Voices of the future: An exploration of teachers' leadership aspirations

Submitted by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

Faculty of Education

Australian Catholic University

Statement of Authorship and Sources

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No parts of this thesis have been submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

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All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics/Safety Committees (where required).

Therese M. Barrington   July, 2015

Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to the following people who supported me along this journey.

To Associate Professor Elizabeth Labone, for her guidance, honesty and patience as my supervisor, thank you for your wisdom and friendship. My gratitude is extended to all at ACU who contributed their expertise and encouragement, particularly my fellow students, JH and Barbara, who walked this path with me.

To my friends and colleagues for their interest and affirmation and to the participants of this study who contributed so much, thank you.

Finally, my deepest gratitude to my family, especially my mother, who gave me a lifelong interest in learning; my beautiful daughters, Katherine and Clare, and grandson, Peter, who kept me grounded; and my husband, John, whose unconditional support, patience and love encouraged me down this path.

Abstract

The ageing demographic of school leaders has created opportunities for teachers to take up school leadership positions as principals, deputy principals and middle leaders (Preston, 2003). Shortages of suitable applicants for the position of principal have led to the study of the many factors that influence teachers' decisions to become school leaders (Dorman & d'Arbon, 2003; Lacey, 2004). There is a significant gap in the educational literature on aspirants to middle leadership positions, as the predominant focus of research on leadership in schools has been on principals (Anderson et al., 2007).

This study addresses this gap by exploring the personal and professional experiences and interactions that form leadership aspirations, providing insights into the career decisions of teachers and the ways in which teachers may be encouraged to apply for middle leadership positions. The study also aims to identify the sources that discourage leadership aspirations.

Specifically, the study addresses an overarching question: How do teachers form leadership aspirations? This question will be explored using the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' leadership aspirations?

2. What are the sources of teachers' leadership aspirations?

    Subquestion: In what ways have mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and personal characteristics formed teachers' leadership aspirations?

3. What are the sources that discourage teachers from aspiring to leadership?

    Subquestion: In what ways have mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and personal characteristics discouraged teachers' leadership aspirations?

A further subquestion for the second and third research questions addresses differences between the two younger cohorts of leaders, those aged between 20 to 32 years and those aged between 33 to 45 years: Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?

The study explores leadership aspirations from the theoretical perspective of social cognitive theory, specifically framing the study in terms of the sources of self-efficacy

(Bandura, 1986). An interpretive approach was adopted, using case study method. Data gathering methods were survey questionnaires administered to 67 teachers, one-to-one interviews conducted with 34 teachers, and written reflections by seven teachers. Participants were divided into two age groups, 20 to 32 years and 33 to 45 years, in order to obtain information on generational differences.

Analysis of the data shows that there are a number of sources of leadership aspirations; these include: high self-efficacy; formative experiences in childhood and adolescence; transformative experiences, such as the death of a friend or close relative; vicarious experience; and social persuasion. Results confirm other studies on the impact of each of these sources, and provide further understanding of the type of mastery experiences, vicarious experiences and social persuasion, which are sources of leadership aspirations. The study found interactions between the sources. Additionally, the results indicate some differences between the sources of leadership aspirations between the two age groups.

Investigation of the third research question also reveals a number of sources that discouraged leadership aspirations; these include: personal attributes and beliefs; lack of formative experiences; difficult experiences in leadership; heightened awareness of models who were not coping; and negative evaluations of leaders. Fewer differences were found between non-aspirants in the two age groups than between aspirants of different ages.

Based upon the results, the study presents a model for leader formation. Implications for further research on the sources of leadership aspirations and the interactions between these sources, both in the personal and professional context, are presented. Recommendations are advanced in respect of the identification and nurturing of aspiring school leaders and those who may have avoided or become disengaged from aspiring to school leadership. These recommendations include: early identification of aspirants, recognition of the importance of learning through professional experience and peer mentoring programmes, and creating a culture of collaboration and support for school leaders.

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Glossary

Assistant Year Coordinator: Teacher in a school who supports the Year Coordinator in taking responsibility for the well-being of a group of students within a particular year. Teachers in this role in the schools studied are given a time allocation.

Careers Advisor: *Middle leader in a school who is responsible for career advice and providing support to students. Teachers in this role in the schools studied are given a time allocation and monetary allowance.

Curriculum Coordinator: *Middle leader in a school who oversees Key Learning Area (KLA) Coordinators and is responsible for initiatives that promote academic aspects of the school. Teachers in this role in the schools studied are given a time allocation and monetary allowance.

Evangelisation Coordinator: *Middle leader in a school who is responsible for initiatives that promote the Catholic faith. Teachers in this role in the schools studied are given a time allocation and monetary allowance.

Formation: "Preparatory socialisation processes and experiences that served to later position … aspirants to leadership in a state of social and psychological readiness to assume responsibility and authority" (Gronn, 1999, p. 32).

Gifted and Talented Coordinator: *Middle leader in a school who is responsible for initiatives for gifted and talented students. Teachers in this role in the schools studied are given a time allocation.

House Coordinator: Teacher in a school who is responsible for promoting house spirit. Teachers in this role in the schools studied are given a time allocation.

KLA Coordinator: *Middle leader in a school who is responsible for a key learning area (specific subject in the NSW curriculum or group of subjects such as Creative and Performing Arts). This position is also referred to as Subject Heads or Subject Coordinators. Teachers in this role in the schools studied are given a time allocation and monetary allowance.

Literacy Coordinator: *Middle leader in a school who is responsible for initiatives to improve the literacy of students. Teachers in this role in the schools studied are given a time allocation.

*Middle leader: "A 'Middle Leader' means a teacher appointed to be responsible for: leadership of teachers including the management of the work in an area or areas of a school, whether in an area of instruction and curriculum, including the delivery of the curriculum [KLAs], the supervision and support of students, the co-ordination of

pastoral care or other programs and any other responsibilities or a combination of responsibilities as determined by the Principal. A Middle Leader is an appointment where the teacher is allocated a monetary allowance." (Catholic Commission for Employment Relations, 2013, p. 115).

Pastoral Coordinator: *Middle leader in a school who oversees Year Coordinators and is responsible for initiatives that promote the well-being of students. Teachers in this role in the schools studied are given a time allocation and monetary allowance.

Positional leadership: Hierarchical view of leadership recognising formal positions of added responsibility.

Principal: The senior leader of a school, also referred to as head teacher (UK) and educational administrator (US).

Professional socialisation: An interactive and "dynamic developmental process through which values and norms of the profession are internalized and a professional identity is gained … [which] requires dialogue, collaboration, and mentoring by an experienced professional to serve as a guide" (Normore, 2004, p. 112).

Senior leader: Principal or deputy principal.

Socialisation: "Processes by which an individual selectively acquires the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to perform a social role effectively" (Normore & Gaetane, 2010, p. 109).

Sport Coordinator: *Middle leader in a school who is responsible for organisation of sport. Teachers in this role in the schools studied are given a time allocation.

Teachers' leadership aspirations: The level of position of school leadership that teachers desire to attain (adapted from Lacey, 2003).

Technology Coordinator: *Middle leader in a school who is responsible for cross-curricular teaching, implementing technology and technology infrastructure in the schools. Teachers in this role in the schools studied are given a time allocation and monetary allowance.

Year Coordinator: *Middle leader in a school who is responsible for the well-being of a group of students within a particular year. Teachers in this role in the schools studied are given a time allocation and monetary allowance.

Acronyms

PDHPE: Personal Development, Health and Physical Education

HSIE: Human Society and its Environments

CAPA: Creative and Performing Arts

TAS: Technical and Applied Studies

Chapter One – Introduction

Schools and school systems in Australia have attempted to identify aspirants to school leadership or relied on self-identification of aspirants, with mixed success (Anderson et al., 2007; Dinham, Anderson, Caldwell, & Weldon, 2011). One reason for this is that self-identification of one's leadership ability is a gradual process that develops over time through personal and professional experiences and interactions with people (Gronn, 1999; Gronn & Lacey, 2004). Understanding the sources of aspirations may offer insights into ways in which teachers may be nurtured and encouraged to apply for leadership, and why other teachers do not aspire to leadership.

The purpose of this qualitative case study seeks to identify teachers' leadership aspirations and to examine the factors that encourage teachers under the age of 46 to aspire to school leadership or discourage them from leadership.

1.1 Background to the research

Over the last ten years there has been a shift in the demographics of the teaching population (McKenzie, Kos, Walker, & Hong, 2008; Owen, Kos, & McKenzie, 2008; Skilbeck & Connell, 2004). In Australian schools, 36% of teachers are aged more than 50 years and 51% are over 45 years of age (McKenzie, Weldon, Rowley, Murphy, & McMillan, 2014). This large cohort of teachers in their late career stage, "had early and excellent opportunities for promotion and leadership" (Preston, 2003, p. 43) and have dominated the positions of leadership in schools. These positions of leadership include senior leaders: principal and deputy or assistant principal; and middle leaders "who may be responsible for teams, year levels or curriculum areas" (Anderson et al., 2007, p. 33), also referred to as pastoral leaders or subject leaders (Busher, 2005). In Australia, the average age of secondary senior leaders is 51.5 years, and 75% of secondary senior leaders are over 45 years old (McKenzie et al., 2014). Replacements for school leaders will need to be recruited over the next few years as the present school leaders retire (Anderson et al., 2007; Owen et al., 2008).

There is substantial evidence, however, to indicate that many teachers, middle leaders and even deputy principals do not aspire to take on the most senior school leadership position, that of principal (Cranston, 2007; Crawford & Earley, 2011; MacBeath, 2011; Rhodes, Brundrett, & Nevill, 2008). Whilst principal positions comprise 3.6% of the

teaching staff positions (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015), only 1.1% of secondary teachers reported that they intended to apply for a principal position within the next three years in a national Australian survey, according to McKenzie et. al. (2014). The increasing number of principal positions that need to be filled is not being met by the declining number of applications for principal vacancies (Gronn & Rawlings-Sanaei, 2003; Jackson, Payne, Fraser, Bezzina, & McCormick, 2010; Lacey, 2003).

There are a number of factors that discourage teachers from aspiring to the position of principal. Increased accountability and heightened expectations, coupled with a high workload, have made the position of principal unattractive, with teachers reluctant to apply for this position (Bush, 2011; d' Arbon, 2006; Gronn, 2003; MacBeath, 2011; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006, 2009). Yet for some teachers, the position of principal is attractive as aspirants feel they can "make a difference" (d' Arbon, Duignan, & Duncan, 2002, p. 478).

Research has concentrated on the deterrents to seeking promotion to the role of principal, and ways to address these through succession planning, leadership development and talent identification (Bush, 2009, 2012; Crawford & Earley, 2011; Dinham et al., 2011; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008, 2012). Whilst there is a wealth of research on teachers' aspirations to become a principal, there is minimal research on aspirations to take on other positions of leadership in schools. These middle leader positions are important not only as the senior leadership positions are drawn from the cohort of middle leaders, but also because middle leaders ideally "are responsible for leading improvement in teaching and learning and student well-being" within the school community (Gurr & Drysdale, 2012, p. 410). In Australia, information on the interest of teachers in aspiring to middle leadership positions is not readily available (Anderson et al., 2007). One study, an Australian nationwide survey in 2013, found that 28% of Australian secondary teachers intended to seek promotion in their present school, and 18% intended to "seek promotion to another school" in the next three years (McKenzie et al., 2014, p. 109). Differences in leadership aspirations between teachers in different age groups were also noted in this survey. Over 45% of secondary teachers who were younger than 36 years of age indicated that they would seek promotion in their current school within the next three years, compared to 30% of teachers 36 to 50 years of age and 14% of teachers over 51 years of age (McKenzie et al., 2014).

These figures offer more questions than answers in providing insight into the aspirations of teachers to positional leadership in Australian secondary schools. The first of these is: what could be the reasons for the disparity in aspirations between different age groups? Some studies have speculated on why school leadership has not necessarily been seen as an attractive career path for the cohort of teachers aged 36 to 45 years. These teachers had fewer opportunities to take on positions of responsibility and leadership in schools because the older cohort of teachers held these positions (Preston, 2003) and they have witnessed the heavy workloads of school leaders and valued a balance of work and family (Skilbeck & Connell, 2004). Other factors that may influence the decision of teachers not to apply for leadership positions are: wishing to remain in the classroom, a lack of preparation and training, little encouragement from colleagues and school leaders, limited career advice, "reluctance to assume a new professional identity" (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009, p. 385) and poor confidence (McKenzie et al., 2014; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008). Whether these factors have had a greater influence on teachers in the mid 30 to 40 years' age range than the younger cohort of teachers is a matter for further research.

The reasons for the considerably larger proportion of teachers aged 35 years or less who aspire to taking on positional leadership in schools are worth investigating. This younger cohort of teachers is a medium sized group, comprising 26% of the secondary teaching population in 2013 (McKenzie et al., 2014). Two studies have predicted that this younger cohort will have school leadership opportunities early in their careers (Barty, Thomson, Blackmore, & Sachs, 2005; Preston, 2003).

One difference between the cohort of teachers aged 36 to 45 years and the younger group of teachers is the significant support and induction which has been offered to the younger group of teachers. Since October 2004, all teachers commencing teaching in NSW for the first time are required to demonstrate that they are competent in professional teaching standards. As part of the requirement of accreditation, beginning teachers are offered induction programs, mentors and support (Board of Studies, n.d.). In the Staff in Australian Schools report over 97% of early career teachers had received some form of assistance (McKenzie et al., 2014). Many of the older teachers began work as casuals or on short-term contracts because of a surplus in teaching, and they were given little support and effective induction into teaching (Preston, 2003). Whether guided induction has encouraged the development of leadership aspirations for the

younger cohort, or the lack of support discouraged leadership aspirations for the older group, is also in need of further investigation.

Research into the traits of this younger group may also offer some insight. Skilbeck and Connell (2004) raised the question as to "whether there are changing values, expectations and lifestyles, particularly among younger entrants [to the teaching workforce]" (p. 21). This new generation of school leaders, born between 1980 and 1994 (McCrindle, 2006) belong to the generation commonly referred to as Generation Y. In any discussions about a whole generation having uniform ideas and values, the diversity of the members of the group is ignored. However, despite these limitations, it is clear that there is a certain mindset which can be identified in the age group commonly referred to as Generation Y. Studies identify this generation as self-reliant and independent, looking for increasing responsibility in the workplace (Martin, 2005; McCrindle, 2006). They are entrepreneurial and creative with high expectations of what they are capable of accomplishing. McCrindle (2006) notes that Generation Y employees are resourceful, innovative thinkers who are goal-oriented and success-driven. These qualities may give some indication why more teachers in this age group expressed a desire to develop their leadership potential, though this also is a matter for further research.

Regardless of age differences, a further question arises regarding leadership succession: how can educational systems encourage and support aspiring leaders? In Australia, there are no clear and identifiable typical leader career progression pathways in school leadership (Anderson et al., 2007), nor are there credentialing or mandatory preparation programmes for school leaders (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013). Educational authorities, including schools, systems, professional associations and universities, have responded by implementing programmes that build leadership capacity, such as "first-time and experienced principal mentoring and shadowing programmes, and professional learning programmes for leading teachers and assistant principals" (Anderson et al., 2007, p. 12). Other programmes, such as Western Australia's Rural Aspirant Programme (Wildy & Clarke, 2005) and the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney's "Leaders for the Future" programme (Canavan, 2007), were designed to encourage teachers who have leadership aspirations. The Leaders for the Future programme specifically targeted teachers under 30 years of age who saw their future role in schools as a principal. In the Diocese of Wollongong, where the Catholic secondary schools of this case study are situated,

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several leaders in each school each year over the past six years have been given professional development of leadership skills in the "Learning to Lead" course. Teachers may self-nominate for this course; however, selection of participants from each school has generally been made by the principal, and preference has been given to teachers who have already been appointed to a position of leadership. The course focuses on leadership models and participants complete the Genos Emotional Intelligence programme (Gignac, 2010) and undertake development based on this programme. Enabling access to leadership programs such as those described, and providing professional development opportunities that are essential to the formation of school leaders, which are linked to the career stages of the aspirants is a further challenge for the education systems and providers of these programmes (Anderson et al., 2007).

How do educational systems identify these aspiring leaders in order to enable access to leader development? In Australia, teachers who aspire to school leadership are identified in two ways: they may self-identify or be identified by others, such as senior school leaders, middle leaders or mentors (Anderson et al., 2007; Lacey, 2004). Yet the identification of potential school leaders by educational authorities has had mixed success as both forms of identification are problematic. Identification by senior leaders can lead to "cloning" (Gronn & Lacey, 2006) and relying on teachers to self-identify is also problematic as insufficient well-qualified candidates may apply (Bush, 2011), as self-nomination requires candidates to recognise their ability as leaders and to aspire to school leadership positions.

Yet research supports the conclusion that recognising one's own leadership ability is a lifelong process (Gronn & Lacey, 2004), entailing interactions that shape the potential leader from childhood (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005; Ribbins, Pashiardis, & Gronn, 2003). The gradual process of leader development is open to change through experiences, interactions and self-reflection (Gronn, 1999). Whether or not teachers choose to aspire to leadership may be determined by factors such as support and encouragement from senior leaders and colleagues, successful leadership experience in other positions and confidence in their ability to take on the role (Gronn & Lacey, 2004; McKenzie et al., 2014).

Therefore, in order to understand the developmental needs of potential school leaders, an understanding of the formation of a leader is required. The experiences and

interactions that form leadership aspirations, and the self-reflections of teachers on these, can offer insights into ways in which a teacher becomes aware of their ability to lead and further insights into why other teachers do not aspire to leadership.

Research exploring the key influences of teachers' leadership aspirations may direct school systems into effective ways of identifying and nurturing new leaders and identify those who could lead well but may have avoided or become disengaged from aspiring to school leadership.

1.2 Research problem and research questions

Nationally, the ageing population of school leaders has led to leadership opportunities for the younger cohorts of teachers. Despite the demand for school leaders, little is known about how teachers develop aspirations to lead or which people or experiences may influence these aspirations.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify teachers' leadership aspirations and to examine the sources that form or discourage teachers under the age of 46 to aspire to school leadership, in order to assist those responsible for the supply of school leaders to identify, nurture and support these future leaders. In particular, this research explored the sources of leadership aspirations positions of teachers in three secondary schools in the Diocese of Wollongong from the perspective of these teachers.

With these insights in mind, the review of the literature and theoretical perspective has led to the development of the question that served to guide the study:

How do teachers form leadership aspirations?

This question will be explored using the following research questions:

1.   What are teachers' leadership aspirations?

2.   What are the sources of teachers' leadership aspirations?

         Subquestion: In what ways have mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and personal characteristics formed teachers' leadership aspirations?

3.   What are the sources that discourage teachers from aspiring to leadership?

Subquestion: In what ways have mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and personal characteristics discouraged teachers' leadership aspirations?

A further subquestion for the second and third research questions addresses differences between the two younger cohorts of leaders, those aged between 20 to 32 years and those aged between 33 to 45 years: Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?

