, as described in the role description, to something which was so multifarious in it nature it would be very difficult to define.

> when you read the job description, I am doing all of those things but probably not as in depth, not as focused as I need to be on those because on a day to day basis, I’m having to deal with the here and now (ML1).

While SL in common with ML1 and ML2, identified a considerable mismatch between the intended purpose and activities of their role against the realities of their position in practice. The job description was described as a strategic position however in practice, the role is very much operational. When asked to consider the workload of their institution’s programme leaders, SL volunteered a number of observations but focused on the pressures experienced by programme leaders. This participant provided an in-depth detail of the institutional gaps supporting programme leaders, as not closing the gaps had led an increase in stress levels and feelings of considerable anxiety amongst programme leaders.

SL attempted to rationalise the role of the programme leader. Initially the intended purpose of the role was to focus on maintaining the educational quality of the programme in their care. This included working with staff to help to maintain and improve not only programmes of study, but to drive and commit to quality assurance processes amongst the programme leader’s team members. There was also an element of developing staff both as educational professionals and for the maintenance of industrial relevance. In relation to success as a programme leader, SL expressed the opinion that the previous experiences of the programme leader largely influenced their ability to meet the demands of quality and understand, implement and evaluate information as dictated by the needs for compliance based quality cycles.
ML2 did discuss an initiative which led to the implementation of a new role, titled Manager, and this support from the Directorate was developed to lighten some of the programme leader’s administrative burden. Recent changes in structure conspired to undo any progress made, leaving the participant with the feeling that the institution had taken a backward step and left only two mature, experienced managers in a programme leader’s role with the remainder being relatively new in their positions. This was considered to be indicative of the high staff turnover in the programme leader role.

As a centre manager, ML3 identified the high expectations contained within the job description, expressed that their workload was so demanding, that it was essential to delegate several operational activities. It was also conceded that this attributed to the ‘nature of the beast’ and that the quantity of the work demanded an excessive number of unpaid hours. This, the participant identified was a direct consequence of a significant mismatch between the original job description and the institution’s expectations of those in the centre manager’s role. ML3 described the complexities of having to deal with and meet the requirements of multifarious stakeholder groups coupled with the senior management demands. It was also expressed that there was an institutional reluctance to investigate and realise the excessive work load carried by the institution’s team managers.

The same interviewee (ML3) was further frustrated by the increasing demands of government organisations, industry stakeholder groups, and their own institution in an environment of ever dwindling physical and staff resources. A key pressure point for them was the pressure exerted by the institution to meet EFTS targets. It was explained that these targets are agreed in
conjunction with the institution’s finance department. The consequences of failing to meet targets threatened to have an adverse effect on staffing and resourcing.

Similarly, ML4 reflected on the heavy weight of responsibility and relating workload. They described how they had to manage staff and maintain morale when it was obvious to them that there was a significant dwindling of resource allocation due to harsh budget restraints. They spoke of the demands of compliance activities and what they perceived to be the institution’s key driver, meeting EFTS’s targets. They declared their stress, dissatisfaction and the mismatch in values between themselves as an educator and the institution as a commercial enterprise. ML4 also indicated that not having a teaching load, was due to the significant pressures of the administrative and compliance demands of their management role.

However, ML4 admitted to paying very little attention to their job description and had not revisited it for a number of years however. They did however, consider their experiences and provide a self-defined job description. They described the team manager’s role as an opportunity to manage staff and provide them with the conditions to excel, this it was argued, was the best way to improve learner outcomes. It is significant that this leader coped with the significant pressure and frustration of their role by relieving a vocational lecturer in the classroom. This was of their own initiative and was not a requirement of the job. This, according to the participant was not only for their own stress relief, it was a mechanism for supporting staff and a way of disseminating their vast industrial knowledge and teaching experience.
4.1.5 Question 5. Are you expected to engage with disciplinary issues and engage with performance management?

Interviews

ML1 noted that he preferred to work with his senior leader on staff disciplinary matters rather than to work directly with the Human Resource Department (HR). Whereas, ML1 and ML2 provided several positive examples where their senior director had trusted and validated their decisions. Both spoke of their respect and appreciation for their senior leader largely due to a trust in their judgement.

ML2 described the performance staff review process and how it was vital that it be used as a tool rather than a compliance activity. Performance review activities were of significant value to both ML1 and ML2. Both agreed that persevering with a performance and review process was worthwhile because it was a mechanism for the creation of opportunities to identify staff weakness early and therefore, allowing for the provision of timely interventions and as a consequence, organisation of meaningful professional development. ML1 added how their position was further strengthened by having a considerable input to the appointment of their direct reports, this however, only served to highlight significant shortcomings in ‘inherited staff’

SL deliberated on how in their opinion, performance management was essentially a disciplinary tool and therefore a last resort mechanism. It was only to be used for addressing educational performance or tackling issues with interpersonal relationships which may adversely affect the continuation of team cohesion and functionality. SL continued to express a belief that
performance management itself was neither discreetly an educational leadership or management issue.