1.3 Significance of the research

In the light of the ageing demography of school leaders (Anderson et al., 2007; McKenzie et al., 2014), it is important for schools and education authorities to identify aspirants to school leadership. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) report on school leadership in Australia calls for such research.

> In general, employers, policymakers and researchers lack clear and detailed knowledge of identifiable and typical teacher and leader career mobility and progression pathways, along with such key influences on aspirations as sense of self-efficacy, capability and motivation. … These difficulties with identifying potential school leaders and their pathways are exacerbated by the relative dearth of research into school leadership roles other than principals. Such roles should be the increasing focus of policy attention and research. (Anderson et al., 2007, p. 56)

Research exploring sources of teachers' leadership aspirations may help to nurture these aspiring leaders through suitable professional development and career pathways. The current study, in exploring the influences on aspirations to take on school leadership positions other than the position of principal, aims to address this gap.

The study also aims to identify the factors that discourage aspirations. In doing so, education authorities may be able to use this research to identify those who could lead well, but who may have avoided or become disengaged from aspiring to school leadership.

Finally, the study aims to investigate generational differences in leadership aspirations and how these differences might be reflected in the design of professional development opportunities.

1.4 Methodology

Given the purposes of the current study, the researcher has adopted an interpretive design to explore how teachers formed their leadership aspirations positions. The epistemological framework of constructionism was used in order to explore the participants' individual sources of leadership aspirations from their lived experience. The methodology of case study was employed as it enabled an in-depth exploration of the sources of teachers' leadership aspirations and complemented both the study's epistemological and theoretical perspectives.

For data gathering, three main strategies were used: a survey, interviews and written reflections. Teaching staff from three secondary schools in the Diocese of Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia, were surveyed to gain information on demographics and leadership aspirations and for identification of interview participants. In further phases of the study data were gathered in interviews with teachers in particular age groups who clearly expressed leadership aspirations, or who just as definitely expressed no desire to take on a leadership position.

A significant delimitation has been to keep the research focused on the exploration of the sources of aspirations. No attempt has been made to assess the adequacy of the participants' self-appraisals. The research intentionally remained a mainly qualitative study in order to gain the perspective of the participants on the influences that they perceived, and to hear their voices. Qualitative research such as semi-structured interviews invite participants to reflect on the influences in their lives that have been the most significant (Usher & Pajares, 2008).

1.5 Outline of the study

This introductory chapter contextualises the problem and clarifies the purpose and research questions. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature, firstly exploring both the encouraging and the discouraging factors to taking on the school leadership position of principal, followed by a similar exploration of encouraging and discouraging factors to the position of middle leader. Models of leader formation are analysed, and the theoretical perspective is explained. The methodology and research design are outlined in Chapter 3, including the research paradigm, data gathering and analysis strategies and ethical considerations. The findings of the study regarding the sources of aspirations and

the sources that discourage aspirations to school leadership are reported in Chapter 4, including responses gathered in the three sources of data: survey, interviews and written reflections. In Chapter 5, the results are discussed in the context of the main research questions and the relevant literature. A model of the formation of a leader is presented. The thesis concludes with implications, conclusions and recommendations for further research and practice in Chapter 6.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

Over the last two decades, international and Australian researchers have attempted to identify encouraging or discouraging factors to teachers' leadership aspirations positions. The literature reviewed in this chapter focuses on studies which reported on these encouraging and discouraging factors, mediators of aspirations and models of formation of school leaders.

The criteria for inclusion in this review are a specific focus on positional leadership and studies conducted from 2000 onwards. The rationale for these criteria is explained in the following paragraphs.

Studies on positional leadership have been included as this hierarchical view of leadership recognises formal positions of added responsibility, positions to which teachers may aspire. As explained above, these positions of leadership in schools are usually those of senior leaders: principal and deputy or assistant principal and middle leaders who are responsible for curriculum or pastoral areas. Positional leadership reflects the career-based view of educational leadership proposed by Gronn (1999). In proposing this understanding of leadership, Gronn (1999) explains that a career movement entails the achievement of a higher rank.

> …when applied to leadership, the notion of career communicates more than the straightforward idea of task performance. In both spheres paid employment and leadership – career has usually signalled the idea of a field of human endeavour in which there is ample scope for, and the possibility of, sequenced and planned movement and, therefore, some sense of anticipated trajectory. (p. 25)

This hierarchal view has been called into question by researchers of career theory such as chaos theory (Bright & Pryor, 2005) or those who propose other views of educational leadership, specifically distributed leadership (Harris & Muijs, 2004) and teacher leadership (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2007; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Murphy, 2005). This researcher acknowledges these other views of leadership; however, the "biographical, life-course career approach" (Gronn, 1999, p. 31) enables an exploration of the formation of aspirations to positional leadership, the central understanding of the study. Therefore, the term "aspiration" is defined as the position of leadership which teachers hope to attain, a definition in keeping with this understanding of positional

leadership. For this same reason, this study is focused on leader development, the development of the individual, rather than leadership development, the development of social and organisational structures (Day, 2011).

The second criterion in selecting the literature for this review is date of publication. The literature review includes studies conducted from 2000 onwards, as more recent studies were considered relevant to understanding the aspirations of teachers who are presently in education systems to school leadership positions. The studies reviewed are both international and Australian. Database search terms included: aspirations, school leadership, school leaders, career advancement, positional leadership, formation, development, middle leadership, in various combinations. The literature was found on a number of databases including: Taylor and Francis online, Proquest, Academic OneFile, Emerald, ERIC, ScienceDirect, OECD Periodicals, Ovid PsycARTICLES. The reference lists of articles from early research were used to locate additional, relevant studies. A reflection approach has been used to critically synthesise and analyse the available literature.

One of the challenges in reviewing the literature is the very limited research into any school leadership positions other than the position of principal, also known as head teacher in the UK and educational administrator in the US. Therefore the review includes studies of the factors that encourage teachers to aspire to become principals or discourage them from doing so, as well as the small body of research focusing on the factors that encourage classroom teachers to aspire to become middle leaders or discourage them from doing so.

2.1 Position of principal

Factors that encourage teachers to become senior leaders, and those that discourage them from becoming senior leaders, particularly the position of principal, have been categorised as intrinsic or internal and extrinsic or external (Bush, 2009; Coleman, 2001; Cranston, 2007; d' Arbon et al., 2002; Dorman & d'Arbon, 2003; Hancock & Müller, 2009; Howley, Andrianaivo, & Perry, 2005; Lacey, 2003; MacBeath, 2011; Oplatka & Tamir, 2009; Smith, 2011b; Young & McLeod, 2001). The literature also provides insights into mediators that impact on teachers' aspirations to take on the position of principal, such as gender, professional and personal support, size of school, the promotional process and community expectations of principals (Barty et al., 2005;

Draper & McMichael, 2003; Kimber, 2003; McKenzie et al., 2014; Oplatka & Tamir, 2009; Smith, 2011b). The review below focuses on each of these factors.

2.1.1 Factors encouraging aspirations

Factors that encourage teachers' aspirations to take on the position of principal are both intrinsic, such as beliefs about leadership and the need to be challenged, and extrinsic such as career advancement, status and salary support (Cranston, 2007; d' Arbon et al., 2002; Hancock & Müller, 2009; Howley et al., 2005; Hu, 2008; Lacey, 2003; McKenzie et al., 2014; Muñoz, Pankake, Ramalho, Mills, & Simonsson, 2014; Smith, 2011b; Su, Gamage, & Mininberg, 2003; Young & McLeod, 2001).

Beliefs about leadership

The belief that the position of principal offers the opportunity to be an agent of educational change is the most commonly reported encouraging factor in the studies for teachers to become principals. This reason is important for teachers in a variety of roles from a number of different countries (Cranston, 2007; d' Arbon et al., 2002; Hancock & Müller, 2009; Howley et al., 2005; Hu, 2008; Lacey, 2003; McKenzie et al., 2014; Smith, 2011b; Su et al., 2003; Young & McLeod, 2001). More specifically, aspirants consider the role of principal as positively affecting the teaching and learning process, particularly impacting on the lives of many children (Smith, 2011b; Young & McLeod, 2001). Teachers aspire to take on the position of principal not only because of the opportunity to make educational changes within the school, but also to lead educational reform beyond the school (Cubillo & Brown, 2003; d' Arbon et al., 2002).

Being able to effect educational change is consistently reported as a significant reason teachers aspire to the position of principal. This finding is reported across international literature, by teachers in a number of different educational roles, such as students in higher educational programs, teachers, middle leaders, deputy principals and principals (Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Hancock & Müller, 2009; Howley et al., 2005; McKenzie et al., 2014; Su et al., 2003). Both US and German students in principal preparation programs in their respective countries considered that "the desire to make a difference" was important as a reason to take on the position of principal (Hancock & Müller, 2009, p. 301). "The need to exert a significant influence on school change" was also a significant reason for choosing this career path for both American and Australian school

principals (Su et al., 2003, p. 48), although Australian principals were less concerned about the purely altruistic reasons than the more idealistic American principals. The researchers attribute this to differences in the samples: the American principals were completing their level two accreditation programs together and "would have been more articulate in defending their decision to provide a more unselfish motive", whereas the Australian group of principals had not had the similar experience of working together and "were perhaps more forthcoming in expressing their inner feelings" (Su et al., 2003, p. 47). Results contrary to Su's study are found in other Australian studies with larger samples. The Staff in Australian Schools survey reported that 69% of the secondary school teachers who anticipated applying for a position of principal or deputy principal nominated leading school development as a factor influencing their decision (McKenzie et al., 2014), and "the opportunity to shape educational change" (p. 156) was a significant reason for aspiring to the position of principal in Lacey's study (2003).

More specifically, this factor has been identified as effecting positive change in the teaching and learning process (Cranston, 2007; Lacey, 2003; Smith, 2011b; Young & McLeod, 2001). Research has shown that the principal has an influence on the academic outcomes of students (Anderson et al., 2007; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Two studies found, through qualitative interview data, that principals saw their role not only as a means of facilitating the learning process to improve academic outcomes for students, but also as influencing the development of the whole child (Smith, 2011b; Young & McLeod, 2001). Empowering students to be lifelong learners was a reason for the participants of Young and McLeod's study (2001) to become educational administrators. The principals in Smith's study (2011b) described their role as "equipping pupils with the confidence and skills to develop throughout life and to achieve what they wanted to achieve, to the best of their ability" (p. 519). "Pupils, and pupil achievement, were clearly central to their motivation and aspirations" (Smith, 2011b, p. 520). The role of the principal is compared favourably to that of a classroom teacher in affecting the lives of a larger number of students, particularly by teachers who aspire to take on the position of principal or who are in this senior leadership position (Howley et al., 2005; Smith, 2011b; Young & McLeod, 2001).

The ability to effect educational change lies in the capacity of the principal to do so within the school, and beyond the school. Australian deputy principals in Cranston's study (2007) considered the "capacity to have a more strategic influence on education –

in my school and beyond" (p. 118) as a significant reason to apply for a principal's position, whilst many of the Australian deputy principals and middle leaders in Catholic schools in d'Arbon et al.'s (2002) study aspired to the position of principal because they felt they could "make a significant contribution to Catholic education and to the formation of young people" (p. 474). In a study of female educational administration students from nine different countries Cubillo and Brown (2003) reported "an altruistic desire to improve the lot of future generations of women" (p. 289) was a reason to aspire to take on senior leadership.

Whilst the belief that the principal of a school can make educational change is the most commonly reported factor encouraging teachers to want to take on this position, studies of teachers also found that the intrinsic need to be challenged is a factor in teachers aspiring to become principals.

The need to be challenged

The need for personal and professional challenge is the second most frequently reported reason teachers want to become school principals (Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Gronn & Lacey, 2004; Hancock & Müller, 2009; Howley et al., 2005; Hu, 2008; McKenzie et al., 2014; Rhodes, Brundrett, & Nevill, 2009; Smith, 2011b). This is more specifically described as the opportunity to be challenged in a different way from the challenges experienced by teachers in the classroom (McKenzie et al., 2014; Smith, 2011b). Of the Australian secondary teachers who anticipated applying for the position of principal or deputy principal in the next three years, 65% considered that challenges other than classroom teaching were considered to be important in their decision (McKenzie et al., 2014). Cubillo and Brown (2003) found that the women in their study considered their need for "self-actualisation" would be met in senior educational leadership positions. Howley et al. (2005) identify this factor in a very different manner, namely as an opportunity to implement creative personal ideas. Further elaboration of what these creative ideas might be was not explored. Smith's (2011b) qualitative study offers a more detailed understanding of what these challenges are: contributing new ideas and initiatives, requiring a range of skills, overseeing projects and being involved in a range of diverse opportunities.

The intrinsic factors of effecting educational change and the need to be challenged have been found to be motivators for teachers to become principals, as were extrinsic factors.

Extrinsic factors

The extrinsic factors associated with the position of principal, such as salary and position, are further reasons reported for teachers being interested in seeking the position of principal (d' Arbon et al., 2002; Howley et al., 2005). These factors were not considered as salient as the intrinsic factors such as beliefs about leadership or the need to be challenged (d' Arbon et al., 2002; Su et al., 2003). In their study of the reasons American and Australian participants became principals, Su et al. (2003) found that a common view was that intrinsic factors were much more important than extrinsic factors. Despite this, extrinsic factors, such as career advancement and status of the position, are factors that encourage deputy principals and middle leaders to aspire to take on the position of principal (Cranston, 2007; Hu, 2008; McKenzie et al., 2014).

An extrinsic factor, the desire for career advancement, is one of the reasons teachers want to become school principals. "A desire for promotion after doing the same job for some time" was a factor that encouraged deputy principals to apply for the position of principal (Cranston, 2007). "Having a career option" (Hu, 2008, p. 97) and being at "the right stage of career to apply" (McKenzie et al., 2014, p. 110) were seen as significant reasons for desiring the position of principal or deputy principal. This factor supports the view of leadership as a career adopted in the current study.

A further extrinsic factor, remuneration, was another factor reported by teachers wanting to become principals. The 2013 Staff in Australian Schools survey found that 21% of the teachers who anticipated applying for a deputy principal or principal position in the next three years indicated that financial benefits were the reason to aspire to take on these positions (McKenzie et al., 2014). Good remuneration was also a factor in seeking promotion for the deputy principals in Cranston's (2007) study.

Whilst these studies reported these factors as encouraging teachers to become leaders, research has also focused on the factors that discourage teachers from becoming principals. Many of these investigations arose in explanation of a shortage of suitable candidates for the positions of principal in a number of countries (Bush, 2011; d' Arbon et al., 2002; MacBeath, 2011).

2.1.2 Factors that discourage aspirations

Both Australian and international studies have identified a number of factors that discourage teachers from aspiring to the position of school principal: enjoyment of present position; the diverse, complex and demanding facets of the role of principal; the difficulty of balancing work with other aspects of life and poor remuneration. (d' Arbon et al., 2002; Dorman & d'Arbon, 2003; Gronn & Lacey, 2005; Howley et al., 2005; MacBeath, 2011; Shen, Cooley, & Wegenke, 2004).

Enjoyment of present position

Enjoyment in their current position is the most commonly reported reason for teachers not to aspire to take on the position of principal. Deputy principals considered satisfaction in their current duties as a reason not to become a principal, whilst teachers and middle leaders identified the satisfaction of working directly with children, being directly involved in the learning and teaching process and having close professional relationships in their present position as reasons not to become principals (Cranston, 2007; d' Arbon et al., 2002; Dorman & d'Arbon, 2003; Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; Howley et al., 2005; Oplatka & Tamir, 2009; Smith, 2011b). In a number of interviews with deputy principals, Oplatka and Tamir (2009) identify some aspects of the role of deputy principal that contributed to their sense of job satisfaction: they were able to focus more on pastoral care rather than the administrative role of the principal, they enjoyed a sense of professional autonomy and they had a high sense of self-efficacy and professionalism in this position.

The enjoyment of engaging with young people and teaching has been found to be a reason for teachers, middle leaders and deputies to remain in their current positions (Cranston, 2007; Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; Smith, 2011b). The middle leaders in Fletcher-Campbell's study viewed their leadership position "as a way of developing the curriculum relating to the subject area to which they were committed" (p.9), and moving on to a higher position meant moving away from this commitment. In other studies, teachers were adamantly committed to remaining in the classroom. The role of principal was seen as a rejection of the main role of a teacher (Howley et al., 2005; Smith, 2011b). Smith reports that: "Women who prioritized pupils and teaching felt alienated from school leadership, and had no wish to take on values and responsibilities that were so far askew of their preferences" (Smith, 2011b, p. 527). This dichotomy is

challenged by principals who considered that their role was to empower students and improve the teaching learning process (Coleman, 2001; Smith, 2011b; Young & McLeod, 2001), as discussed above.

Despite the positive view of their position held by principals, the perception of the role is another reason reported for teachers, middle leaders and deputy principals not to aspire to take on this position.

The role of principal

Teachers are discouraged from becoming principals because of their perceptions of the role as demanding, with increasing accountability and community expectations (Dorman & d'Arbon, 2003; Draper & McMichael, 2003; MacBeath, 2011; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009; Sperandio & Kagoda, 2010; Thompson, 2009). Teachers, middle leaders and deputy principals perceive the role as isolated, with overwhelming responsibility (Rhodes et al., 2009; Sperandio & Kagoda, 2010; Thompson, 2009). The increasing workload of principals and the accountabilities and responsibilities which are demanded of principals have made the role unattractive (Dorman & d'Arbon, 2003; Draper & McMichael, 2003; MacBeath, 2011).

Teachers considered the role of principal to be isolating and lonely, and fear of the loss of close relationships with colleagues and children discouraged teachers from aspiring to this role (d' Arbon et al., 2002; Dorman & d'Arbon, 2003; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003, December). While this fear of isolation and disconnection is a very strong discouraging factor for teachers (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003, December; Smith, 2011b), principals found ways to overcome this isolation, such as "learning to manage their own feelings and level of emotional involvement in the job" (p.524), as well as developing professional and personal supports (Coleman, 2001; Smith, 2011b).

The principal's role is reportedly perceived by teachers and deputy principals as demanding and stressful, a perception also discouraging teachers from aspiring to this position. One reason that this role is seen as demanding is the extensive workload principals are expected to carry. Gronn (2003) asserted that the principal's role has expanded to the point where it is described as "greedy work".

> Work becomes greedy when, as part of its intensification … the role space occupied by a role incumbent expands. Role expansion increases to such an

extent that the incumbent becomes responsible for an amount and quality of work output, and a depth of emotional and cognitive commitment and work engagement that might previously have been demanded of more than one person. (p. 150)

Such role intensification has led to a withdrawal by teachers from the potential leadership position of principal (Barty et al., 2005; Draper & McMichael, 2003; Gronn, 2003). The time and responsibility required of the person in this role discouraged not only teachers (McKenzie et al., 2014; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009; Sperandio & Kagoda, 2010), but also deputy principals (Cranston, 2007; Gronn & Lacey, 2006; Oplatka & Tamir, 2009). This was reported in Australian (Gronn & Lacey, 2006) and international studies (Draper & McMichael, 2003; Oplatka & Tamir, 2009; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). In Oplatka and Tamir's study (2009), Israeli female deputy principals had unenthusiastic images of principalship. The high stress of the jobs led to fear of health problems, and they were "unwilling to pay the price and take headship upon themselves" (p. 228).

Community demands, such as increased accountability, as well as the "anticipated stress associated with having to 'play politics'" (p. 765), were factors that discouraged US teachers from aspiring to school leadership positions (Howley et al., 2005). A deterrent to taking on the role of principal was reported as what Smith (2011b) has labelled the "politico-educational culture" (p. 527), a culture in which principals have increasing responsibility for political requirements, such as measurable outcomes, and "accountability for societal conditions beyond an educator's control" (Howley et al., 2005, p. 765). This finding is consistent with studies from a number of countries: the United Kingdom (Draper & McMichael, 2003; MacBeath, 2011; Smith, 2011b), the United States (Howley et al., 2005; Su et al., 2003) and Australia (Cranston, 2007; Dorman & d'Arbon, 2003; Su et al., 2003). An unsupportive external environment, constant change and uncertainty and increasing accountability have been reported as leading to a sense of powerlessness and vulnerability in principals (Draper & McMichael, 2003; Su et al., 2003). MacBeath (2011) explains that a reason for recruitment difficulties to the positions of principal in Scottish schools is the reluctance to be in a position where the principal is open to litigation and to being sacked. Increased accountability and responsibility have reportedly been a deterrent, particularly to senior staff such as deputy principals (Cranston, 2007; Draper & McMichael, 2003).

"The increasingly litigious community in which schools are embedded and a more demanding critical society" are factors discouraging Australian teachers from wanting to become principals (d' Arbon et al., 2002, p. 469). Barty et al. (2005) report that, ironically, principals themselves can deter others from aspiring to the role by voicing frustration with the expectations others have of them.

The position of principal is also considered unattractive because of the complexity of the role. Different aspects of the role are seen as discouraging factors to teachers (d' Arbon et al., 2002; Draper & McMichael, 2003; Gronn & Lacey, 2004; MacBeath, 2011; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009; Thompson, 2009). The perception of the role as administrative and managerial, rather than educational, is a significant disincentive (Gronn & Lacey, 2004; MacBeath, 2011; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). The financial and budgeting role of the principal is also a discouraging factor to teachers, who considered that they are not prepared to manage this aspect of the role (Draper & McMichael, 2003; Gronn & Lacey, 2004; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009; Thompson, 2009). The explicit religious identity and faith dimension of the role of principal was also seen as a deterrent to taking on the role of principal by deputy principals and middle leaders in Catholic schools (d' Arbon et al., 2002; Dorman & d'Arbon, 2003).

In reporting on these discouraging perceptions of the principal's role as demanding, stressful and complex, Draper and McMichael (2003) conclude "if the job of head teacher is not one that committed, experienced and trained staff believe they can and wish to do, then this must be a major concern and the job may need to be both redesigned and differently managed" (p. 194). The conclusion that the intensification of the role requires a reconsideration is supported by a number of other researchers (Cranston, 2007; Gronn & Lacey, 2004).

Work and life balance

Teachers are also discouraged from aspiring to the principal's role because of the impact that this "greedy work" has on other aspects of the principal's life (Cranston, 2007; d' Arbon et al., 2002; Gronn, 2003; MacBeath, 2011; McKenzie et al., 2014; Shen et al., 2004). The intrusion of the role on personal life, resulting in a diminishing quality of life, deters teachers from aspirations to the principal's position (Howley et al., 2005; Lacey, 2003; McKenzie et al., 2014; Shen et al., 2004; Smith, 2011b).

Not only teachers, but also deputy principals were discouraged because of the difficulty of balancing work with personal life for those in the role of principal. Deputy principals reportedly found that managing a balance between work and other aspects of life was easier in their current role (Cranston, 2007; d' Arbon et al., 2002; MacBeath, 2011; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003, December). The significance of these studies is that deputy principals perceive the principal's role as different from their own. In contrast to their own role, deputy principals saw the role of principal "as one characterised by impacting on their work/life balance, holding high responsibilities and accountabilities and moving them away from a teaching and learning focus" (Cranston, 2007, p. 121). Such perceptions of the role of principal discouraged aspirations to take on this position and reinforced satisfaction in the participants' present position.

Poor remuneration

A factor reported to discourage aspirants to become a school principal is poor remuneration. The financial rewards in the role of principal were not seen as commensurate with the increased responsibility and accountability (Cranston, 2007; d' Arbon et al., 2002; Draper & McMichael, 2003; MacBeath, 2011; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009; Shen et al., 2004). In Cranston's study, 62% of the deputy principals surveyed considered that the higher salary was not worth the extra accountabilities and responsibilities.

Studies which explored factors that encouraged or discouraged teachers from taking on the position of principal reported a number of mediators that influence the aspirations of teachers to the role of principal. These mediators are reviewed in the next section.

2.1.3 Mediators

Mediators such as gender, professional and personal support and contextual factors such as the promotional process and school size impact on the decision of teachers to be principals (Barty et al., 2005; Gronn & Lacey, 2004; Howley et al., 2005; Kimber, 2003; McKenzie et al., 2014; McLay, 2008; Oplatka & Tamir, 2009; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006; Smith, 2011b). Each of these mediators both encourages and discourages teachers from taking on the position of school principal.

Gender

The low numbers of women in positions of principal, despite the high proportion of females in the profession (McKenzie et al., 2014; Smith, 2011a), has led to the literature specifically focusing on women and the factors experienced by women that discourage and encourage them to aspire to the position of school principal (Coleman, 2001; McLay, 2008; McLay & Brown, 2000; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003, December; Oplatka & Tamir, 2009; Smith, 2011b; Sperandio & Kagoda, 2010). Barriers such as stereotyping of women and systemic factors such as the promotional process discourage women from seeking the role of principal. A lack of support and the difficulties of balancing work with other aspects of life are also reported as discouraging women from taking on this role. In contrast, women who do receive personal and professional support consider this an important factor in becoming school principals as such support helped nurture their leadership skills and self-confidence (Chan, Ngai, & Choi, 2014; Coleman, 2001; Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Moorosi, 2010).

Stereotypical views of both women and men have led many teachers, including women themselves, into believing that women do not have the capacity to be leaders (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003, December). Studies completed in a variety of countries, South Africa (Moorosi, 2010), Uganda (Sperandio & Kagoda, 2010), Israel (Oplatka & Tamir, 2009), England and Wales (Coleman, 2001) and Australia (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003, December), and an international study of women from nine different countries (Cubillo & Brown, 2003), have reported similar stereotyping which created barriers to leadership and discouraged women from aspiring to the principal's position. Coleman (2001) identifies this barrier as a stereotypical view of the principal's role as masculine and of women as unable to cope with the demands of leadership. The studies, from a wide range of countries, consistently report that a deterrent to women wishing to become principals is the cultural belief that the role of principal is for strong men, a belief supported by males dominating in educational administrative roles. This discouragement is imposed, in some cases, by the women themselves who perceive they do not have the skills to be a principal because of this stereotypical perception of the role (Oplatka & Tamir, 2009; Sperandio & Kagoda, 2010). The female deputy principals in Oplatka and Tamir (2009) reported that they did not consider themselves suitable candidates for the position of principal as they perceived the principal as aggressive, powerful and remote, characteristics they considered contrary to their

personalities. Women reported that in pursuing leadership positions they were perceived as abandoning their families (Muñoz et al., 2014). Young and McLeod (2001) identify a lack of exposure to non-traditional styles of leadership as a factor that discouraged women from perceiving themselves as leaders.

Other factors have reportedly discouraged women from becoming principals, such as lack of leadership experience and training, appropriate mentor schemes and a lack of support (McLay, 2008; Moorosi, 2010; Muñoz et al., 2014; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003, December; Sperandio & Kagoda, 2010). South African female principals reported that a lack of experience and training in middle management positions contributed to their difficulties to attaining promotion (Moorosi, 2010). The female participants in the study by Cubillo and Brown (2003) recalled a lack of support, particularly from men, as their careers advanced. Many of the women in this study were from patriarchal societies, and the researchers reported that these women had experienced "unwelcoming and often hostile male-dominated cultures and environments" (Cubillo & Brown, 2003, p. 286).

Systemic factors, particularly the promotional process including the application and selection procedures, discourage women's aspirations and opportunities to become principals. In a US study of both female and male teachers, quite a number of female teachers who were the more highly educated, older and experienced participants had been overlooked for administrative positions (Howley et al., 2005). Coleman (2001) reported that 62.5% of the female principals in her UK study "felt they had experienced sexist attitudes or bias in respect of job applications or promotions" (p. 87). Various barriers are experienced by women in the promotion process. Men are predominantly the "gate-keepers" in the selection process (Coleman, 2001), and "the male norm of a secondary school principal manifests in the unspoken criteria apparent in the selection process" (Moorosi, 2010, p. 553). Ugandan women teachers did not expect to get support from school administrators and "they had not positioned themselves to do well in the competitive application process" (Sperandio & Kagoda, 2010, p. 22). Sperandio and Kagoda suggest that these women's understanding of the qualifications needed was limited to formal qualifications, and did not extend to the hidden and informal agenda, such as needing to have the patronage of senior administrators.

A further factor discouraging women reported in the literature is the balance of work and other aspects of life. Whilst this is a factor reported for both male and female teachers, two studies reported that this was of greater importance for women (Howley et

al., 2005; Lacey, 2003). The extent to which the challenge of balancing work and other aspects of life discourages women from the role of principal is evident in Smith's (2011b) study which reported that many of the teachers viewed leadership and family life as mutually exclusive. Not only is having family responsibilities a disincentive for women to aspire to take on the position of principal, the need to balance work with family has an impact on the development and timing of women's aspirations (Lacey, 2003; Young & McLeod, 2001). Moorosi (2010) found that the burden of domestic obligations was a more significant issue for younger female principals with children, than for women who were older and who no longer had responsibility for children. This conflict between pursuing career advancement and managing childcare and domestic obligations has led women to delay their career until their children were older (Coleman, 2001).

Several of the studies on women's decisions to become principals explored the reasons for becoming a principal from the point of view of female principals. These studies reported the encouraging personal and professional support that these women had been given (Coleman, 2001; Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Moorosi, 2010; Muñoz et al., 2014; Young & McLeod, 2001). Female teachers identified familial support as encouraging in their progression to the position of principal (Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Mendez-Morse, 2004; Young & McLeod, 2001). All nine women in Cubillo and Brown's study identified the influence of their fathers in their careers. Both mothers and fathers encouraged and actively supported the female administrators in Mendez-Morse's study, acting as both mentors and role models. Professional support has also been reported as an important factor of encouragement in studies specifically exploring women's experience in administrative positions. Former principals (Coleman, 2001; Young & McLeod, 2001) and friends in the field of education (Young & McLeod, 2001) endorsed, encouraged and informally mentored women. This supported women not only in aspiring to the principal's position, but also led to growing confidence in their ability to be principals. Such support was instrumental in their career success (Muñoz et al., 2014). Many female principals also found their own informal network of support (Mendez-Morse, 2004; Moorosi, 2010; Muñoz et al., 2014). Moorosi explains:

> The support women received was important in that it influenced their job satisfaction, which could have positive implications for retaining female principals to ensure sustainable equity. The more support female principals

got from the stakeholders, the more they seemed comfortable with principalship. Some women who experienced problems after their appointment seemed to have lost the love for principalship. (Moorosi, 2010, p. 557)

Women are also influenced by positive role models in leadership to consider leadership as a career pathway. Female teachers who worked with administrators whose leadership styles were attuned with the teacher's philosophy of leadership also influenced their aspirations to take on the position of school administrator (Mendez-Morse, 2004; Young & McLeod, 2001). Researchers have found that positive role models had the effect of giving teachers confidence by knowing others had succeeded (Young & McLeod, 2001).

Whilst this literature reported on the factors that affect the decision of women to be a principal, a number of these factors, such as professional and personal support, the promotional process and community expectations of the principal, are reported by both men and women as mediators of their aspirations to take on the position of principal.

Professional and personal support

Personal and professional support reportedly acts as a mediating factor in the decision of teachers to become school principals. This has been found not only in studies which focused specifically on women but also studies with both male and female participants (Howley et al., 2005; Hu, 2008; McKenzie et al., 2014). Those who are not given support considered this a salient reason not to apply for senior leadership positions (Howley et al., 2005; McKenzie et al., 2014).

Professional support from school leaders influenced the decision of teachers to become leaders themselves (Howley et al., 2005; Hu, 2008; McKenzie et al., 2014). In particular, support from senior school leaders was considered to be a very important factor in encouraging teachers to take up positions of assistant principal and principal (Howley et al., 2005; Hu, 2008; McKenzie et al., 2014). Teachers who considered encouragement from school leaders was important gave higher salience to the incentives to take on educational administration positions rather than to the disincentives (Howley et al., 2005). Such encouragement raised teachers' confidence in assuming leadership responsibilities and empowered them by purposely providing opportunities to learn

leadership skills, contributing to the decision to become leaders (Hu, 2008; Muñoz et al., 2014).

In other studies, lack of professional experience and support was one of the factors that discouraging teachers to take on the position of principal (Draper & McMichael, 2003; McKenzie et al., 2014). Draper and McMichael (2003) reported on the absence of appropriate professional support, career advice and positive recognition of teacher performance as problems related to recruitment to the position of principal. Lack of professional and institutional support reportedly limited opportunities for professional development, a factor in teachers attaining a position as principal.

Size of school

The importance of school size as a factor in the decision by teachers to become school principals has been considered in a number of studies (Kimber, 2003; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006, 2008; Southworth, 2004).

Studies have reported on the difficulties of attracting applicants to the position of principal in both very large and very small schools (Barty et al., 2005; Gilbert, Skinner, & Dempster, 2008; Wildy & Clarke, 2005). Barty et al. (2005), investigating the shortages of principals in two Australian states, found that fewer applicants than average were attracted to schools that were either very large (over 800 students) or very small (under 200 students). They conclude that this is because these schools are not considered "safe" options for the applicants. Large schools, with "complex organisational arrangements", are considered demanding for leaders, and small schools can constitute "a career dead-end" (p. 7).

Promotional process

The promotional process has been reported as a factor discouraging men as well as women from applying for the position of principal (Barty et al., 2005; Bush, 2011; Gronn & Lacey, 2006). The process of self-nomination is an issue, as candidates needed to have confidence to subject themselves to scrutiny (Bush, 2011; Gronn & Lacey, 2006). The difficulty of this process is highlighted by the need for candidates to be "tenacious", "self-motivated" (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009, p. 457) and resilient (Gronn & Lacey, 2006; Muñoz et al., 2014) in order to sustain aspirations for the position of principal.

Alternatively, school systems in which candidates are nominated by others may create a leadership cohort from a narrow social base (Barty et al., 2005; Bush, 2011; Gronn & Lacey, 2006), a process which Gronn and Lacey (2006) warn may be subject to the possibility of "cloning". A further problem reported with the promotion process is the risk of applying for a position. Aspirants did not apply for some positions as they believed that internal applicants had front running in principal appointments in Gronn and Lacey's (2006) study. Speculation amongst aspirants that an incumbent was likely to achieve a principal's position reportedly meant that aspirants would not apply so as not to "rock the boat" (Barty et al., 2005). "Failure of the merit selection process to appoint the best applicant for the position does appear to have caused some people to refrain from applying for positions which did, in fact, interest them" (Barty et al., 2005, p. 9). In each of these studies the research participants showed a loss of faith in the promotions process (Barty et al., 2005; Bush, 2011; Gronn & Lacey, 2006).

This body of literature on the factors that encouraged or discouraged potential aspirants offers insights into the aspirations of teachers, middle leaders and deputy principals to apply for the position of principal. Beliefs about leadership and external rewards were reported as the reasons for teachers to aspire to take on the role of principal. Enjoyment of the present position, the duties involved in the role of the principal, the difficulty of maintaining a balance between work and life and poor remuneration were factors that discouraged teachers from aspiring to the role of principal. Mediators such as gender, personal and professional support, size of school and the promotional process impacted on aspirations to become a principal.

The literature reporting on the factors encouraging and discouraging potential aspirants to become middle leaders is reviewed in the following section.

2.2 Position of middle leader

As noted above, one of the challenges in reviewing the literature on teachers' aspirations to take on middle leadership positions in schools is the very limited research into any school leadership positions other than the position of principal. This section reports on the small body of research which focuses on the factors that impact on the decision of teachers to take on school leadership positions. The majority of this research is focused on the decision of teachers to become school leaders generally (to take up senior or middle leadership positions), rather than the decision to specifically become

middle leaders. The exceptions to this are the few studies which specifically addressed the reasons teachers became middle leaders (Busher, 2005; Fletcher-Campbell, 2003). A few of the studies which reported on the reasons for teachers to want a school leadership position have been developed more recently in response to a need to identify school leadership talent (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006, 2008, 2009). As with the research exploring the decision of teachers to take on the position of principal, a number of mediators are reported that impact on the decision of teachers to aspire to school leadership positions.

2.2.1 Factors that encourage aspirations

Studies reporting on aspirations to take on a position of middle leadership have found that beliefs about leadership encouraged teachers to become leaders.

A number of beliefs about the influence of leaders are reported as reasons for teachers to aspire to school leadership (Busher, 2005; Fletcher-Campbell, 2003). The belief that leadership offers the opportunity to have an impact on others encourages teachers' aspirations to take on middle leadership positions (Busher, 2005). Middle leadership reportedly offered opportunities for participants in Busher's study to "assert their voice and their ideas more strongly within their school" (p. 143). In her study of middle leaders, primarily subject leaders in secondary schools, Fletcher-Campbell identifies promoting teaching and learning as a motivator for taking on these types of positions of school leadership. "The love of teaching, the subject and the classroom … influenced decisions to seek middle management" (p. 9).

Whilst these studies are small in number, consistently the findings are that teachers aspire to take on a position of middle leadership because they recognise that these positions offer opportunities to make a difference.

2.2.2 Factors that discourage aspirations

The literature on teachers' leadership aspirations positions besides the role of principal also reported a number of factors that discourage aspirations to middle leadership: wanting to maintain a balance between work and other aspects of life, beliefs about teaching and beliefs about leading.

The concern about the difficulty of balancing work with other aspects of life is a factor reported to be discouraging teachers not just from the role of principal, but from other school leadership positions as well (Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; McKenzie et al., 2014; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008). The difficulty of maintaining a work-life balance was one of the most important factors for 54% of Australian secondary teachers not to apply for a leadership position (McKenzie et al., 2014). Classroom teachers reportedly did not want to take on a leadership position because of the difficulty of balancing the demands of work with other aspects of life (Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008), particularly because of the longer working hours or the need to move schools to gain a promotion (Fletcher-Campbell, 2003). Fletcher-Campbell found that a significant self-imposed factor discouraging teachers to consider promotion to a leadership position was the responsibilities of family, particularly young children.