Is it a management thing or an educational leadership thing, I think actually, the two sit side by side. I wonder how it would work if you had one person that managed the staff from the management side and another person who managed them from an educational side... you’d just create more layers that you don’t really need, in my opinion (SL).

The question of performance management was presented to ML5 and ML6 in a different context because they were not directly expected to deal with performance management issues at their level. When asked do you think there is a need for performance management? ML5 spoke of the frustrations associated with the course coordinator’s role and general perplexity with the operation of tertiary education in relation to the general work attitudes of several staff. ML5 did admit to having an exceptionally strong work ethic, being driven and very goal orientated and this caused a degree of tension with staff that demonstrated different values. ML5 did feel that staff had the option to operate at the most basic level with very limited accountability for their actions.

I think that sometimes you know, complacency breeds contempt. So you can ask somebody to do something a hundred times, but when you meet somebody that’s got that same sort of drive it is sort of a breath of fresh air (ML5).
4.1.6 Question 6. Do you consider that you have sufficient time to lead and support and develop your team?

Interviews

ML1 and ML2 both agreed that mentoring staff was difficult due to excessive workload and time pressure placed on them. They both concurred that there were key elements of administration which were deemed essential to the effective operation of the institution and that there was a need to compartmentalise proportions of their role to meet this requirement. However, they spoke with frustration of the bureaucratic nature of their role.

*I don’t mind spending time on doing something if I feel it’s being done, but I do feel that a lot of the time, because either internally or externally, the rules are changed on you. What you do has to be redone or what you do has to be reconfigured in the following year* (ML2)

ML1 spoke of a number of institutional initiatives for distribution of at least a portion of their administrative duties. This however, was described as an initiative which merely went some way to deal with retrospective work load without taking into consideration the workload for future initiatives. Both ML1 & ML2 did comment on a new initiative, the position of Direct Support Manager. This was described as a very valuable resource but, as with other initiatives, there was only a portion of time made available and this dramatically limited the provision of support.

As a senior manager, SL admitted that there were several issues facing their institution. The participant spoke of the disconnect between senior management and programme leaders, the lines of communication were not effective as they should be. This was described as one issue amongst many which collectively, are conspiring to cause distrust and confusion across the
institution. In relation to leading, developing and supporting staff, SL described how their time was taken up by responding to changes in the Tertiary Education Commission policy and investment, planning and reporting, therefore, limiting their ability to develop their middle leaders.

According to SL, the nature of programme leadership and its requirement to focus on staff and programmes helped to contribute to the disconnect because

*they don’t necessarily get to see or understand all of the stuff that’s going on up at that level...* (SL)

The same interviewee (SL) did make the point that arrangements are made to meet with the programme leaders collectively and individually once a week. This initiative was to develop an understanding of the issues of the day and involve programme leaders in some level of decision making discussions. SL nevertheless, did offer a level of concern that despite the effort to involve programme leadership in relatively important level of discussion, the content was not being relayed to the teaching staff on the ground. This lack of communication had a consequence in that it fostered the increasing levels of institutional disconnect. This was seen as a middle leadership deficiency within the programme leaders. The rationale was that they have the greatest influence on their staff and carry the responsibility to communicate the big picture to their respective staff.

ML3 discussed their commitment to the development of their subordinates. Despite not having the same vocational trades background as a lecturer, ML3 described how they implemented a number of initiatives for growing capability in learning and teaching and beyond. ML3
confessed to a background in psychology and still retained a passion for that subject. They then went on to describe how their knowledge and expertise in their psychological background could be applied to the successful leadership and management of their department.

ML3 commented on managing and leading a change process, and how change brings disruption, disharmony and stress to staff with the ultimate detrimental impact on the departmental operation. To support their staff, the participant spoke of how they had tried to create conditions to allow staff to ‘let go and move forward’, this was described as essential for maintaining staff morale.

*If your staff aren’t okay, everything is going to fall over. I’m sure organisations don’t want to be paying for people to be off all the time because they’re sick. The pressure that gets put on other staff to cover the teaching you can’t just cancel your classes. Staff are conscious of the fact that I don’t want to put other staff under pressure, so they come in sick anyway. So the more we can do to create a good, positive energy environment, I can just see that we can be far more successful (ML3)*

The exposure and recognition of good practice was also discussed by the same interviewee who explained how recognition of staff achievement had become a focal point for the department. Again, the participant spoke of their psychological background how they had used their knowledge to support staff and develop strong feelings of self-worth within them.