The enjoyment of being in the classroom is another reason for teachers not to seek promotion (Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; McKenzie et al., 2014; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008; Smith, 2011b). Teachers considered that there is a conflict between teaching and leading, in that being in a leadership position removes the teacher from the classroom and the teaching learning process (Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008; Smith, 2011b). Teachers and middle leaders reported a reluctance to seek promotion, or were only prepared to take on a leadership position that still involved being in the classroom, because of their love of teaching (Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008). Smith (2011b) found classroom teachers had different views about teaching and leadership than leaders. In her study exploring the views of classroom teachers and principals, she found that teachers saw their views about the importance of classroom teaching and pupil-centredness as incompatible with hierarchical advancement. Most of these teachers perceived leadership as a movement away from the classroom, and led to a remoteness from the relationships with children that they valued. Smith notes that, "women who prioritized pupils and teaching felt alienated from school leadership, and had no wish to take on values and responsibilities that were so far askew of their preferences" (Smith, 2011b, p. 527). In contrast, as mentioned above, the female principals in Smith's study considered that their commitment to providing a nurturing, child-centred school was the reason they became leaders.

A further factor discouraging leadership aspirations is the assumption of a new professional identity. Aspects of the role of leadership, such as monitoring or judging

colleagues, the additional workload (Fletcher-Campbell, 2003) and fear of isolation (Smith, 2011b), were the reasons reported for teachers not to want to become middle leaders, and for middle leaders not to aspire to senior leadership positions such as deputy principal or principal.

The factors that encouraged or discouraged aspiration to middle leadership positions are mediated by a number of other factors. These factors are discussed in the following section.

2.2.3 Mediators

Mediators such as school size, school culture and age influence the aspirations of teachers to leadership (Barty et al., 2005; Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; Howley et al., 2005; Kimber, 2003; Lacey, 2004; McKenzie et al., 2014; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006, 2008; Southworth, 2004).

Size of school

School size is not only a mediating factor of aspirations to take on the position of principal, but reportedly impacts on aspirations to other school leadership positions as well. The influence of school size, however, is complex as both small and large schools may encourage teachers to become leaders or discourage them (Kimber, 2003; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006, 2008; Southworth, 2004).

Both small and large schools offer opportunities for leadership development (Kimber, 2003; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006, 2008; Southworth, 2004). Large schools reportedly have an increased need to distribute leadership with an extended range of leadership opportunities (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006, 2008; Southworth, 2004). Rhodes and Brundrett (2006) found that large schools with high staff turnover could create leadership opportunities. Small schools, on the other hand, were found to offer leadership possibilities where staff members work closely in strong collaborative leadership teams (Kimber, 2003; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008). These opportunities may not always be empowering. In Kimber's study some of the participants in the small schools reported that they felt they gained leadership positions too soon in their career, which worked against them as they felt they were "stuck" in these positions (Kimber, 2003, p. 11).

School size may not always be an advantage for teachers aspiring to leadership. Large schools may not provide opportunities for leadership development if there is a culture of staff anonymity and exclusion (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008). Small schools may also restrict leadership development if sharing of responsibility is absent (Kimber, 2003; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008). Small schools have fewer departmental role models for emergent leaders (Kimber, 2003). Limited staff turnover in small schools was reported to reduce opportunities to be leaders, therefore discouraging teachers from aspiring to leadership (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006).

As can be seen from this literature, school size is a mediating factor in leadership aspirations. However, these studies reported that it is not necessarily the size of the school that mediates leadership aspirations, but the culture of the school. Literature reporting on the mediating factor of school culture is reviewed in the following subsection.

School culture

The culture of a school can support or hinder the development of leadership, mediating teachers' leadership aspirations (Barty et al., 2005; Busher, 2005; Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006, 2008; Rhodes et al., 2009).

A school culture of empowerment, support and acceptance reportedly encourages leadership development. The study by Rhodes and Brundrett (2008), exploring leadership development in 70 contextually different schools in England, found a number of common features nominated by classroom teachers that supported leadership development: opportunities for leadership development, particularly through distributed leadership that involved real responsibility, a culture of support and trust from a senior leader, acceptance of controlled risk-taking, access to effective courses on leadership, work shadowing, mentoring and coaching, teamwork, networking and opportunity to take acting roles.

Professional support offered by principals and experienced teachers encourages teachers to become school leaders (Busher, 2005; Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006, 2008, 2009; Rhodes et al., 2009). Experienced teachers reportedly helped teachers to realise the possibilities of leadership in asserting their voice and their ideas more strongly in the school, therefore encouraging leadership aspirations (Busher,

2005). The support of senior leaders is particularly important in identifying potential leaders, creating leadership opportunities and supporting leadership development through these initiatives. Supportive principals offer opportunities for professional development in leadership (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006), as well as career advice, helping to position the aspiring leader for possible succession (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Leaders who offered trust and support empowered teachers to feel encouraged, included and motivated, developing their sense of confidence and enabling them to aspire to take on positions of responsibility (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008). The support of senior leaders in creating opportunities for leadership development is seen in the study by Barty et al. (2005). These researchers reported that initiatives, instigated by principals who have recognised the need to foster young leaders, have resulted in people in their early 30s taking up the position of principal even in large secondary schools.

A lack of professional support is also reported as a factor discouraging teachers from applying for school leadership. A culture of exclusion and having a lack of teamwork, discourages leadership development (Kimber, 2003; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008). A lack of career advice and training, and a lack of workplace shadowing and networking opportunities can also hinder leadership development (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008, 2009). Teachers and middle leaders in Rhodes and Brundrett's study (2008) recognised that they had been given little guidance in career planning and reported they wanted direction in developing their leadership skills. "Respondent statements concerning the matching of leadership development to career stage were frequently associated with notions of possible exclusion, particularly for staff at an early stage in their career" (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008, p. 22). They conclude:

> It would seem sensible to foster leadership talent wherever it might exist within the school staff if appropriate numbers and quality of aspirant leaders are to be available within the talent pool. In considering future leadership needs, the inclusion of young staff with talent may be particularly important if they are to be retained within the school and further develop their commitment to the profession. (p. 22)

As evident in Rhodes and Brundrett (2008) and other studies, age is another mediating factor that may influence the decision by teachers to become leaders. These studies are reviewed in the next subsection.

31

Age

Several studies reported differences in attitudes and leadership aspirations of younger teachers compared to older teachers (Howley et al., 2005; Lacey, 2004; McKenzie et al., 2014). Younger teachers are the more likely applicants for school leadership positions than older teachers, as they are more interested in seeking promotion and consider the incentives to be school leaders as more salient than the disincentives (Howley et al., 2005; McKenzie et al., 2014). In Lacey's (2004) large study of teachers in Victorian schools in Australia, younger teachers (those under 31) reported that, although motivated by the challenge to lead, they wanted this challenge earlier in their careers. These younger teachers considered that, given appropriate professional development, they could manage the tensions that discourage people from wanting to become principals. Lacey (2004) also found that young teachers were an exception to other teachers in that they could see that the principal has an impact on the learning environment, a factor encouraging teachers to become school leaders. "The length of teaching experience appeared to affect career aspirations, with teachers with less than five years' experience more likely to aspire to the principal class while those with more than ten years' teaching experience more likely to aspire to remain in the classroom" (Lacey, 2004, p. 8). Lacey recommends providing early leadership experience for young teachers (Lacey, 2004).

This interest of young teachers in taking on leadership positions early in their career has been reported in other studies. In a leadership succession initiative, organised by the Catholic Education Office of Sydney, teachers under 30 years of age were given the opportunity to participate in a leadership formation course if they could "imagine themselves as school principals at some future time" (Canavan, 2007, p. 69). The response was overwhelming: 27% of all teachers in the Catholic education system aged under 30 years of age applied to have the opportunity of attending a leadership formation course. Using qualitative and quantitative data, Watt, Richardson, and Tysvaer (2007) investigated the career development aspirations of 510 Australian university students training to be teachers, most of whom were under the age of 35. Over two-thirds of the students intended to engage in professional development and aspire to leadership positions. The early career teachers in Muijs, Chapman and Armstrong's study were "keen to exercise leadership, being both ambitious in terms of

wanting to take on formal leadership roles, and in terms of leading a variety of improvement initiatives" (2013, p. 778).

Several studies have emphasised the importance of developing aspirant teachers early in their career (Tranter, 2003) and the negative implications of failing to identify leadership talent in early career teachers (Baker, 2003; Lambert, 2003); however, there has been little further research in this area. These studies show clearly that younger teachers appear to be interested in becoming school leaders.

The literature reported on a number of factors that encourage or discourage teachers to aspire to take on leadership positions other than senior leadership. Only two of these studies specifically reported on positions of middle leadership, Busher (2005) and Fletcher-Campbell (2003), and of these only Busher reported on pastoral leaders as well as subject heads. Neither of these studies had, as their focus, the reasons for becoming middle leaders. The other studies which reported on the factors that encourage or discourage teachers from aspiring to be school leaders were concerned with school leadership positions in general.

Despite these gaps in the literature a number of factors have been identified. The belief that middle leadership positions offer the opportunity to have an impact on others is reported as a reason for becoming a school leader (Busher, 2005). This was also reported as a reason for teachers to want to become principals.

Factors that discourage teachers from wanting to become school leaders are wanting to maintain a balance between work and other aspects of life and beliefs about teaching and leading (Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; McKenzie et al., 2014; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008). These factors, along with the enjoyment of their present position, are common to teachers who do not aspire to take on a position of middle leadership and teachers who do not aspire to the position of principal (Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; McKenzie et al., 2014; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008; Smith, 2011b).

As with the literature on the factors that encourage or discourage teachers to become principals, the studies into factors influencing the decision of teachers to become middle leaders reported a number of mediators. School size was a reported mediating factor; however, the mediating factor school culture was of greater significance in supporting or hindering development of leadership (Kimber, 2003; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006, 2008; Southworth, 2004). A school culture of empowerment, support and acceptance is

reported to encourage leadership development (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008), as is professional support offered by principals and experienced teachers that encouraged teachers to become school leaders (Busher, 2005; Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006, 2008, 2009; Rhodes et al., 2009). The influence of school culture as a mediating factor indicates the importance of including this factor in the design of a study on leadership aspirations.

The literature reported on age as another mediating factor that may encourage or discourage teachers to become leaders (Canavan, 2007; Lacey, 2003; McKenzie et al., 2014). However, there is an evident gap in the literature on the influence of age on the decision to become a school leader. Whilst studies show that younger teachers show an interest in school leadership, little more is known about their aspirations. More research is needed into the motivations and attitudes of different age groups of teachers to taking on school leadership positions.

There are a number of encouraging and discouraging factors and mediators (school size, school culture and age) that impact on the decision by teachers to become middle leaders. Yet it is clear that some teachers choose to become leaders despite any factors that discourage aspirations being present, whilst others are determined not to become school leaders despite factors that encourage aspirations being present. Some researchers paint a more complicated picture, reporting on the mediating roles of self-belief and personal agency in teachers' decisions to become school leaders (Dorman & d'Arbon, 2003; Moorosi, 2010; Rhodes, 2012; Smith, 2011a).

Self-belief

The importance of self-belief in the journey to leadership has been reported in a number of different studies. Self-belief, including the constructs of self-efficacy, "the acceptance of one's potency, competence and capacity to make a difference to organisational outcomes and self-esteem, or positive feelings of one's own worth and value", (Gronn, 1999, p. 36) are important preconditions for leadership attainment. Other studies have reported on the level of self-confidence, and its precursor, self-efficacy, as modifiers or inhibitors in the decision to become a school leader.

A lack of confidence is a potential discouraging factor to assuming a leadership position (Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; McKenzie et al., 2014; Smith, 2011b) and to further

leadership development, for both middle leaders (Fletcher-Campbell, 2003) and deputy principals (Oplatka & Tamir, 2009). Smith (2011a) argues that low self-confidence is one of the defining characteristics of female teachers in her study who consider that their career path is externally defined. This group of teachers, who she names "protégées", "need encouragement and feedback from others to boost self-esteem and confidence… [They] are more likely to apply for/achieve promotion as a result of suggestions/encouragement/mentoring from professional colleagues (especially senior colleagues)" (Smith, 2011a, p. 13). Classroom teachers, middle leaders and deputy principals expressed a lack of confidence in their capability to deal with some of the duties expected in a promotional leadership role (Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; Oplatka & Tamir, 2009). Cubillo and Brown (2003) suggest the reason for this lack of confidence is a lack of familiarity with the territory and a fear of failure.

Just as low self-confidence is a discouraging factor to aspiring to school leadership, high self-confidence is reported as a significant factor in motivating teachers to pursue careers in school leadership (Gronn & Lacey, 2004; Hu, 2008; McKenzie et al., 2014; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006, 2008, 2009; Sperandio & Kagoda, 2010; Su et al., 2003). In a study of the experiences of a cohort of school leaders who aspired to be principals, Gronn and Lacey (2004) explored the range of feelings, challenges and uncertainties associated with the positioning of aspirants to the role of principal. Through a series of E-journal reflective entries, they found that an important aspect of the aspirant's positioning as a leader was having the confidence and self-belief in their ability to do the job. "I was confident in my ability to do the job" (McKenzie et al., 2014, p. 85) was the most important factor in their decision to take a leadership position for 69% of Australian secondary school leaders. Teachers were also encouraged to be leaders if they believed that they possessed skills suited to leadership, such as being effective organisers (Busher, 2005; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006). Self-perception of leadership skills was not only a reason to aspire to leadership, but a powerful motivator (Hu, 2008). Possession of confidence, ambition and people skills were recognised by both middle leaders and principals as significant features in identifying leadership talent (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006). Rhodes et al. (2009) suggest that there is a "need to foster self-confidence and self-belief at all stages of the leadership journey, from early experiences of leadership through later role-conceptualisation to final application for

headship" (p. 463). These results indicated the importance of understanding how teachers develop the confidence to be leaders.

Self-efficacy, which precedes self-confidence, is also considered to be a mediator in the decision to become a school leader (Gronn, 1999; Gronn & Lacey, 2004; McCormick, Tanguma, & Lopex-Forment, 2002). High self-efficacy for leadership is positively associated with persistence in applying for a leadership position (McCormick et al., 2002). This is consistent with a large body of research that links achievement with self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Bell & Kozlowski, 2002; Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001; Hackett, 1985; Pajares, 1996; Phan, 2010). The importance of the role of developing high personal efficacy and self-esteem in the formation of leaders is evident in studies which indicate that low self-efficacy for leadership leads to avoidance of or disengagement with the leadership journey (McKenzie et al., 2014; Oplatka & Tamir, 2009; Rhodes, 2012; Smith, 2011b).

> Lacking self-belief may serve to undermine potential and the achievement of potential through disengagement, feelings of inadequacy and unwillingness to disclose an interest in pursuing a journey to leadership. (Rhodes, 2012, p. 446)

These findings indicate that high self-efficacy for leadership may be a significant factor in developing leadership aspirations. The interaction of self-confidence and personal agency suggests that personal agency also needs to be taken into consideration.

Personal agency

A number of studies report on the influence of personal agency in the decision by teachers to aspire to take on the position of principal (Dorman & d'Arbon, 2003; Moorosi, 2010; Smith, 2011a, 2011b). Personal agency is defined as "an awareness of one's capacity to take control of an aspect or aspects of one's life (and by extension, career)" (Smith, 2011b, p. 530). In Smith's study, a distinction is made between teachers who lack personal agency and have an external locus of control, "who describe their career paths as defined by factors largely external to themselves"; and teachers who are agentic and "self-defined", "taking control of their lives and careers" (Smith, 2011a, p. 11).

Personal characteristics, such as low self-confidence, were reported to be intrinsic factors impacting on decisions to take on school leadership positions (McKenzie et al., 2014; Moorosi, 2010; Oplatka & Tamir, 2009). Moorosi (2010) draws a link between these internal discouraging factors and agency, suggesting personal characteristics such as low self-confidence indicate a lack of individual agency. "When women lack this agency, they are perceived as lacking the self-esteem they need in order to take charge of their professional lives" (Moorosi, 2010, p. 549). Teachers can gain a sense of personal agency and recognise their ability to be principals by having prior leadership experience (Moorosi, 2010). Principals' and teachers' contrasting perceptions of the role of principal in Smith's (2011b) study indicate a difference in personal agency. The teachers did not perceive that, in the position of principal, they were able to make their own decisions, whereas the principals had an agentic view of school leadership. Each of these studies is primarily focused on the decision of women to be school leaders, although a study by Dorman and d'Arbon (2003), which included both men and women, speculated that teachers who lack personal agency may give greater salience to factors which discourage aspirations to leadership. These researchers call for further research in this area.

Understanding of the role of personal agency in career decisions has been extended considerably by Smith's study (2011a). Whilst Smith recognised women experienced external constrictions, she examined the means by which women negotiated these restrictions by exerting their personal agency. Smith (2011a) found that women's recognition of their exertion of personal agency in their career choices is a key to understanding their career decisions. Smith (2011a) identified a "typology of female teachers' approaches to career", which she placed in two categories: those whose "career path [was] perceived as self-defined", who perceived a "degree of personal agency in career decisions": "planners", "pupil-centred" and "politicised leaders" (p. 12), and those "whose career path [was] perceived as externally defined": "protégées", "pragmatists" and "protestors" (p. 13). Interestingly, Smith (2011a) found that the category of women who were pupil-centred and self-defined chose to stay in the classroom, whilst others who lacked personal agency, such as the protégées, were interested in career progression. Her conclusions indicate the role of personal agency in making decisions regarding career, and suggest a research which moves beyond the assumptions that women's career decisions are based on obstacles to career progression.

Given the important role of personal agency and self-belief in developing leadership aspirations, it is necessary to understand how teachers form this personal agency and self-belief. Studies reported that formation of a school leader happens over time, through a number of different stages and influences (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Busher, 2005; Gronn & Lacey, 2004; Normore & Gaetane, 2010). Several models have been proposed to explain the process of leader formation. This review now focuses on the models found in educational literature.

2.3 Models of leader formation

As has been discussed, a plethora of research has considered the factors that encourage or discourage teachers to aspire to the position of school principal (Barty et al., 2005; Cranston, 2007; Cubillo & Brown, 2003; d' Arbon et al., 2002; Gronn & Lacey, 2005; Howley et al., 2005; Moorosi, 2010; Oplatka & Tamir, 2009; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2008; Su et al., 2003). The literature presenting models of educational leadership formation, however, is limited. The four models discussed share an understanding that leadership can be learned and shaped by a number of influences and are therefore relevant to research of leadership aspirations.