ML4 once again described how their role was heavily biased toward policy, compliance management and reinforced the concerns of excessive demands of stakeholders. ML4 continued to discuss the considerable time taken responding to inappropriate emails and other such annoyances. There was the also added burden of the centre being used by the institution
as a commercial enterprise which would therefore service the requirements of the whole institution. ML4 did discuss their values as to the true purpose of the institution and reinforced the belief that everything that happens should be directed toward learners ‘getting value for money’. Because of this belief, ML4 expressed the importance of maintaining high standards of learning, teaching and staff morale. Therefore, self-developed strategies had been adopted in an attempt to keep management and compliance activities at 50% of their workload. The remainder of the time would be spent developing staff and maintaining a strong working relationship. ML4 also described how they would ‘walk the corridors’ to maintain and build collegiality amongst staff members.

4.1.7 Question 7. Would you consider applying for a more senior leader/management position?

Interviews

ML1 & ML2 both admitted to having a strong and generally very positive relationship with their immediate supervisor. They were concerned that out of the ten senior managers in their institution only four of them had an academic background. Their concern was that the current senior management team was out of touch and insulated from the core purpose of the institution, which they believed was learning and teaching. This disconnect ultimately proved to be the underpinning reason for neither ML1 or ML2 applying for a senior role in the future.

ML4 found it necessary to deliberate and discuss the detrimental impact of their institution having a high turnover of management, this was attributed to issues surrounding the hiring process. This was especially pertinent because ML4 was insistent that they wanted to pass the leadership baton to a ‘safe pair of hands’. ML4 spoke with affection and respect for their team but admitted, in relation to future leaders, that there were probably three current members of
their department who possessed the technical ability and were therefore, viable successors. They described a number of discussions where they had expressed their willingness to ‘groom’ future leaders as their own replacement but spoke of the common response as the role being ‘not for them’.

ML6 exclaimed how he had been ‘sounded out’ as the natural successor to their current centre manager. ML6 strongly expressed reluctance to supersede the current team manager, and presented the reasons for such a demonstration of unwillingness. Foremost was the respect and reverence for the person currently in the role, further homage was paid to the way in which the current team operated themselves in the ‘political’ arena. This keen observation demonstrated an essential skill which the participant personally believed that they did not possess, and that without strong diplomatic attributes, managers would not last long in their positions.

ML5 described how their institution provided for academic career advancement by way of a portfolio of evidence. Although, the progression process had placed considerable demands on themselves as they collated and processed their evidence for their portfolio of evidence, they considered it to be challenging but worthwhile and in keeping with their own very self-motivating personality. However, when further questioned on the process for management selection, a number of significantly negative comments were made with one stating:

*couldn’t think of anything worse than being promoted to management here, from what I’ve seen* (ML5).

**Focus Group**

A Focus group member (FG1) described considerable resentment at the perceived appointment of managers for vocational trades areas who did not identify with the same vocational trades
background as the staff whom they managed. The difficulties of appointing such a person was heatedly discussed; they concluded that appointing managers with backgrounds that are alien from the staff was damaging. They expanded and rationalised their response, it was contended that there was an element of short term thinking at senior management levels and current manager recruitment strategies was setting ‘them up to fail’ causing high turnovers of staff.

Another focus group member (FG2), gave a personal observation surrounding promotion and the state of the institutions senior management. They firstly justified their reluctance to progress into a formal middle leader role because they viewed this level as being the institution’s ‘piggy in the middle’. It was argued that this was a position which offered very limited authority over their subordinates, and was therefore, continuously at the mercy of human resources.

While focus group member (FG5) discussed their reluctance to advance to a middle leaders’ role because of the excessively heavy demands for compliance. This they argued, removed and isolated the leader from delivery staff which consequently, distorts the leader’s view that in turn fails to develop true understanding of what actually happens at functional level, effectively enhancing the level of disconnect. There were also a number of other comments during the course of this focus group who were mainly in agreement that management and academic staff members have differing views, values and opinions.

4.1.8 Question 8. How do you approach succession planning?

Interviews

ML1 was not aware of any formal succession plan and admitted that it was an area of concern. While ML2 explained that staff were hired in the past with succession in mind but they had
since ‘fallen short’. It was also explained how competition with other polytechnic institutions for quality staff have worked to the detriment of the institution as several appointees were offered better prospects elsewhere.

SL gave an outline of the process for succession, a staff member would ‘put up their hand’, then they would be observed for a number of attributes, chiefly being a good teacher and effective administrator. The institution had in the past, grouped a number of staff with leadership potential and were provided with leadership and management training but due to resourcing issues, the institution no longer pursued this initiative.

ML4 was sure that there was some level of succession planning at their institution. This participant was extremely complimentary of the institution’s commitment to professional development and because of this, it was argued that staff members have professional development autonomy and can structure development activities to suit their chosen career path.

So, if a staff member says to me that one day I want to be a manager then there is the chance here to create a plan and sort out the PD (ML4).