The model of school leader formation proposed by Gronn (1999) divides a leader's career into four stages: "formation, accession, incumbency and divestiture" (p. 33). The first two stages, formation and accession, outline the early formative stages of leadership in childhood to the point at which the person develops mastery of a school leadership role. Figure 2.1 outlines the formative stage.

```
                    Stage 1: FORMATION


                  An individual candidate's passage through


Socialization agency        FAMILY              SCHOOL


                          and contact with


Reference groups   PEERS     FRIENDS     MENTORS    CONSCIOUSNESS-
                                                    SHAPING MEDIA


                      generates a conception of


                              SELF


                      and lays the basis of a


                  STYLE      and     OUTLOOK



                    LEADERSHIP CHARACTER
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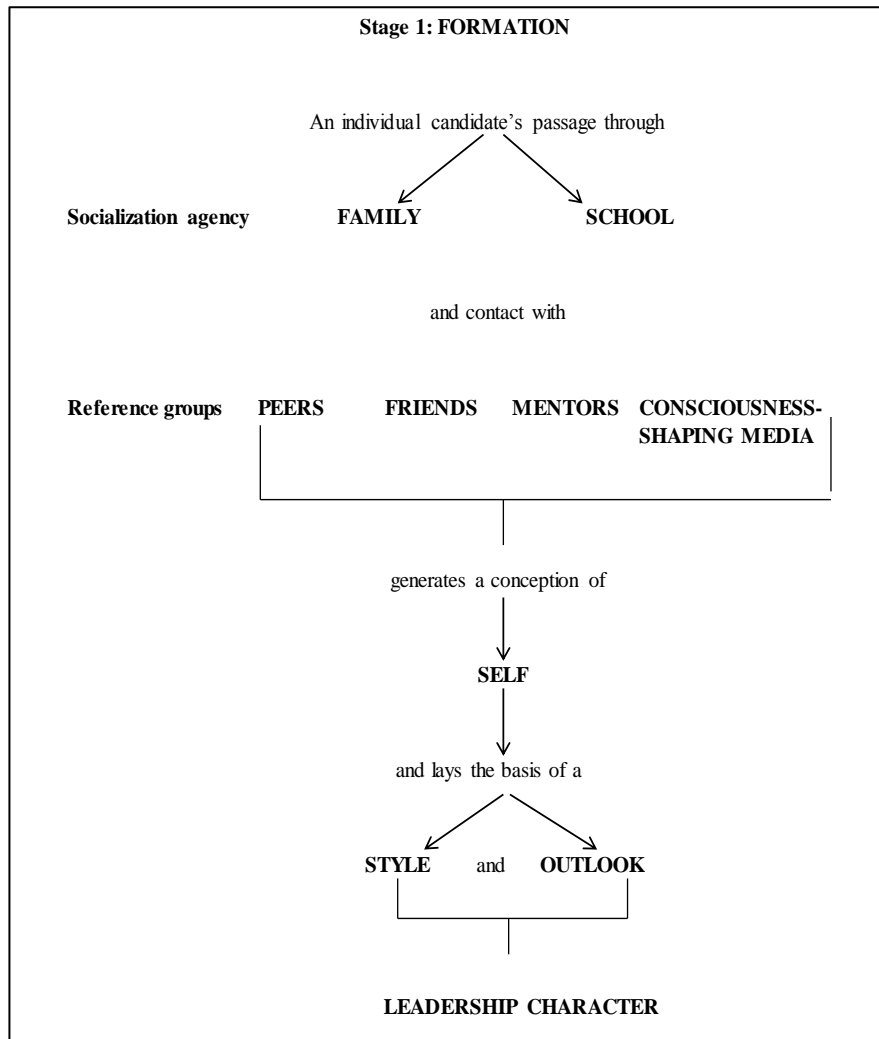
Figure 2.1 Gronn's model of the process of leader formation (Gronn, 1999, p. 35)

The preparatory socialisation processes and experiences in the formation stage, which Gronn (1999) suggests occurs from infancy to early adulthood, position the teacher in "a state of social and psychological readiness to assume responsibility and authority" (p.32) . Three socialisation agencies, family, school and other people in the form of peers, mentors, friends and consciousness-shaping media, influence the formation of a self-concept. The developmental, biographical awareness of self generates the development of a leader identity, and lays the basis for forming the values and leadership style of the person. Figure 2.2 outlines the second stage: accession.
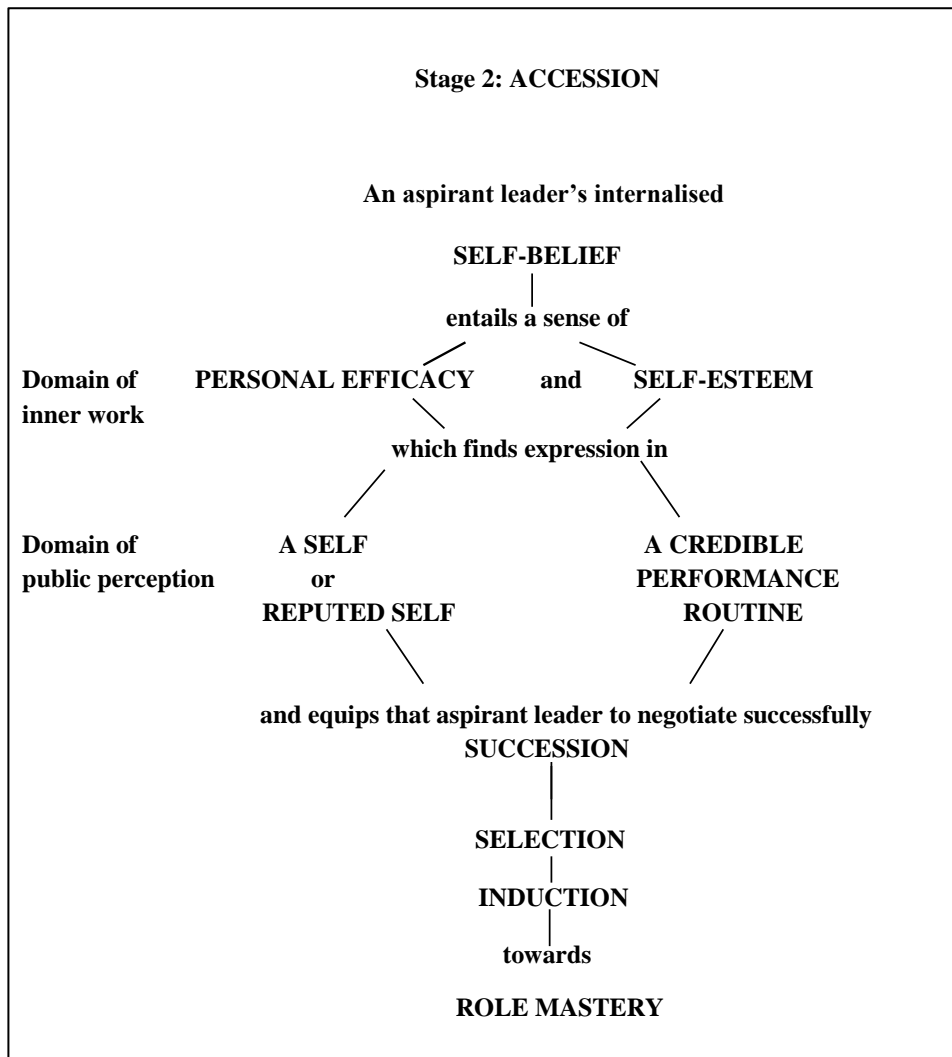
Figure 2.2 Gronn's model of leader accession (Gronn, 1999, p. 37)

In stage 2, the accession stage, candidates for leadership positions test their capacity to lead through comparison with models, advertising their willingness to lead and attaining a sense of self-belief. Apart from access to a supportive external environment, Gronn (1999) notes that an important internal precondition for self-realisation is self-belief, the components of which are a sense of efficacy and self-esteem. According to Gronn's model, personal efficacy and self-esteem developed in this stage lead to a position of leadership, after overcoming institutional hurdles of succession, selection and induction. Incumbency and divestiture, the two stages after gaining a leadership position, follow the leadership journey of a leader through to the end of their career.

Research supports a number of aspects of this model: the centrality of self in leader formation and behaviour, the development of leader identity and the roles of personal

socialisation agencies (Branson, 2004; Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Busher, 2005; Gronn & Lacey, 2004; Normore & Gaetane, 2010).

Gronn's model (1999) places a central importance on self: self-belief, self-efficacy and self-esteem in the stages of formation and accession, consistent with other research. Stages in leader formation reflect a growing awareness of self as leader in the grounded theory study of Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella and Osteen (2005). Studies on school leader formation indicate that expressing a sense of oneself as a leader is a formative step in moving from teacher to leader (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Busher, 2005; Gronn & Lacey, 2004; Normore & Gaetane, 2010). Gronn's recognition of the importance of development of self-belief which entails a sense of personal efficacy and self-esteem is supported by research on the pathway to school leadership (Cowie & Crawford, 2009; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). This sense of self-belief in the aspiring leader is important for others to identify future school leaders. Principals identified those teachers as potential leaders who had a realistic self-belief (Baker, 2003) and self-confidence (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006).

The influence of socialisation agencies and reference groups is another aspect of Gronn's model (1999) which is well-supported by research. Through mentoring and modelling, sources of personal socialisation, such as family members and teachers, have considerable influence on the development of leader identity (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Crow, 2006; Madsen, 2007; Mendez-Morse, 2004; Ribbins, 2008). The acknowledgement of the influences on formation in the personal context is a merit of this model; however, formative influences on the leader professionally are reduced to role models, despite considerable evidence to suggest the strong influence of people in the workplace supporting the formation of a leader (Anderson et al., 2007; Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Crow, 2006; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; MacBeath, 2011; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). A further significant omission in this model is the influence of experiential learning on leader development. The role of experiences in developing leaders, both in the early formative stage of leaders' development, and in the accession stage, is evident in numerous studies (Anderson et al., 2007; Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Earley, 2009; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009; Sperandio & Kagoda, 2010; Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). The lack of reference to the influences of professional socialisation agencies and experiences highlights a further aspect of Gronn's model in conflict with research. Whilst Gronn acknowledges that learning to be a leader occurs over a lifetime,

consistent with the literature on leadership development (Komives, Mainella, Longerbeam, Osteen, & Owen, 2006; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Shamir & Eilam, 2005), the model presupposes that the main formation of a leader occurs in childhood to early adulthood.

Despite these limitations, Gronn's model holds merit in conceptualising an understanding of the formation of the educational leader from childhood. This model has been referenced and used in several studies, indicating its impact on research in school leader development (Baker, 2003; Cowie & Crawford, 2009; McLay, 2008; Ribbins et al., 2003).

Another model which recognises the importance of self in the formation of the leader is Branson's (2010) "Representation of the components of self" (p. 51). In this model, a person's behaviour is influenced by the sequential interaction between self-concept, self-esteem, motives, values and beliefs. Whilst this model has been used as a framework for self-reflection in order to develop ethical leadership capacity, it has merit as a means of understanding the formation of a leader. Branson (2005, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2014) advocates the process of self-reflection derived from this model to understand the influences that form leadership behaviour. In doing so, this model, and the accompanying self-reflection, indicate how the motivation to be a leader, as well as leadership behaviour, is formed. Figure 2.3 represents Branson's (2010) framework.
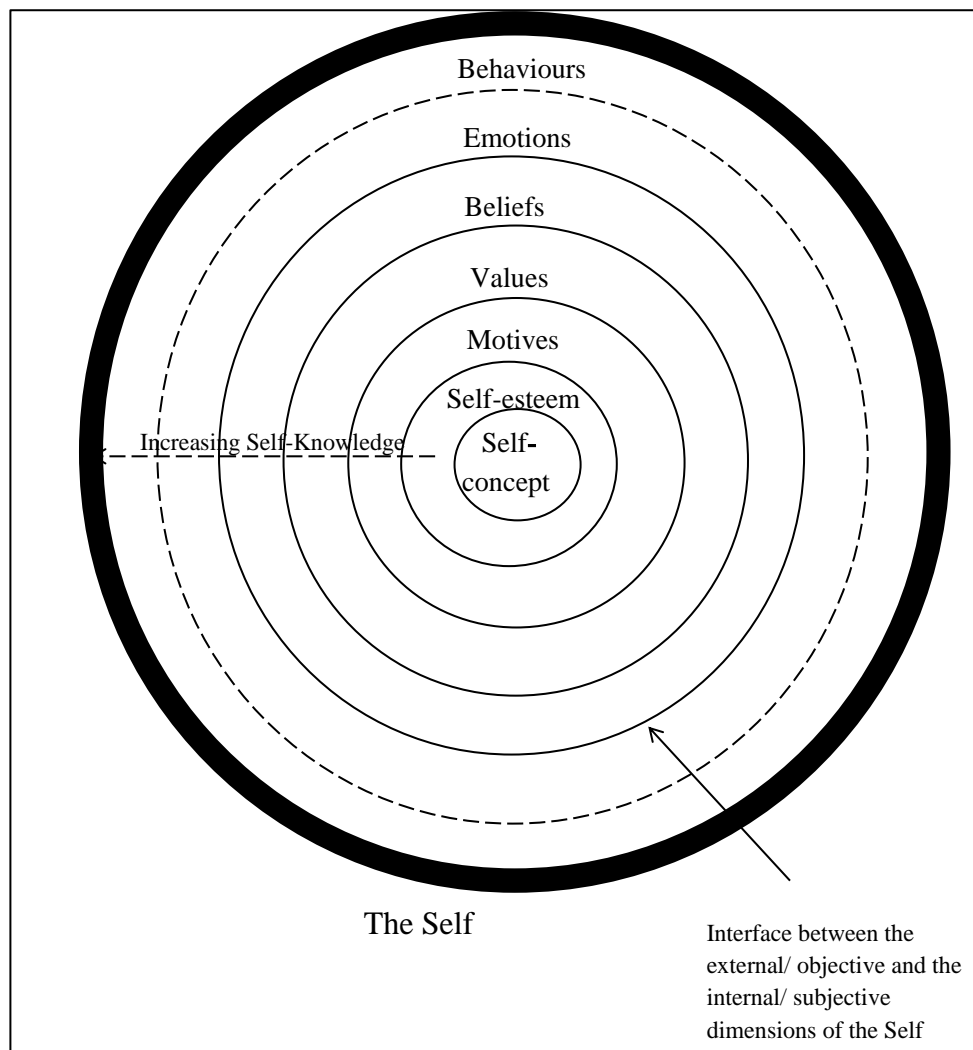
Figure 2.3 Representation of the various components of the self (Branson, 2010, p. 51)

In this representation, Branson explains how behaviour, the observable component of identity, is influenced by components of self that are "inner, tacit, and increasingly intangible" (2010, p. 51). Self-concept, the composite of ideas, feelings and attitudes people have, is at the heart of how one behaves. Comprised of many images of self, self-concept is linked to the roles people think are important in their lives, which give them purpose. In this view of self, behaviour is agential, as self-concept directs one to behave in ways that have previously produced accomplishment, achievement and personal benefit. Each of these components has a consequential effect on the next outer component. Self-esteem is a personal evaluation of the degree to which people achieve the image established in their self-concept. Self-esteem is a source of motives, which in turn assign a particular value to behaviours. Values guide action, and encourage short and long-term goals by forming beliefs. Beliefs are the source of emotions, which control our behaviour.

Branson (2009, 2010, 2014) recommends this model be used in a process of self-reflection that enables the leader to gain increasing consciousness of their formation of self, in order to become wise leaders. In using the model in this way, Branson (2005, 2007) found that the interpretation of a particular life experience creates the image of self. These influential experiences were aligned with influential people and experiences, both "formative moments in personal, as well as professional life" (Branson, 2005, p. 22). These experiences were "formed at various stages and in a variety of different contexts": "from affirming and non-affirming life experiences, from early childhood to recent experiences, [and] from experiences that lasted moments to ones ongoing for a number of months or years" (Branson, 2007, p. 233). The guiding questions in Branson's (2014) self-reflection process link aspects of this experience to each component of the model.

Table 0.1 Self-reflection process (Branson, 2014, pp. 202-203)

COMPONENT	GUIDING QUESTIONS
Self-concept	• Describe this defining experience. What happened that made this experience so significant? • What impressions/feelings about yourself did you sense at this time? Was this what you expected to happen? Were you proud? Relieved? Excited? What impressions/feelings do you gain about yourself now when you recall this time? Why? • What benefits (physical and/or social and/or affective) did you gain from this time? • Who was there with you? What part did they play in how you felt about this time? • What was your mental/physical experience? Were you able to fully comprehend and enjoy the moment? Were you in control or a little shocked? • What were you saying to yourself? • How would you have felt about yourself if you had not achieved the outcome that you did? • How would you change the way you responded to the situation if you could? • What image or understanding about your self did this achievement instil in your memory?
Self-esteem	• What was your previous understanding about your capacity to deal with the demands of this experience prior to this time? • In what ways did this experience change your understanding of yourself? • How did this moment influence your sense of self-worth? What level of self-esteem does it create in you as you now reflect back on it? • Have you ever previously experienced a similar situation but did not achieve the same outcome? If yes, how did this previous occasion make you feel about yourself? How does this previous experience still influence your thinking about yourself?
Motives	• From this experience, what are your motives when having to respond to similar situations? What do you try to do to ensure you are able to achieve the best outcome? • How is your thinking about yourself in such similar situations influenced by other motives (e.g., personal/professional reputation, loyalty to family, gaining a better career, responsibility to your community, cultural expectations)? • What were the reasons behind how you chose to respond to this experience? Why were these reasons important to you?

COMPONENT	GUIDING QUESTIONS
Values	• What qualities/characteristics do you value most in yourself in the way you responded to this situation? Why is each of these important to you? Do these values always provide you with a sense of success? Do these values sometimes cause you to become annoyed with yourself? • What qualities/characteristics do you value least in yourself in the way you responded to this situation? Why do you dislike these values? Do these values put pressure on you? Why? In what ways, if any, are these values ever of any help to you? • What qualities/characteristics would you like to have had in yourself that you feel would have helped you to respond even more capably to this situation? Why would these have helped you?
Beliefs	• What are your personal beliefs about yourself now when you face similar situations? • How would you describe yourself to someone you have just met based upon how you responded to this experience? • What personal/professional strengths enabled you to deal with this experience? In what other ways do these strengths help you? • What, if any, personal/professional weaknesses became apparent to you during this experience? In what other ways do these weaknesses influence your life?
Emotions	• What was your emotional reaction to this life experience? What do you think caused you to feel this emotion(s)? • Where else in your life do you experience very similar emotions? • In what ways have any of your desires, hopes, or dreams about yourself been affected by this experience? • In what ways, if any, has this experience left some uncertainty or fear in you about having to cope with other similar situations in future?
Behaviours	• When responding to this or similar life experiences, which of your particular behaviours: (a) make you feel very pleased about yourself? (b) make you wish that you could do this differently? • As a result of this important experience in your life, what behaviours /routines /habits: (a) Do you really like to do? (b) Do you avoid doing? • What other, if any, behaviours/routines/habits would you like to develop in order to respond to life experiences like this with even more confidence and capacity?

The complex interconnectedness between self and behaviour, evident in Gronn's model (1999) and other studies (Baker, 2003; Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Cowie & Crawford, 2009; Komives et al., 2005; Rhodes, 2012), is clearly demonstrated in Branson's model (2010). As with Gronn's model, Branson's model (2010) supports the centrality of self in the formation of leader behaviour. Branson (2010) extends this understanding of the role of self-confidence and self-esteem in forming leaders by recognising the influence of self-concept on self-esteem, motives, values, beliefs, emotions and behaviour.

In this model and the accompanying self-reflection, Branson (2004, 2005, 2007, 2010) recognises the influence of experiences in forming the leader, consistent with other studies (Anderson et al., 2007; Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Earley, 2009; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009; Sperandio & Kagoda, 2010; Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). Yet unlike other studies, Branson (2005) does not limit the reporting to types of influential experiences, as in Gronn's model (1999), finding instead that these experiences occur in both professional and personal contexts, and in various stages of life. Branson's (2004, 2005, 2007) studies using this model consider that experiences create a sense of purpose and influence values and motives, in this case, leadership aspirations.

This model recognises the ongoing formation of the leader, consistent with literature on leader development (Komives et al., 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Shamir & Eilam, 2005), whilst not limiting that formation to particular stages in life. The agential nature of behaviour is evident in both Branson's (2010) and Gronn's (1999) models. Branson, however, does not highlight the role of guidance and support in developing the leader's self-concept in his studies using this model.

The two models proposed by Normore and Gaetane (2010) (Figures 2.4 and 2.5) draw on educational leadership literature to explain the dimensions of preparing and developing leaders.
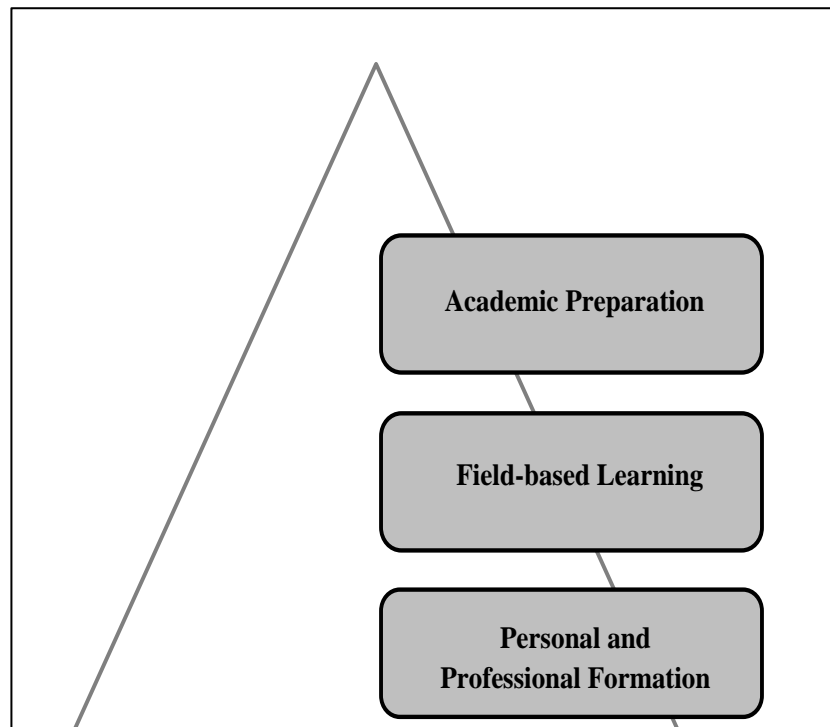
Figure 2.4 Three dimensions to preparing and developing leaders (Normore &
Gaetane, 2010, p. 117)

Formulated from the perspective of those who are responsible for preparing and
supporting school leaders, the model "Three dimensions to preparing and developing
school leaders", is based on the dimensions considered essential by Daresh (2004): pre-
service preparation (represented as academic preparation in the model), "field-based
learning" (p. 500) and "personal and professional formation" (p. 502). Normore and
Gaetane (2010) define academic training as "those learning activities and other
processes that take place before initial job placement" (p. 116). This appears to refer to
teacher training rather than the more encompassing early formation during childhood
described in Gronn's (1999) model. The second dimension, field-based learning,
describes experiential learning in a formative period when the teacher is in a new role.
The third dimension, personal and professional formation, is self-reflection on values of
the role of school leader. This process of self-reflection is not a single, isolated event,
but a constant commitment and recommitment, as advocated by Branson (2009, 2010,
2014).

This model has several merits. The consideration of a lifelong process of formation
reflects the research on leader development (Komives et al., 2005; Luthans & Avolio,
2003; Shamir & Eilam, 2005); however, this consideration is only taken into account

once the teacher is in a school leader position. Another merit of this model is the reference to experiential learning, which research considers significant in forming a school leader (Boerema, 2011; Crow, 2006; Earley, 2009; McLay & Brown, 2000; Ribbins, 2008; Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). Whilst the model is useful for an understanding of the professional development of a leader, the simplistic model makes little reference to formation in the personal context which may occur early in a leader's life.

The other model proposed by Normore and Gaetane (2010), "On-the-job professional socialization of school leader", describes the process of developing a leader identity. This model is presented in Figure 2.5.
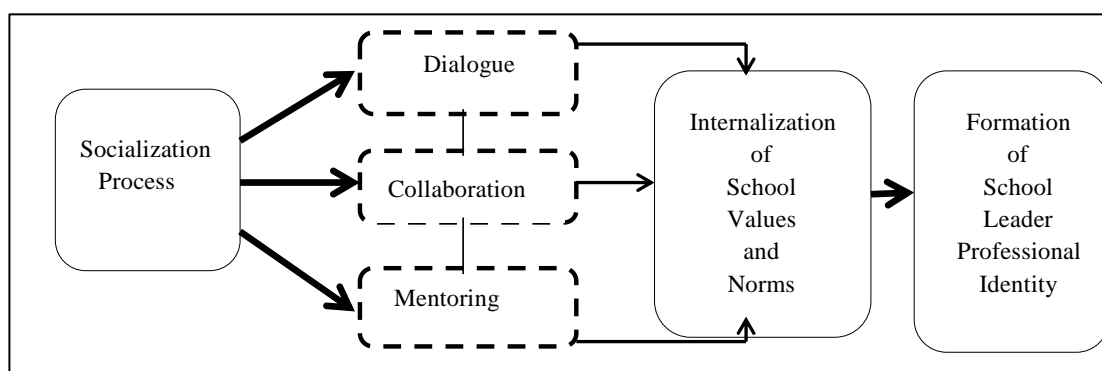
Figure 2.5 On-the-job professional socialisation of school leader (Normore & Gaetane, 2010, p. 111)

The three factors of professional socialisation, dialogue, collaboration and mentoring, presented in this model have been reported in the literature as effective socialisation factors in the formation of school leaders (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004; Bush, 2009; Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Mendez-Morse, 2004). Through these professional socialisation processes, the school leader internalises school values and norms and forms a school leader professional identity.

Whilst this model is only concerned with professional formation, the merit of this model is in the awareness of school context as a factor in formation, consistent with studies on leader formation (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006, 2008; Rhodes et al., 2008). The recognition of the influences of people in formation of the school leader in the professional context, the development of a leader identity (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004; Bush, 2009; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Komives et al., 2005; MacBeath, 2011),

and the development of values (Branson, 2010), factors well supported in the literature on school leader formation, are also positive aspects of this model.

2.4 Implications for studies on the formation of a school leader

Evident in these models are three important implications for studies on the formation of a school leader: the first pertains to the context in which the formation occurs, the second pertains to the significance of the development of self and the third to influences on formation of the school leader. Each of these issues is discussed in turn.

The formation of a leader in childhood is recognised by Gronn's staged model (1999) and is considered a possibility in Branson's model and accompanying self-reflection (2010); however, neither of the other models includes formation in any other context besides the professional environment. Normore and Gaetane's (2010) model of the three dimensions of preparing a leader make reference to early formation, but only in terms of pre-service learning. Yet Gronn's model (1999) does not take into account the formation that occurs in the professional context, through experiential learning and processes of professional socialisation such as mentoring, which is evident in each of Normore and Gaetane's models (2010) and implicit in Branson's model (2010). Studies are needed to confirm that formation of a school leader occurs in both the personal and professional context, and is an on-going, lifelong process.