Professional development was also described as a key driver for maintaining morale and the retention of staff within the institution. The retention of good staff was viewed by ML4, as being essential for the continued prosperity of the institution and the need to limit the damage caused by having a high staff turnover was an absolute priority.
4.1.9 Question 9. Considering the current tertiary environment, is it possible for a vocational trades staff member to achieve a significant leadership role?

Interviews

ML1 and ML2 started to answer this question by describing the current state of institutional senior leadership and these leaders’ backgrounds. They noted the differing backgrounds of the institution’s leadership as being academic, business and military respectively. ML1 described how none of these leaders had any prior vocational trades experience or background. ML2 went further and described their view of the major issue surrounding the current state of vocational trades qualifications:

$I think though the distinction there for me, and this is kind of a hobby horse, but we're not teaching any soft skills in the trades, the way we should (ML2).$

ML1 expanded on this answer, they used the example of German vocational trades education to develop their argument. This country it is believed, possessed a model of education which should be exemplified because German vocation learners were taught a wide variety of other ‘soft and life skills’ as an integral component of their studies and it is these skills which allow for broader career choices. Both ML1 and ML2 went on to discuss how their current crop of trades programme leaders attained their positions. All were internal appointments but there was no visible evidence of further advancement and therefore, the position of programme leader was the highest achievable leadership position. Appointment of external vocational trade leaders into a higher institutional leadership position was also considered to be extremely difficult because of the low level of the starting salary. ML1 spoke of how institutions had previously lost out on high performing job applicants to industry because of the institutions unattractive remuneration.
I guess the thing with trades is it’s exacerbated by the fact that, if you’re leadership material in trades, your comparative salary in the private sector is actually pretty good... you know, a lead hand, a good tradesman is going to be making close to $100,000, and we’re not paying anywhere near that (ML1).

SL spoke of the difference in structure and types of qualifications, and admitted that a vocational lecturer progression into a senior leadership role would be difficult at their institution. The rationale behind this statement was due to the nature of vocational programmes and how vocational education would not provide the qualifications required, such as degrees. This was important to highlight because according to SL, a degree level qualification would require at least three years of tertiary education. The participant then went on to describe how staff would have been embedded in the tertiary system for a considerable length of time and attained masters and higher degrees. The vocational tutor would have had a less academic route into tertiary and would have received their training through apprenticeships. The nature of vocational trades work was also noted as being ‘hands on and practical’. This distanced vocational trades practitioners from the tertiary education system which is manifested through knowledge gaps when they are appointed as tutors. This difference according to SL, was important because of the manner which the institution promotes its staff:

the progression route that we have, I think is much, much more difficult for a... for a Trades type tutor. The criteria... just initially, the criteria are a Degree or a Degree equivalent, and I don’t think that’s as clear as it could be for a Trades tutor. So the benchmark is set as a degree equivalent and Advanced Trade qualification is not being deemed as the equivalent of that (SL).
The disparity of skills associated with degree and vocational trades qualification was deemed to be a critical point of departure. More directly the absence of critical analytic skills it was claimed, were far more developed at degree levels programmes. The length of time spent within the tertiary system was again raised as a crucial factor because this afforded the time to develop the required level of critical analytical skills. Vocational trades staff have a very different skill set and this according to SL, made the journey through the ‘ranks’ far more difficult.

ML4 described how they had in the past, taken staff members career ambitions on board and made the effort to develop them for leadership through coaching and the arrangement of workshops for leadership based development activities.

\[\text{So it's always about thinking, who's in your team that possibly could eventually step into that next level, if that's what they're desiring. Some of them just don't want to go further forward, they just love the classroom, they love the teaching, they love the interaction, they love using their skills and capability and once you move into management, you don't... you just don't really (ML4).}\]

When asked if succession planning was the norm at the institution, ML4 agreed that this was indeed the norm. The reasons for this answer was based on observations and conversations between peers, there was nevertheless, no official documentation or institutional policy to back the point of view. It was also noted that the process was dependent on middle leaders identifying talent and developing staff independent of the institution.

ML5 explained the barriers and challenges of attaining promotion as a vocational trades lecturer:
So basically, what happens is you have to go through a promotion round, so you have to submit... I think with my promotion I would have submitted about... I hate to think... hundreds of pieces of evidence stating that... basically what they look at, and I’ve never come across this before, they look at you performing in a role before you get a role (ML5)

This helped to reinforce the premise that movement into more senior leadership positions would have so many barriers erected, it would be pointless even trying.

ML6 spoke of some keen observations in relation to the time keeping and commitment of some staff, and how in their opinion, their promotion into higher positions was frustrating. These observations only served to reinforce the opinion that selection for promotion was not based on work ethic or even academic performance, but is heavily dependent on ‘if the face fits’.

**Focus Group**

Focus group member (FG 6) conveyed their perception of how vocational trades tutors were viewed at their institution. They voiced dismay as they describe feeling of vocational trades being devalued.