The importance of self in formation is conceptualised in both Gronn's model (1999), Branson's model (2010) and in the models proposed by Normore and Gaetane (2010). Branson (2010) and Gronn (1999) explicitly place a central importance on self in formation. Gronn (1999) recognises the significance of self-belief, self-efficacy and self-esteem in the stages of formation and accession and Branson explains self-concept provides purpose, influencing self-esteem and ultimately behaviours. The significance of the centrality of concepts of self in the formation of school leaders is evident in literature (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Busher, 2005; Cowie & Crawford, 2009; Gronn & Lacey, 2004; Komives et al., 2005; Normore & Gaetane, 2010; Rhodes, 2012). In consideration of this, studies need to take into consideration the development of self in the formation of a school leader, consistent with these models.

Influences on the leader's formation are also recognised in each of the models. Gronn (1999) considers the influence of socialisation agencies, family and school, and

reference groups – peers, friends, mentors and conscious-shaping media – in generating a awareness of oneself as a leader. Branson (2010) recognises the role of experiences in guiding the leader to an understanding of the formation of their values, motives, beliefs, emotions and behaviour. Consistent with the literature, Normore and Gaetane's two models (2010) include reference to the influences of experiential learning, "Three dimensions to preparing and developing school leaders" and to the influences of people in mentoring, dialogue and collaboration, "On the job professional socialisation of school leader" in the professional context (Anderson et al., 2007; Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004; Bush, 2009; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Mendez-Morse, 2004; Moorosi, 2012; Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). These models suggest that more studies should focus on investigating the influences of both people and experiences in the personal and professional context on formation of the school leader.

In reviewing the literature on the decisions of teachers regarding taking on positions of leadership, the interactions of personal characteristics in these decisions and the models on the formation of school leaders, it is clear that there are a number of areas yet to be studied.

2.5 Areas needing further research

This literature review on the leadership aspirations of teachers highlights several gaps in the literature. There have been minimal studies exploring aspirations to take on middle leadership positions, the differences between younger and older teachers in career aspirations and the developmental influences on the formation of leadership aspirations. Each of these gaps is addressed in turn.

The literature reporting on the career decisions of teachers, middle leaders, deputy principals and principals is primarily focused on the aspiration and attainment of the career position of the position of principal. Only a few studies referred to aspirations to school leadership positions other than the role of principal, and these were not specific about other leadership roles. Only two studies, that of Fletcher-Campbell (2003) and Busher (2005), specifically considered the reasons teachers may or may not apply for roles as middle managers in schools, yet it is these middle leaders who will be the future senior educational leaders (Cranston, 2007; d' Arbon et al., 2002). An understanding of how leadership aspirations are formed may frame an understanding of the future senior

leaders of schools, as well as enable systems to identify and support aspiring leaders. This considerable gap in the literature is addressed in the current study.

A further gap in the literature is the study of teachers within particular age groups, specifically the two cohorts that Preston (2003) predicted will be the teachers who will take on the positions of leadership once the present, older cohort retire. The differences between younger and older teachers in career aspirations have been reported in a number of studies (Lacey, 2004; McKenzie et al., 2014; Watt et al., 2007). These studies reported that younger teachers are generally interested in the challenge of school leadership positions. Lacey (2004) found that younger teachers' perception of the principal's role was positive, an exception to other teachers. Whilst a number of studies have noted the importance in identifying early career teachers who may want to be leaders (Barty et al., 2005; Muijs et al., 2013; Preston, 2003) and emphasised the importance of developing aspirant teachers early in their career (Tranter, 2003) and the high cost of not identifying leadership talent in early career teachers (Baker, 2003; Lambert, 2003), the aspirations of the younger cohorts have yet to be examined in educational studies. In response to this, this research focuses on the aspirations of teachers under the age of 45.

Other mediators that were reported in the literature, such as school size, school culture, personal agency and self-belief, have been included in the design of the study.

The review of the models of formation of school leaders also revealed gaps in the literature. Minimal research is concerned with the formation of leadership aspirations of teachers in schools. In order to discuss leadership aspirations, exploration of the developmental influences that contribute to the formation of these aspirations is needed. The investigation of these developmental influences, particularly the influence of people and experiences within both the professional and personal contexts, may offer some insight into the ways in which teachers learn to be leaders. Further, research needs to take into account the development of self in formation of leadership aspirations. An understanding of how teachers develop leadership aspirations, both in their personal and professional lives, is a fundamental gap in the educational studies. This suggests that research should focus on these gaps.

In consideration of the literature review and the models of school leader formation, the focus of the study was to identify teachers' leadership aspirations and to examine the

sources that form or discourage teachers under the age of 46 to aspire to school leadership positions. In order to understand why teachers did not want to become leaders, the study also addressed the influences that discourage the formation of leadership aspirations.

The question that remains under-examined in the research is: How do teachers form leadership aspirations? This question will be explored using the following research questions:

1.   What are teachers' leadership aspirations?

2.   What are the sources of teachers' leadership aspirations?

3.   What are the sources that discourage teachers from aspiring to leadership?

A further subquestion for the second and third research questions addresses differences between the two younger cohorts of leaders, those aged between 20 to 32 years and those aged between 33 to 45 years: Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?

In consideration of the important role of self in the formation of leadership aspirations, and the developmental influences on these aspirations, the study is based on the theoretical perspective of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986).

2.6 Theoretical perspective

Social cognitive theory provides an understanding of how teachers form leadership aspirations, both in their personal and professional lives. The three factors identified as important in models of leadership formation – the on-going formation of the leader in different contexts, the significance of self and the influence of agencies in the formation of a school leader – are consistent with the theoretical assertions in this theory (Bandura, 1986). Social cognitive theory is based on the assertions that:

> Human agency operates within an interdependent causal structure involving triadic reciprocal causation. In this transactional view of self and society, internal personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective, and biological events; behaviour; and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another bidirectionally. (Bandura, 1997, p. 6)

Central to this perspective is that the environment is an interacting determinant of formation, which assumes formation is an on-going process. This concept, known as triadic reciprocal determinism, emphasises that none of these components can be understood in isolation from the others. Figure 2.2 shows the relationships between behaviour, personal factors such as affective, cognitive and biological events, and the environment in the diagram devised by Bandura (1997, p. 6).
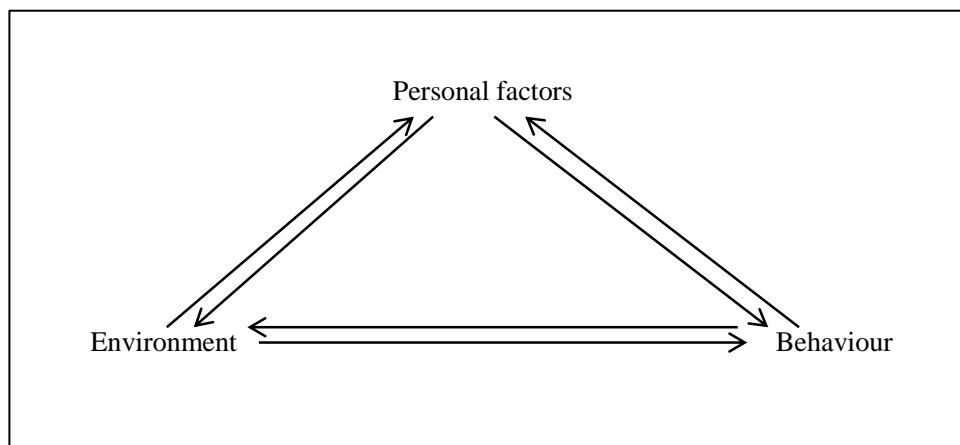
Figure 2.6 Triadic reciprocal determinism (Adapted from Bandura, 1997, p. 6)

Bandura explains that personal factors, behaviour and external events, "all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another bidirectionally" (1997, p. 6). Personal factors, the environment and the person's behaviour all interact to produce the person's subsequent behaviour. Hence, according to social cognitive theory, a person's aspiration to lead (behaviour) is shaped by their interactions with both their environment (experiences and people) and personal factors such as cognitive and motivational processes. The relative influence of each determinant will vary under different circumstances.

Social cognitive theory emphasises that people have the ability to regulate their thoughts, feelings, motivations and actions (Pajares, 1996). Bandura (1997) emphasises that people are agents of experience, rather than passively undergoing experience. In this theory, behaviour is mediated not only by environment, but also by self. Bandura (1997) contends that:

> The self system is not merely a conduit for external forces… The self is socially constituted, but, by exercising self-influence, individuals are partial

contributors to what they do and become. Moreover human agency operates generatively and proactively rather than just reactively. (p. 6)

As has been reported in a number of studies, personal agency is considered to be important in the career decisions of teachers (Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Dorman & d'Arbon, 2003; Smith, 2011a). Social cognitive theory recognises the importance of personal agency. Bandura (1997) explains that "…by exercising self-influence, individuals are partial contributors to what they become and do" (1997, p. 6). "Beliefs of personal efficacy constitute the key factor of human agency (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). The anticipative mechanism of forethought, a factor of human agency, is mediated by self-efficacy beliefs. Self-efficacy, unlike any other self-belief, by its very nature is a future focused belief, predicting future behaviour and actions.

Self-efficacy is considered among the most important determinants of thoughts and actions in Bandura's (1986) theory. It is defined as: "…beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3).

Self-efficacy can be domain specific, such as self-efficacy for leadership. It is important to note, however, that whilst self-efficacy beliefs are context and task specific, they can be generalised across a range of situations and tasks.

> Mastery experiences that provide striking testimony to one's capacity to effect personal changes can also produce a transformational restructuring of efficacy beliefs that is manifested across diverse realms of functioning. Such personal triumphs serve as transforming experiences. What generalizes is the belief that one can mobilize whatever effort it takes to succeed in different undertakings. (Bandura, 1997, p. 53)

Therefore a leader with a generalised belief of self-efficacy will perceive himself or herself as more adaptable to the challenges of leadership (Hannah, Avolio, Luthans, & Harms, 2008).

Individuals' self-efficacy beliefs influence their behaviour. "The self-efficacy beliefs that people hold influence the choices they make, the amount of effort they expend, their resilience to encountered hardships, their persistence in the face of adversity, the anxiety they experience and the level of success they ultimately achieve" (Zeldin & Pajares, 2000, p. 218). A teacher who has an efficacy belief in their personal capability

of being a leader will apply for leadership positions. Bandura explains the pervasive role of self-efficacy beliefs on behaviour:

> By influencing the choice of activities and the motivational level, beliefs of personal efficacy make an important contribution to the acquisition of knowledge structures on which skills are founded. …Beliefs of personal efficacy also regulate motivation by shaping aspirations and the outcomes expected for one's efforts. (Bandura, 1997, p. 35)

Motivation and actions are based on what individuals believe. The incentive to act is based on the belief that the desired effects will be produced by the actions. Bandura (1997) refers to the beliefs about the consequences of performing an action as outcome expectations, which involve anticipated consequences of particular courses of action. Motivation levels are based on what a person believes about the desired effects of his or her actions. People motivate themselves through their thoughts about negative outcomes, potential rewards and past experiences. Behaviour is mediated by these thoughts.

Bandura (1986) explains that the source of motivation operates through the cognitive process of goal setting. Goals, also referred to as aspirations, are the intention to engage in a particular activity or produce a particular outcome; in the study the outcome is positional leadership. People's personal aspirations are affected by their self-efficacy and their outcome expectations. Regardless of the truth of self-efficacy judgements, people are guided by their personal efficacy beliefs, which influence the choice of activities and aspirations. "Beliefs of personal efficacy regulate motivation by shaping aspirations and the outcomes expected for one's efforts" (Bandura, 1997, p. 35). Therefore leadership aspirations are preceded by the development of self-efficacy for leadership.

The significant role of personal efficacy in the formation of a leader is found in Gronn's model (Gronn, 1999) and in other studies (Machida & Schaubroeck, 2011; McCormick et al., 2002). "Leadership self-efficacy was found to be highly related to the frequency with which a person reported attempting to assume a leadership role, given the opportunity" (McCormick et al., 2002, p. 43). The importance of the role of developing high personal efficacy and self-esteem in the formation of leaders is evident in studies which indicate that low self-efficacy for leadership leads to avoidance or disengagement

for the leadership journey (McKenzie et al., 2014; Oplatka & Tamir, 2009; Rhodes, 2012; Smith, 2011b).

The influence of people and experiences in shaping behaviour are recognised in social cognitive theory. Four major sources influence and are influenced by beliefs in efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences (modelling), social persuasion and physiological states. Mastery experiences, also called performance accomplishments, are considered to be the strongest and most generalised sources of increased self-efficacy. This influence is most effective when accomplishments are gradually developed. Vicarious experience is when one compares oneself to others completing the task to support the development of self-efficacy. Social persuasions that people receive from others serve as a third source of efficacy. Encouragement and support from others can boost confidence in one's ability. The fourth source, physiological states, is not addressed as part of the research design as somatic indicators are most relevant in domains that involve physical accomplishments, health functioning and coping with stressors. This research considers mastery experiences, vicarious experiences and social persuasion on self-efficacy for leadership of teachers are sources of leadership aspirations.

The influence of experience on behaviour is recognised as being the most persuasive source of self-efficacy. A person may consider performing a task with high self-efficacy if they have had previous success with a similar task. Perceived success, rather than actual success, will raise efficacy. This influence is most effective when the accomplishments are gradually developed. The reverse is also true: when person experiences failure repeatedly with a particular task, his or her self-efficacy for the task is diminished over time (Bandura, 1997). An example may be a teacher who has been in a leadership position, but has considered they have not led successfully, will have low self-efficacy for leadership.

A further component of Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory relevant to the study is the importance of observational learning on leadership aspirations. The acquisition of leadership behaviour may occur through vicarious reinforcement of a particular leadership style. People may imitate a particular behaviour if the person observed is seen as receiving positive reinforcement. Another way that leadership aspirations are developed in leaders through observation is by social comparison. People judge their capabilities by comparing their performance with others, or because of resemblance to

models. Bandura (1997) proposes a diversity of models: competent or masterly models, who perform calmly and faultlessly, and coping models, who begin timorously but gradually overcome their difficulties by determined coping efforts, and models who are not coping. Each of these models may raise or lower efficacy depending on the cognitive processing of the observer. This aspect of Bandura's theory explains that observation of leadership encourages the development of leadership behaviour.

The third source of efficacy referred to the study is social persuasion. People can depend on others to provide evaluative feedback, whilst encouragement and support can bolster effort and self-confidence. People who enhance others' beliefs in their capabilities through persuasory messages do so in a number of ways, such as offering encouragement, support and opportunities for success as well as positive appraisals and instilling beliefs in potential, sometimes over long periods of time (Bandura, 1997). This influence is most effective when individuals already believe they can be successful.

By focusing on the interaction of behaviour, the person and the environment, and recognising the on-going nature of formation, the influences of other people and experiences on development of self-efficacy and the important role of self in guiding future behaviour, social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) provides an effective theoretical framework to address questions of influences on the formation of leadership aspirations.

A conceptual framework has been designed to illustrate the understanding in the literature of how leadership aspirations are formed. This framework is derived from the literature and the theoretical perspective of social cognitive theory.

2.7 Conceptual framework

The following conceptual framework for the study takes into account the developmental influences on the formation of leadership aspirations.
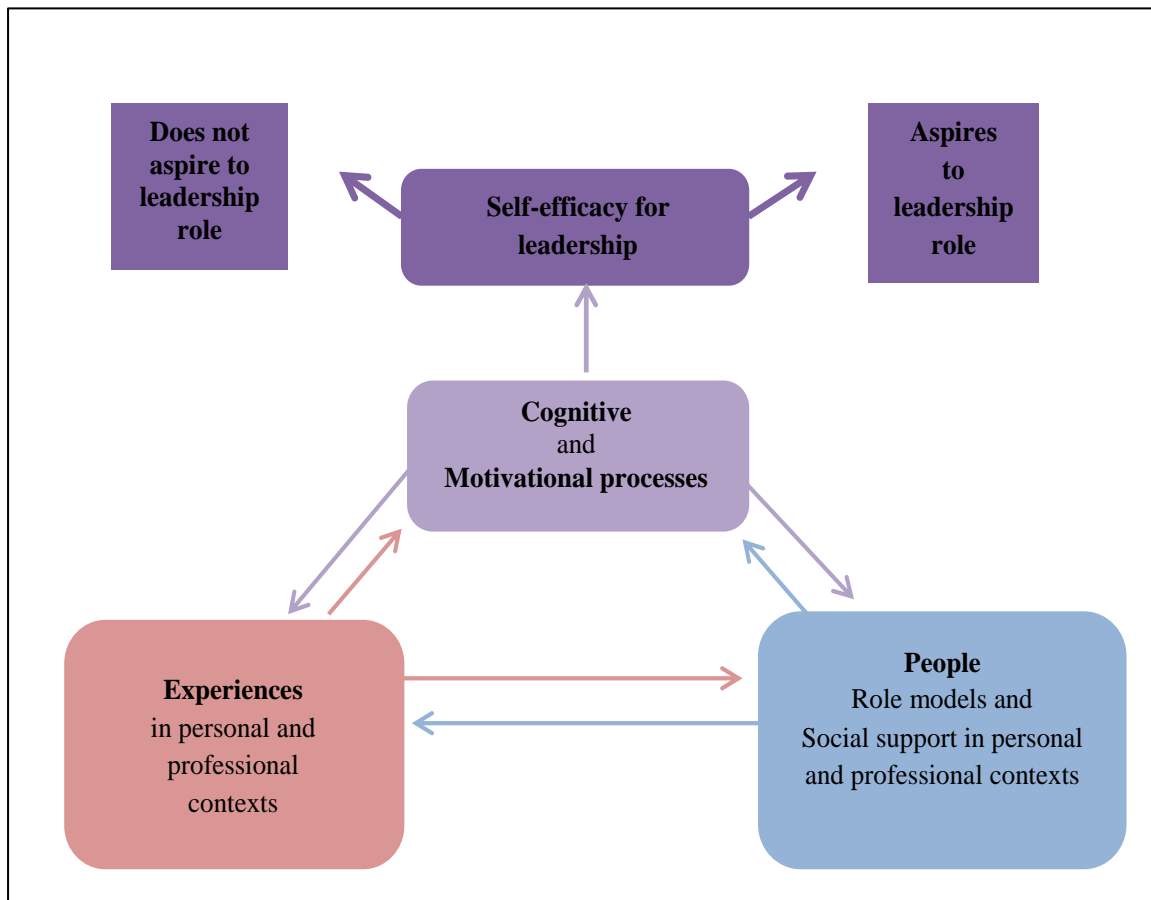
Figure 2.7 Conceptual framework

This conceptual framework highlights not only the influences on the formation of leadership aspirations, but the mediating role of self-efficacy in the formation of these aspirations. Implicit in this framework is the understanding that formation of leadership for the teacher occurs in both the personal context, which includes childhood, and in the professional context. Adapted from the conceptual figure of triadic reciprocal determinism represented in Figure 2.6, (Bandura, 1997), this conceptual framework indicates the interacting influences of the experiences, people as role models and social persuasion and beliefs of self-efficacy, which influence one another bidirectionally. According to social cognitive theory, a person's aspiration to lead (behaviour) is shaped by their interactions with both their environment (experiences and people) and personal factors such as cognitive and motivational processes. The significant role of self-