Another example would be, when I first came here, hearing that we have to give our quals up, you’ve only got to give your C.V. in and I was like, look... I did and Advanced Diploma in *******, and hearing... you didn’t go to Uni for that. But to me, it’s still a really special ... Oh, and it’s only at level... this. So you always feel like you’re always perceived to be a little bit... not... not dumb but, you’re in the trades so you could never be an academic or those leadership roles seem out of our reach in a way. I mean, you can aspire to them or try and work towards them, but I think it’s a hard one to crack (FG6).
4.2 SUMMARY

The findings identified that the role of a TVET leader is complex and diverse, issues raised were mainly associated with academic leadership development, dealing with senior management and coping with institutional politics. The role of vocational trades leaders is further complicated by the requirement of having to meet the demands of the quality agenda, multifarious stakeholder groups and cope with the fluidity of their own institutions, while expecting to maintain their industrial currency. The main responsibilities of their roles are interpreting institutional strategies, translating national policies (mandatory review of qualifications) into functional action plans, meeting the requirement of a multitude of quality processes, accountability for the programmes that they lead, interoperating and implementing stakeholder requests and monitoring, supervising and developing trades staff.

Synthesising the research findings, common themes have emerged. Operational issues are a cause for concern as TVET leaders are faced with inadequate resourcing, continuous changes in vocational knowledge which as a consequence, necessitates the organisation of staff continuous professional development activities and ensuring that vocational staff have the capability to be able deliver programmes in best education practice. TVET leaders have also to consider their own personal leadership and management capability that includes developing competencies which allow for effective translation of institutional policy, and digesting it for consumption by their trades staff.

To be an effective TVET leader, there are some capabilities that vocational trades leaders should embrace. This includes but is not limited to: teaching instructional skills, information
technology skills, data management skills, workload management skills, creating a clear vision, communication skills and the monitoring, development and evaluating of staff.

These significant findings will be discussed in the following chapter with support from the literature reviewed in chapter 2. This concluding chapter will also consider the recommendations for tertiary senior and technical vocational education and training leaders, the limitations of this research and the recommendations for future research in TVET.
CHAPTER 5:

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the current environment for technical vocational education and training leadership development in New Zealand polytechnics. Over the course of this research I have determined that the TVET educational leaders are continuously challenged by several complex issues ranging from attending to the requirements of wide ranging stakeholder groups to meeting their institutions quality obligations.

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

By employing a qualitative approach, I have generated data from two New Zealand polytechnic institutions with different perspectives from the TVET leadership and lecturers. The conclusions and recommendations have been drawn from the data collected and analysed from two data gathering methods: semi structured interviews and focus groups.

5.1.1 Research question one: What are the leadership development opportunities for TVET leaders in two polytechnic institutions?

The findings revealed that the two institutions participating in the research face a number of challenges in relation to leadership succession. This is not particular to these two institutions as Ladyshewsky and Flavell (2012) inform that many educational institutions are struggling to find an effective mechanism for leadership succession planning. The research identified that a number of the TVET leadership participants had serious concerns in relation to their institution’s approach to succession planning.
The research identified that there is, at the very least, some level of acknowledgement to the importance of succession planning. Indeed, one of the institutions (A) had recruited staff with a partial focus on leadership succession. Nevertheless, issues of new leader institutional support and personal capability are a cause for concern. The research also identified that financially, the remuneration offered by the private sector is far in advance of that offered by a polytechnic institution. This is identified as a significant barrier to the recruitment of the most capable staff.

While on the other hand, leadership succession planning at the other institution (B) was viewed more positively. Nevertheless, leadership succession planning was wholly dependent on current TVET leaders’ ability to identify and nurture staff. This however, is dependent on the institution’s commitment and approach to professional development. Several TVET leaders have used professional development to support their leadership succession plans, to the point where individual development plans have been drawn up. Individual leadership initiatives such as this validate the work of Robinson et al. (2009) who confirm that the educational leader is required to set goals and inspire others to meet expectations. In this context, it is related to the TVET lecturer accepting their leader’s endorsement of their progression to a future leadership role.

However, the research indicated significant flaws in this approach as it is entirely dependent on the staff member’s willingness to advance. It is important to note that the research identified a number of compelling reasons, why TVET lower middle leaders and TVET lecturers fully reject advancement into a leadership position. The workload issue once again is a cause for concern, only this time it is noted from the perspective of TVET lower middle leaders and TVET lecturers. The excessive workload issue of quality and compliance are also viewed as a
significant reason for not wanting to seek promotion. Further still, the research uncovered a disconnect between TVET leadership and institutional management.

For TVET lower middle leaders and TVET lecturing staff this is a strong contributor to feelings of institutional management being ‘out of touch’ with the day to day realities of their institutions. The research also identified that there is a strong belief amongst TVET leadership and TVET lecturing staff, that to be able to survive in a more senior leadership environment, they need political skills. This point of view is reflected in the work of Marshal (2012) who identifies that the educational leader is in a precarious position, sandwiched between senior management and teaching staff.