efficacy beliefs on behaviour are represented in the framework as mediating influences on leadership aspirations.

This framework is also concerned with the influences that discourage the formation of leadership aspirations. Low self-efficacy, influenced by experiences and people, may lead to a desire not to be a leader.

With these insights in mind, the review of the literature and theoretical perspective has led to the development of the overarching question that served to guide the study:

How do teachers form leadership aspirations?

The following research questions, previously outlined, provide a means to approach this question:

1.   What are teachers' leadership aspirations?

2.   What are the sources of teachers' leadership aspirations?

> Subquestion: In what ways have mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and personal characteristics formed teachers' leadership aspirations?
>
> Subquestion: Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?

3.   What are the sources that discourage teachers from aspiring to leadership?

> Subquestion: In what ways have mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and personal characteristics discouraged teachers' leadership aspirations?
>
> Subquestion: Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?

These sources of self-efficacy for leadership – mastery experiences, vicarious experiences (modelling) and social persuasion, and age-related differences in the sources of aspirations – guided the research process and assisted discussions of the findings.

These questions will be examined by means of the research design and methodology presented in the next chapter.

Chapter Three – Research Design and Methodology

Studies discussed in the literature review reported the reasons teachers may or may not choose to be school leaders. The sources that encourage or discourage leadership aspirations, however, need to be investigated. The study examined these sources for teachers under the age of 45, using the theoretical framework of Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory.

The research question which determined the research design is: How do teachers form leadership aspirations?

This question will be explored using the following research questions:

1.   What are teachers' leadership aspirations?

2.   What are the sources of teachers' leadership aspirations?

   Subquestion: In what ways have mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and personal characteristics formed teachers' leadership aspirations?

   Subquestion: Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?

3.   What are the sources that discourage teachers from aspiring to leadership?

   Subquestion: In what ways have mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and personal characteristics discouraged teachers' leadership aspirations?

   Subquestion: Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?

This chapter will introduce and justify the research design for the study, and the methodology used to conduct the research.

3.1 Research paradigm

An interpretive approach has been adopted as the research paradigm for the study because it emphasises that knowledge is built through social construction of the world (Crotty, 1998). Interpretive research is "the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds" (Neuman, 2006, p. 88). Interpretive theorists assume that there are

multiple interacting factors that cause an event; that it is extremely difficult to attain complete objectivity and therefore the goal of an inquiry is to develop an understanding of individual cases; that the multiple realities are best studied as a unified whole; and that "inquiry is always value-laden" (Candy, 1989, p. 4). This approach lends itself to the study, which sought to explore the aspirations and the sources that form or discourage individual teachers' leadership aspirations as well as the cognitive processing of these influences. This paradigm is appropriate because "interpretive accounts of research do not seek to reinterpret the actions and experiences of the actors, but rather give a deeper, more extensive and more systematic representation of events from the point of view of the actors involved" (Candy, 1989, p. 5). Constructionism and symbolic interactionism are two key research orientations of interpretivism that have guided the study.

3.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is "the study of how knowledge is generated and accepted as valid" (O'Donoghue, 2006, p. 9), and the epistemological framework, constructionism, provides an understanding of knowledge from the point of view of the individual (Costantino, 2008). In focusing on the aspirations and their sources, the study explored the concept that meaning is constructed as individuals interact socially (Crotty, 1998; Schwandt, 2000). Constructionists recognise there are diverse ways of knowing and each view is valid and meaningful. There may be multiple, even conflicting constructions of meaning; however, each individual's interpretation of experiences is valid. The construction of meaning is on-going and dynamic. Changes in perception occur as the constructors become more informed and act on their interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schwandt, 2000). Constructionism, and research based on this epistemology, require an openness to "new and richer meaning. It is an invitation to reinterpretation" (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). This study acknowledges that teachers may reflect on previous experiences and interactions with others, and then attribute greater or less meaning to these experiences and interactions over time.

Constructionism emphasises that "the interactions and beliefs of people create reality" (Neuman, 2006, p. 89). In stressing the importance of culture and history in shaping meaning, constructionism suggests "shared, negotiated knowledge" (De Koster, Devise, Flament, & Loots, 2004, p. 76). In different contexts, different interpretations of the

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same phenomena occur, leading to variations in perceptions (Creswell, 2008; Crotty, 1998). This research assumes that teachers may interpret experiences and interactions with people in very different ways, leading to differing decisions about becoming school leaders. The central perspective of constructionism is the importance of the participants' views and the context in which these views are developed and expressed (Creswell, 2008). This research considered the different contexts and complexities of experiences that form or discourage teachers' leadership aspirations.

The focus of the study is the reality the teachers construct from their experiences and interactions with others concerning their decision to take on positions of leadership in schools. Despite the multiplicity of interpretations, these interpretations relied on the teachers' perceptions of their situation (Schwandt, 2000). Therefore the chosen theoretical framework of the study, constructionism, supported the exploration of the meanings teachers have about their world (Creswell, 2002). Constructionism is well suited to the study which explored the experiences, social interactions and personal characteristics that form or discourage leadership aspirations.

3.3 Theoretical perspective

In adopting an interpretivist paradigm, this research assumed that there are varied interpretations, and that those are shaped by the experiences and background of the teachers. The four principles of symbolic interactionism stress that people ascribe social meanings to their experiences and interactions with the world (Charon, 2004). Although there is no single symbolic interactionist orthodoxy, the study is founded on the premise that "humans are dynamic beings who interact with their environment" (Sly, 2008, p. 65), as the formation of leadership aspirations occur through this interaction.

The implications for the study are evident in the four principles of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1998). The first principle is that individuals act towards a phenomenon according to the meanings that it has for them. Viewing the phenomenon in the study from the perspective of the teachers is therefore relevant. Whilst their understandings differed, symbolic interactionism accepted the meanings that individuals gave to their interactions. The second principle is that constructed meaning occurs from the individuals' interaction with society (Charon, 2004). Social interactions have formative influences that form or discourage leadership aspirations. The third principle is the understanding that individuals construct meaning of social acts by monitoring,

interpreting and assessing the particular situation. This monitoring, interpretation and assessment occurs through the cognitive processing of the individual, an essential process in developing capacity according to Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory. The fourth principle of symbolic interactionism is the acknowledgment that these influences are dynamic, changing and developing as further interaction between the individual and society occurs.

Symbolic interactionism allows for the exploration of each individual's perspective. The adoption of symbolic interactionism is appropriate for the study as it sought to understand and describe the teacher's subjective experience. It also acknowledges that language and symbols shaped the interpretation of the study, and these guide the methodology employed. Finally, symbolic interactionism recognises the complexities of social interactions that have influenced the varying interpretations. The influence of these social interactions on the varying interpretations of the teachers is one focus for the study.

3.4 Research methodology

Methodological decisions relate to how we conceptualise the world, therefore research methodology, the overall research strategy, is intrinsically linked to the researcher and the participants' theoretical perspective (Silverman, 2005). The methodological framework for the study is summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Methodological framework

Research Paradigm	Interpretivism
Epistemology	Constructionism
Theoretical Perspective	Symbolic interactionism
Research Methodology	Case study
Participants	Purposeful selection
Data Collection Methods	Survey
	Semi-structured interviews
	Written reflections

3.4.1 Case study

Given the consideration of the exploration and description of the participants' individual experiences, interactions with others and personal characteristics, the case study methodology was chosen as particularly appropriate in exploring the perceptions of the teachers under study (Tellis, 1997). The case study approach offered the opportunity to provide rich descriptions of events, contexts and others' influences, allowing the researcher to see reality through the eyes of the teachers (Hughes & Hitchcock, 1995). The study researched the perspective of the teachers in their recollections and responses to the sources that form or discourage leadership aspirations. The use of case study provided valuable insights into the unique sources of aspirations of the individuals being studied.

Case study methodology was also chosen as it achieves "a deep understanding of processes and other concept variables such as participants' self-perceptions of their own thinking processes, intentions and contextual influences" (Woodside, 2010, p. 1). Case studies investigate the research problem within real life contexts, enabling researchers to explore meanings in great depth and data to be effectively presented through rich reflection (Hughes & Hitchcock, 1995; Stake, 1994; Yin, 1989). Studies of social cognitive theory have called for research which recognises the influence of contextual and personal factors on efficacy beliefs (Labone, 2004; Machida & Schaubroeck, 2011; Usher & Pajares, 2008). The case study approach not only provided an interpretivist understanding of self-efficacy, but it also looked at self-efficacy embedded in context, which addressed a fundamental gap in efficacy literature generally (Labone, 2004). In the study, the real life contexts are the professional and personal contexts of the teachers.

Teachers' leadership aspirations and the sources that formed or discouraged these aspirations were explored through the use of multiple methods appropriate to this style of research. Research using qualitative approaches has been called for in the study of sources of self-efficacy as such studies may offer further understanding about the sources of self-efficacy beliefs (Irwin, 2008; Usher & Pajares, 2008). Case study research uses a variety of sources of information to explore and identify, rather than explain the common and unique features of the case (Gillham, 2000).

Another feature of case study research is that the object of study, the case, is "a single entity around which there are boundaries" (Merriam, 2014, p. 40) and the behaviour patterns within the system are key factors in understanding the case (Hughes & Hitchcock, 1995; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1994). The bounded features of the study are:

- Three Catholic secondary systemic schools in the Diocese of Wollongong
- The ages of the participants
- The replication of the research methods over each site for the survey
- The replication of research methods with each participant in the interviews

3.5 Participants

The principal question directed the study to explore the aspirations of teachers and the sources that form or discourage leadership aspirations of teachers.

3.5.1 Site selection

The three systemic secondary schools situated within the south-western suburbs of Sydney, within the Diocese of Wollongong, were purposefully selected by the researcher to reduce differences that may effect leadership identification and development (Day, Sammons, & Leithwood, 2011; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006). This area has a young growing population and each of the case schools has been established within the last 30 years. Each of these Catholic, diocesan, Years 7 to 12 schools is coeducational and comprehensive. The schools are part of the same local authority, Wollongong Catholic Education Office. As a bounded case study, the selection of schools was restricted to specifically focus on the leadership aspirations of teachers in these particular schools.

These schools were selected for their similarities in school size, which was a mediating factor in teachers' decisions to become school leaders as reported in the literature review. The contextual influence of size of school on leadership growth (Kimber, 2003; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006, 2008; Southworth, 2004) was reduced by choosing schools with a similar number of students, approximately 1,000 students, and a similar number of teaching staff. While staff numbers were similar, there were differences in the distribution of the ages of the staff, and the distribution of leaders in each age group.

Table 3.2 presents the teachers' demographic and the distribution of leaders in each school.

Table 3.2 Staff in each school by age

Ages	School A		School B		School C	
	Staff	Leaders	Staff	Leaders	Staff	Leaders
20-32 years old	24	8	29	4	19	4
33-45 years old	22	7	18	7	34	11
> 45 years old	24	9	29	15	20	9
Total	75	24	76	26	73	24

Each of these schools followed a traditional leadership model of formal, positional leaders, appointed through an interview process. The number of these leadership positions varied slightly between schools, as did the type of leadership positions. Schools A and C followed a pastoral model of six Year Coordinator positions, managed by a Pastoral Coordinator who was a member of the executive. School B followed a vertical model, where one teacher, a Pastoral Coordinator, supported by an Assistant Pastoral Coordinator, was responsible for students across all age groups within one of the four house groups.

The principal in each school has had over ten years' experience as principal, and each has served in the role in more than one school. School A had a female principal and Schools B and C had male principals. The middle leaders had responsibility for a pastoral group or curriculum area and received time allowance and remuneration for these added responsibilities. Teachers who had responsibility for other programs in the school, such as the Gifted and Talented Coordinator, the Literacy and Numeracy Coordinator and the Evangelist Coordinator, were given time release, but no remuneration.

3.5.2 People selection

A review of empirical studies suggested differences in leadership aspirations between younger teachers and teachers in mid and late career (Lacey, 2004; McKenzie et al., 2014; Watt et al., 2007). Studies have noted the potential of early career teachers to be leaders (Barty et al., 2005; Preston, 2003) and emphasised the importance of developing

aspirant teachers at an early stage in their career (Tranter, 2003). Preston (2003, p. 43) predicted young teachers may be able to make significant cultural-professional shifts early in their careers. This cohort has been identified in a number of studies as a group whose "expertise, commitment and professional values are sources of enormous strength for the nation's future" (Skilbeck & Connell, 2004, p. 7).

For these reasons, participants from the three Catholic diocesan schools were purposely chosen for age, and two groups were established: teachers who were 20 to 32 years of age and teachers who were 33 to 45 years of age. These age groups allowed for an exploration of the similarities and differences in sources of aspirations between these two different groups of younger teachers. The participants were further subdivided into those who aspired to leadership and those who did not want to be leaders. As participation was voluntary, the number of teachers in each category was not uniform across the three sites.

3.6 Data gathering methods

In order to develop a rich description of the research problem studied, several methods of data collection were used (Hughes & Hitchcock, 1995). Each method of data collection was informed by the research purpose and the theoretical framework of social cognitive theory. Triangulation of multiple sources of evidence was conducted which not only provided rich data, but also added "trustworthiness" to the research (Creswell, 2008; Yin, 1989).

The choice of qualitative methodology allowed for the exploration of how teachers interpret and find meaning in their experiences (Merriam, 2014). Social cognitive theory recognises this personal interpretation in triadic reciprocal determinism. In the study qualitative methodology enabled the exploration and interpretation of the personal history of the teachers, allowing for description and reflection of the sources that formed or discouraged leadership aspirations to emerge.

The methods used for the study included a survey, semi-structured interviews and written reflections. The study was conducted in three phases. Phase 1 involved the implementation of the survey. Phase 2 involved interviews with teachers who aspired to leadership in the two age groups of 20 to 32 years and 33 to 45 years. During this phase written reflections were also collected from the participants. In Phase 3, teachers

between the ages of 20 to 45 years who did not aspire to leadership were interviewed. Table 3.3 outlines an overview of the research design.

Table 3.3 Overview of research design

Data gathering strategy	Participants	Procedure and analysis	Data timeline
Phase 1: Overview of aspirations and their sources			
Survey	67 teachers under the age of 46	* Administration of survey at 3 schools during staff meetings * Collate, code and enter data * Analysis of data begins with first data collection * Preliminary themes established. * Redesign questions in interview in response to data analysis in phase 1	Feb 2011 – Invitations sent to principals March 2011- April, 2011 * Surveys administered at school staff meetings * Collection of surveys * Aspirants volunteer as participants in interviews
Phase 2: Sources of leadership aspirations			
Interviews **Written reflections**	23 aspirants to school leadership under age of 46 7 aspirants	* Conduct interviews (audiotape and transcribe) * Participant check for changes * Collection of written reflections * Data entering into NVivo 10; reduction * Constant comparative method of coding of data * Identification , confirmation or discounting of themes from data analysis	May, 2011 to August, 2011 * Interviews conducted * Collection of written reflections * Verification of data