In an effort to further expand on the question of leadership succession planning, the research considered whether it was possible for TVET lecturers to progress into more senior leadership positions over the course of their career. The view of one institutional senior leader (SL), in contrast to the middle TVET leaders, deemed it to be a far greater challenge for a TVET lecturer when compared to their academic counterpart. The nature of TVET training naturally limits the attainment and development of essential skills which are deemed to be critical for successful transition into a more senior leadership position. Further still, many TVET lecturers take exception to this perspective, believing it devalues not only their qualifications, but also their trades.
5.1.2 Research question two: What do polytechnic education institutions require from their TVET Leaders?

This study revealed that TVET leaders in two New Zealand polytechnics have a critical role in ensuring that their institutions meet quality and compliance demands. Their roles are associated with leading and ensuring academic consistency across a range of programmes. They are also responsible for compiling self-assessment documentation required by NZQA. This study has shown from one senior leadership and six middle leadership perspectives, compliance is an absolute priority. The TVET leaders are dissatisfied with the excessive demands of the quality requirements of the TEC. Nevertheless, TVET leaders interviewed, understand that meeting the demands of compliance is an essential part of their role.

TVET leaders are also aware of the wider issues which have both a direct and indirect impact on their work. They are aware of the political landscape and are cognisant of the work of the TEC and NZQA. They are also cognisant that in the short term, the demands of quality and compliance will increase as the TEC plans to increase the number of audits and external evaluation reviews in conjunction with NZQA (Spencer, 2016). To add to the complexity of the work of TVET leadership, they are expected to meet the ever-changing demands of their stakeholders.

The multifarious demands of various stakeholder groups have proven to be a considerable burden. As McMillan (2007) notes, vocational education is in a constant state of change which mirrors the fluidity of the world of work. This places a considerable strain on the TVET leader, as they look to effectually utilise dwindling physical resources to meet the requirements of stakeholder groups. Adding further tension is the nature of TVET programmes of study and
their perceived perpetual cycle of redevelopment. This places strain on both the TVET leaders and their teaching staff as TVET courses are now so full of content (as per requests of stakeholders) they have become confused.

It has become apparent that many TVET leaders have to accept work and responsibilities that are well above their level of competence. For some, this included accepting full responsibility for programme retention and academic attainment. TVET leaders are also challenged to support lecturers to innovate their learning and teaching. This is supported by Thomas (2001) who notes that technical skills are crucial for the effective delivery of TVET, the ability to effectively engage with the principles and practice of learning and teaching is just as critical. However, despite the acknowledgement that developing TVET lecturing staff is a key component of their role, TVET leaders struggle to find the time and resources to do so.

One conclusion can be drawn from this study is that TVET leaders are key actors in assisting their institutions to meet the demands of quality and compliance. The research indicated that TVET leaders have to manage an excessive workload which not only relates to the demands of the quality agenda but also addresses the requirements of various stakeholder groups. However, the time taken to accommodate these demands is to the detriment of leading and supporting their lecturing staff.
5.1.3 Research question three: What are the professional development needs of TVET leaders?

The research has identified two distinctly different institutional approaches to leadership development and professional development. It also noted that TVET leaders from both institutions value both professional development and leadership development opportunities that are essential for them to effectively perform their duties. Organised leadership development courses are, to a point, well received. However, the relevance of some of the course content is questionable.

The TVET leadership value leadership development activities which assist them in building cross institution relationships, development of workload coping strategies and deeper understanding of the intricacies of leading and managing lecturing staff. The acquisition of leadership skills is highly valued and recognised as essential if TVET leaders are to effectively support their institutions and lecturing teams. As noted by Falk and Smith (2003), institutions are requiring their educational leaders to continuously adapt themselves so that they cope with changes in compliance.

The research identified that when leadership development is offered, workload constraints limit the ability of TVET leaders to attend. The lack of leadership training for TVET leaders is a cause for concern as Marope et al. (2015) caution TVET institutions that leadership development must be placed at the core of institution development activities. Without strong leadership they argue, institutions will be bereft of key actors in managing the development of departments and educators. This will be to the detriment of effective education performance.
The research also notes that there is an appetite amongst TVET leaders for leadership professional development to be targeted towards leading in education rather than generic leadership courses. The complexities of educational leadership in relation to TVET are highlighted by Callan et al. (2007) who acknowledge that leadership development activities should be delivered in context.

Several of the research participants had previously held leadership positions within their specific industries and had received leadership training while in these roles. Nevertheless, the research concludes that while leadership training outside of the polytechnic sector is useful, this training does not allow for the complexities of leading a curriculum area in a tertiary institution. While Waters et al. (2004) convey that professional development for leadership is essential if institutions are to deliver on their targets.

### 5.2 SUMMARY

The findings identified several challenges faced by TVET leaders attempting to successfully navigate and balance the needs of stakeholders with their institution’s commitment to compliance. TVET leaders are also challenged by inadequate professional development and leadership development opportunities. Further, leadership succession planning is confused and in one of the institutions, succession planning is reliant upon current leaders sourcing their own successor. However, this approach is fully reliant on identified staff wanting to accept more senior leadership positions in the first place. The other institutions preference was to import leaders from other institutions or industry. However, the lack of competitive salary, insufficient institutional support and excessive leader workload rendered their leadership succession plan ineffective.
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 Recommendation One

That institutional senior management and leadership teams address the excessive workload that compliance and quality has placed on their TVET leaders.

The findings show that TVET leaders play a crucial role in fulfilling their institutions commitment to quality and compliance. The compliance agenda has been studied by a wide range of researchers and is reflected in the literature (Callan et al., 2007; Cardno, 2013; Falk & Smith, 2003; Howse, 2013; Marshal, 2012; McMillan, 2007). Further, the TVET leaders are responsible for the interpretation and implementation of requests from an ever-increasing body of stakeholders. This has had a significant impact on the workload of TVET leaders as they struggle to cope with increasing demands. Therefore, what might be a possible recommendation, is that senior management should provide support to relieve at least a portion of the administrative burden. This would have the potential benefit of freeing time which would allow TVET leaders to support and to strengthen their teams through the provision of academic leadership.

5.3.2 Recommendation Two

That TVET institutions work together with their TVET leaders to identify and to create a series of TVET targeted leadership development activities.

The findings confirm that institutions adopt a variety of approaches to staff professional development. The general consensus of opinion is that staff appreciate their institutions investment in their personal development. Nevertheless, TVET leadership professional development has been found to be inconsistent and of questionable value. A common theme which emerged from this research was the difficulties faced by TVET leaders as they struggle
to negotiate the demands of compliance. Further still, TVET leaders lack the confidence to deal with the complexities of leading TVET lecturers. With little or no educational leadership professional development, these issues are amplified. Therefore, a possible recommendation is that institutions should pay attention to the creation and delivery of structured TVET leadership professional development (Callan et al., 2007; Cardno & Piggot-Irvine, 1997; Middlewood & Cardno, 2001; Waters et al., 2004). The professional learning must allow for the TVET leader to analyse their strengths and weaknesses and come together with others to build a collective understanding of their professional development requirements within their own institutional context.

5.3.3 Recommendation Three

*That TVET institutions analyse their current approaches to leadership succession planning while being mindful of the need to create a culture of mutual support for those who aspire to a leadership role in the future.*

The final recommendation is that senior institutional and TVET leaders should be coming together and taking stock of their institution’s approach to leadership succession planning. They should be considering an institution wide approach to leadership succession planning. If advancement into leadership positions is to be seen as an attractive proposition, institutions will need to improve their communications to staff. This will be essential if senior leadership is to dispel rumours. Further, institutions need to recognise the value of TVET lecturers’ qualifications and encourage career progression through organised leadership development (Callan et al., 2007; Falk & Smith, 2003; Groves, 2007; Guthrie, 2010; Van Velsor & McCauley, 2004). Institutions also need to create conditions where those who aspire to a leadership role are both mentored and supported by their institution.
5.4 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

5.4.1 The Strengths of the Research

The significant strengths of this research are the validity and triangulation of the data collection using two data collection methods, the interview with TVET leaders (plus one senior leader) and focus groups with TVET lecturers in two New Zealand polytechnic institutions. It is noted that triangulation is the use of two or more methods of data collection to provide different perceptions of practice. Also, triangulation can strengthen the credibility and viability of this research.

5.4.2 The Limitations of the Research

One of the limitations is the significant gap in the available literature relating to TVET within the New Zealand context. The literature reviewed stems from TVET mainly from the United Nations, European Union, Australia and the United Kingdom. New Zealand has a very sparse pool of TVET literature available.

Another limitation is that the findings taken from the focus groups. The relatively small sample can be further strengthened by widening participation by way of a survey, distributed to lecturers from a variety of trades. Their voices and perspectives are missing from this data and these perspectives would have been an interesting addition to better substantiate the findings from both focus groups. Further, the relatively small number of polytechnics in New Zealand limited the number of interviewees (n7) and participants in the focus groups (n14). Therefore, the findings of this research cannot be considered to be wholly representative of all New Zealand’s polytechnic institutions.
5.5 FUTURE RESEARCH

The researcher recommends that future research could be conducted with a larger sample of TVET leaders and lecturers across the New Zealand polytechnic sector. The work could be strengthened further by interviewing more senior leaders across the New Zealand polytechnic sector to gain their perspectives of the professional development needs and leadership development opportunities for their institution’s TVET leaders.

5.6 SUMMARY

In summary, this study adds to the limited, sparse body of literature and knowledge on the New Zealand TVET leaders and their leadership development opportunities. The research investigates the role of TVET leaders as they try to make sense of quality and compliance while trying to lead their TVET lecturing teams. New Zealand TVET leaders face difficulties in meeting the requirements of their institutions because of an excessive workload, lack of institutional administrative support and lack of effective leadership development.

For New Zealand polytechnics to be effective in their future endeavours, they need to consider formalising leadership succession planning. The key issues and recommendations outlined in this research need to be considered by senior leaders, the NZQA and the TEC to build a robust TVET education system.
REFERENCES


Title of Thesis: An Investigation into the Current Environment for Technical Vocational Education and Training Leadership Development in New Zealand Polytechnics

My name is Lee Baglow and I am currently enrolled in the Master of Educational Leadership and Management degree in the Department of Education at Unitec Institute of Technology. The research will identify the professional development needs of middle leaders of VET (Vocational Education and Training) programmes in New Zealand tertiary education. The project aims to build an understanding of the complexities of VET middle leadership and identify possibilities for tertiary education institutions to build VET leadership capacity and capability.

To achieve sufficient information and maximise the benefit of my research I have designed 3 key guiding questions:

1. What are the leadership development opportunities for TVET leaders in two polytechnic institutions?

2. What do polytechnics require from their TVET leaders?
3. What are the professional development needs of TVET leaders?

Your institution has agreed to participate.

I will be collecting data through interviews and focus groups. Both the focus group and interviews should be no longer than 45 minutes and would appreciate your participation in this. These focus groups and interviews will be recorded using an electronic device. The recording will be transcribed by the researcher and the transcripts will be seen by the researcher and two research supervisors. I can provide you with a summary of the focus group if required.

My supervisor is Dr Josephine Howse and may be contacted by email or phone.

Phone: (09) 815 4321 ext 8348
Email jhowse@unitec.ac.nz

Yours sincerely

Lee Baglow

Post Graduate Student

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2015-1052)

This study has been approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee from (14 October, 2015) to (14 October, 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 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix B

Interview Participant Consent Form

From: Lee Baglow – Post Graduate Student and Researcher

Re: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

Thesis Title: An Investigation into the Current Environment for Technical Vocational Education and Training Leadership Development in New Zealand Polytechnics

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

I understand that I don't have to be part of this if I don't want to and I may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of the research project.

I understand that everything I say is confidential to the focus group. I also understand that all the information that I give will be digitally stored, securely on a USB drive for a period of 5 years.

I understand that my interview will be recorded and transcribed.

I understand that I can see the finished research document.
I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be a part of this project.

**Participant Name:** ……………………………

**Participant Signature:** ………………………….. **Date:** ……………………………

**Project Researcher:** ……………………………. **Date:** ……………………………

**UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER:** (2015-1052)

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 25 September 2015 to 30 November 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 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix C

Focus Group Participant Consent Form

From: Lee Baglow – Post Graduate Student and Researcher

Re: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

Thesis Title: An Investigation into the Current Environment for Technical Vocational Education and Training Leadership Development in New Zealand Polytechnics

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

I understand that I don't have to be part of this if I don't want to and I may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of the research project.

I understand that everything I say is confidential to the focus group. I also understand that all the information that I give will be digitally stored, securely on a USB drive for a period of 5 years.

I understand that the focus group will be recorded and transcribed.

I understand that I can see the finished research document.
I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be a part of this project.

Participant Name: .................................

Participant Signature: .......................... Date: ........................................

Project Researcher: ............................... Date: ........................................

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2015-1052)
This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 25 September 2015 to 30 November 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 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix D

Interview Schedule

The Identification of Needs in Vocational Leadership Capability and Leadership Development in New Zealand Tertiary Institutions

Question 1. Could you please give your job title and how long have you held your position?

Question 2. What are your main areas of responsibility and focus of activity associated with your role?

Question 3. Have you been offered any professional development activities that are specifically directed to advancing your leadership position?

Question 4. Does your role accurately compare to your position description?

Question 5. Are you expected to engage with disciplinary issues and engage with performance management?

Question 6. Do you consider that you have sufficient time to lead and support and develop your team?

Question 7. Would you consider applying for a more senior leader/management position?
Question 8. How do you approach succession planning?

Question 9. Considering the current tertiary environment, is it possible for a vocational trades staff member to achieve a significant leadership role?
Full name of author: ..........Lee Lenard Baglow

ORCID number (Optional): .................................................

Full title of thesis/dissertation/research project ('the work'):
An Investigation into the Current Environment for Technical Vocational Education and Training Leadership Development in New Zealand Polytechnics.

Practice Pathway:  
Vehicle Systems and Materials

Degree:  
Master of Educational Leadership and Management

Year of presentation: 2016

Principal Supervisor: Dr Josephine Howse

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