Phase 3: Sources that discourage leadership aspirations			
Interviews	11 non-aspirants to leadership under age of 46	* Conduct interviews (audiotape and transcribe) * Participant check for changes * Collection of written reflections * Data entering into NVivo 10 * Constant comparative method of coding of data	October, 2011 to November, 2011 * Interviews conducted * Verification of data
Phase 4: Focused exploration of data			
		* Continue coding, categorising of data * Analytical interpretation of all data	December, 2011 to August, 2012
Phase 5: Report Writing			
		*Presentation of data and emerging themes at workshops * Writing up results	September, 2012 to September, 2014

3.6.1 The survey

The main purpose of the survey was to collect demographic information and information about leadership experience, aspirations and the reasons teachers considered they did or did not aspire to leadership.

Survey design

The survey, which was conducted in Phase 1, was designed to be in two parts. Part A sought to gather demographic information, and Part B information regarding the aspirations of the participants and their views on the sources that form leadership aspirations or discourage aspirations to school leadership positions. The participants were asked to rate their leadership aspirations to take on positions of principal and middle leader, using a continuous rating scale. Following these questions on aspirations, questions designed to obtain the views of the participants on the formation of aspirations were asked. They rated these sources on a 3-point scale as having significant influence, some influence or little influence. Questions were informed by the theoretical framework of social cognitive theory and were centred on the influence of experiences, role models and social persuasion, for example: "To what extent do you consider that experiences as a teacher may influence people wanting to become school leaders?" Participants were given a further option of qualitative responses on each influence, for example: "What type of professional experiences may contribute to people wanting to be school leaders?", see Appendix 1 for the full survey.

Survey administration

The principals of the three schools were asked for permission to carry out the study at their school and the survey was conducted at each school during staff meetings, with voluntary participation. All survey responses were completed manually. The total number of survey questionnaires given out was 228, with a response rate of 42%. All the teachers in the three schools were invited to respond to the survey. Table 3.4 presents a break-down of the survey respondents according to age and gender.

Table 3.4 Survey respondents by gender and age

Respondents	20-32 years old	33-45 years old
Female	27	14
Male	9	17
Total	36	31

The survey offered a snapshot of a number of teachers' aspirations and their views on the sources that form or discourage teachers to aspire to school leadership. These responses were then used to shape the interview questions. While the limitations of data gathered via the survey are acknowledged, the survey responses provided information about teachers' intentions to become school leaders and the differences in responses between the different age groups. The survey also allowed for corroboration of evidence to support the central findings of the study.

Whilst the survey responses were anonymous, the participants who aspired to leadership and those that did not aspire had the opportunity to self-nominate to participate further in the study at the time of administration of the survey. Thirty-four teachers agreed to be participants for the interviews.

3.6.2 The interviews

Qualitative interviews "elucidate subjectively lived experiences and viewpoints from the respondents' perspectives" (Tracy, 2012, p. 132). The purpose of the interviews in the study was to gain detailed and descriptive data on the sources that form or discourage leadership aspirations.

Interview design

Guided by the central questions of the study, all interviews pursued a consistent line of inquiry (Yin, 2003). The interviews were semi-structured in order to maintain integrity, yet allow for the interviewee to explore answers to guiding questions. These open-ended questions allowed for the interviewees to respond reflectively on the influences to their aspirations. The initial interview questions sought demographic information and asked questions about teaching and school leadership experience and aspirations. The main interview questions focused on the sources of those aspirations. These questions were

designed within the theoretical framework of social cognitive theory, on the basis of the three major sources of aspiration: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences and social persuasion. These were considered in questions that focused on experiences in the personal and professional context, of role models and of social persuasion. The interview questions for those teachers who aspired to school leadership are presented in Appendix 2. The focus of these interviews was to gather information on the sources that encouraged leadership aspirations. The interview questions for those teachers who do not aspire to school leadership (non-aspirants) are presented in Appendix 4. The focus of these interviews was to gather research on the reasons for not wanting leadership, and the sources that discouraged the formation of leadership aspirations.

Interview administration

The one-to-one interviews followed a consistent procedure. The researcher met with each participant twice. The first meeting was a short, informal face-to-face meeting designed to establish rapport and outline the research purpose and problem and the research questions, as well as to explain the data gathering methods. The research interview with each participant was conducted in the following month, after the participants had had time to reflect on their responses to the interview questions. The interviews were of a duration of approximately twenty minutes to an hour, at a site proposed by the participant that was free of interruptions and conducive to conversation. The role of the researcher was to participate through open-ended questions while probing for in-depth understanding. Interviews were recorded, with the permission of the participants, and then transcribed by the researcher. As soon as possible after the interview, a transcript was referred back to the interviewee for correction and feedback. No interviewee requested changes or corrections.

The initial interviewees were the teachers who aspired to leadership. These interviews comprise Phase 2 of the study. Sixteen interviews were conducted with teachers under 33 years of age, who had identified themselves as motivated to take on leadership positions in schools. Following the interviews with the younger aspirants, seven interviews were conducted with teachers 33 to 45 years old. The data from these interviews served to provide examples of influences of experiences, interactions with people and personal characteristics, whilst also presenting some differences in influences between the teachers in the two different age groups. The interviewees are

listed by their pseudonyms in the following tables, with age, teaching subject area and leadership experience.

Table 3.5 Interviewees: Aspirants, 20 to 32 years old

Name	Age	Subject area	Current leadership position	Previous leadership position
Abby	24	TAS	Year 7 Coordinator	None
Danielle	29	English	Pastoral Coordinator	Year Coordinator
David	26	PDHPE	Year 12 Coordinator	Assistant Year Coordinator
Dominic	25	PDHPE	Assistant Year Coordinator	None
Joshua	27	English	None	None
Julia	24	PDHPE	Year 11 Coordinator	Literacy/ Numeracy Coordinator
Katherine	26	HSIE	None	None
Kayla	29	HSIE	Careers Advisor	Year Coordinator
Marissa	24	English	None	None
May	25	Art	None	None
Michelle	23	PDHPE	Evangelisation Coordinator	None
Natalie	23	PDHPE	Year 10 Coordinator	None
Paige	28	PDHPE	Gifted and Talented Coordinator	Assistant Year Coordinator
Patrick	27	HSIE	None	None
Rebecca	23	English	None	None
Sinead	23	English	House Coordinator	None

Table 3.6 Interviewees: Aspirants, 33 to 45 years old

Name	Age	Subject area	Current leadership position	Previous leadership position
Adella	39	Languages	Pastoral Coordinator	Year Coordinator
Ben	33	PDHPE	Curriculum Coordinator	PDHPE Coordinator
Denise	38	Science	None	Acting Science Coordinator
Janette	39	English	None	Literacy Coordinator
Mark	41	Religious Education	Evangelising Coordinator	None
Nick	34	HSIE	HSIE Coordinator	Technology Coordinator
Phil	33	PDHPE	Pastoral Coordinator	Year Coordinator

Following the interviews with aspiring teachers, 11 teachers in the age group of 20 to 45 years who were not interested in leadership positions were interviewed, to gain understanding of the sources that discourage teachers from taking on positions of leadership. These interviews comprise Phase 3 of the study. Non-aspirants in the 20 to 32 years age range were interviewed, followed by non-aspirants in the 33 to 45 years age range in order to explore any age-related differences. The interviewees are listed by their pseudonyms in the following tables, with age, teaching subject area and elements related to leadership experience.

Table 3.7 Interviewees: Non-aspirants, 20 to 32 years old

Name	Age	Subject area	Current leadership position	Previous leadership position
Alicia	32	Mathematics	None	None
Maddy	28	Art	None	Acting CAPA Coordinator

Table 3.8 Interviewees: Non-aspirants, 33 to 45 years old

Name	Age	Subject area	Current leadership position	Previous leadership position
Mia	32	PDHPE	Acting PDHPE Coordinator	None
Margaret	28	Art	None	Acting CAPA Coordinator
Brendan	38	Mathematics	None	Administration Coordinator
Deanna	41	English	None	None
Justine	40	Art	None	Acting CAPA Coordinator
Kirsty	34	PDHPE	Acting Sport Coordinator	None
Tara	41	HSIE	None	Year Coordinator
Anne	38	TAS	None	Year Coordinator
Rose	36	English	None	English Coordinator

3.6.3 The written reflections

In order to further explore the sources of leadership aspirations identified by the participants, the 20- to 45-year-old teachers who aspired to leadership positions were asked to spend time writing about and reflecting on two main influences that they discussed in the interview.

Aspirants were asked to submit a written reflection elaborating on an experience and person who had an influence on the participant's self-efficacy for leadership. The intention of this data collection was to offer an opportunity for thoughtful, detailed responses and reflection on influences that have helped form the participants' leadership aspirations. This provided an opportunity for the exploration of one or more of the sources of self-efficacy for leadership that have had the most significant influence in the formation of these leadership aspirations.

Written reflection design

The written reflection was submitted to the researcher by some of the aspirants in both age groups. Open-ended questions guided the reflections, which explored the influences

on leadership aspirations through description and reflection. The guided questions for the written reflection are presented in Appendix 3.

Written reflection administration

Written reflections were collected from teachers who aspired to leadership, as they were the original intended participants of the study. Five of the sixteen 20- to 32-year-old aspirants and one of the seven 33- to 45-year-old aspirants contributed a written reflection. Table 3.9 presents the respondents and the subjects of their written reflection.

Table 3.9 Written reflections: Aspirants

Name	Influential Person	Other Influences
20- to 32-year-old aspirants		
Kayla	Colleague and mentor	Personal motivation to succeed
Marissa	Father	
May	Incompetent school leader	Previous leadership experience in part-time work
Paige	Family friend who was a school principal	Leadership of school initiatives: peer support, gifted and talented program, Assistant Pastoral Coordinator
Rebecca		As an adolescent, taking on leadership role in her family in situation of domestic abuse
Sinead	Father	Negative experiences with school leaders as a student
33- to 45-year-old aspirants		
Ben	Friend who is an Assistant Principal	Early leadership experiences: captain of sporting teams, school captain

All forms of data, the survey, interviews of aspirants and non-aspirants and written reflections, were collected in order to explore the research problem under study from multiple perspectives (Denzin, 1997), in this case sources that form or discourage leadership aspirations.

3.7 Analysis of data

In order to explore the influences on the participants' leadership aspirations, a rigorous and complex dynamic process was employed. The analysis included all the relevant evidence from surveys, interviews and written reflections, all rival interpretations in the analysis were included, the most relevant aspects of the case study were addressed, and the use of the researcher's knowledge was used to further the analysis.

The data analysis process, which included all the data from the survey, interview and written reflection, occurred in four stages. Data analysis began at an early stage, after the collection of the survey questionnaires. Each survey participant was coded with a number and then placed within their age group, for example, 21: 33- to 45-year-old teacher, and the interview participants were each given a pseudonym for identification and confidentiality purposes. The written reflections were attributed to the interview participant using the same pseudonym. Quantitative data from the survey was input into a database and served to provide demographic details of the participants, as well as details of aspirations. This data was input into a NVivo 10 database and analysed and interpreted mainly using percentile ranks. This data provided an overview of leadership aspirations to take on the positions of principal and middle leader, and was analysed within the two age groups.

Qualitative data from the surveys and interviews was transcribed by the researcher, ensuring confidentiality for the respondents. This had the added advantage of immersing the researcher in the data, assisting in the analysis process. Transcription and close reading of the qualitative data from the survey and interview and close reading of the written reflection enabled the researcher to recognise the emerging themes, and compare the information from different sources.

Following the transcription and coding of both the surveys and interviews, and the coding of the written reflections, listing and preliminary grouping, and reductions and elimination were made using QSR NVivo 10 software. Data reduction, through coding, occurred using the constant comparison method as outlined by Boeije (2002). The NVivo 10 program offered the researcher the opportunity to reduce information into nodes, and mark texts using open, then axial coding (Creswell, 2008; Silverman, 2005). The initial nodes were informed by the survey responses, interviews and written reflections. Using the NVivo10 program, the researcher read through each source from

a given age group and placed these sources into two categories, "encouragements" and "discouragements". These were coded for key words and phrases, and formed the basis for further analysis and development of principal themes and categories, through clustering and thematising. These themes were developed from the qualitative data, but were informed by the literature review and the theoretical framework. An example of a theme is "positive professional experiences". In the initial analysis, 27 references from 10 sources were found on this theme. Using these references, this theme was refined to indicate different types of positive professional experiences, such as professional development and successful leadership experience. The NVivo 10 program allowed for compression of data through selective display of data as figures and as sources. The functions of NVivo 10 also allowed the researcher to examine data more efficiently and to create a trail showing the development of themes, categories and subcategories.

The themes constructed from the data on the sources of leadership aspirations were: mastery experiences, people (social persuasion and vicarious modelling) and personal characteristics (beliefs about self, teaching, leading, family; self-efficacy and motivation). These themes, however, were not mutually exclusive and almost all intersected, as the findings of the data will show. At this point the theoretical underpinning of Bandura's social cognitive theory began to emerge, allowing for conclusions to be drawn. Selective coding, the integration of the categories generated and developed through open and axial coding, resulted in interpretations and theory building. Reflection occurred throughout this cyclical process.

3.8 Trustworthiness and credibility

Qualitative research, by its very nature, is shaped by the natural subjectivity of the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 1994). In approaching the study from an interpretivist point of view, the researcher is no more detached from the object of study than the participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As a consequence, verification of qualitative research findings is not discussed in terms of traditional paradigms, such as validity and reliability, but in terms of credibility, dependability and trustworthiness.

Credibility ensures that the study is conducted in such a manner as to ensure that "the research findings match reality" (Merriam, 2014, p. 213). To ensure the credibility of the study, an in-depth description of the parameters and complexities of the case study, derived from the data, formed part of the research. Credibility was also addressed by

member checking (Creswell, 2008), with participants' checking of the transcripts both for clarifications and corrections. The constant comparative method was employed, moving from small to larger data sets as previously described in the data analysis, as was triangulation of all sources of data: survey, interviews and written reflections. The researcher included all data in the interpretation, using comprehensive data treatment including conversation analysis.

In order to ensure dependability, the reliability of the findings and the stability and consistency of the research process over time and methods, the following controls were put in place.

- The researchers' objectives and the research questions were outlined to all participants, the principals of each school and the Diocese of Wollongong Catholic Education Office. These were confirmed with the participants at the administration of the survey, during the interview and at the collection of the written reflections.
- Interviews followed the same framework through the use of the questions, and all interviews were recorded in an audio file.
- The research was guided by supervisors and critique of the data analysis for bias was a focus of this guidance.

The researcher did not seek to establish the authenticity and transferability of the data in a case study, but rather the trustworthiness of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This meant that the data collected on the sources of aspirations needed to be rich, comprehensive and accurate. It was not tested or justified, nor was each participant's description of the sources of their aspirations measured against other participants. Rather the insights gained from the interviews were aligned with social cognitive theory.

Verification of the findings of the study is particularly problematic in case study research (Tellis, 1997). The implementation of effective protocols and strategies in the study aimed to ensure credibility and trustworthiness.

3.9 Ethical issues

Ethical issues impinge on qualitative research because of the intimate engagement with the public and private lives of individuals (Silverman, 2005). Ethical issues, categorised as codes and consent, confidentiality and trust (Ryen, 2004), were addressed in this research. Approval of the ACU Human Research Ethics Committee (Register no: N2011 08) was required before research could be undertaken. Approval was also received from the Diocese of Wollongong Catholic Education Office.

Letters were sent to the principals of each of the schools, outlining details of the study and inviting their school staff to participate, and specifically explaining the voluntary nature of participation and offering the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity (Appendix 5). Before the implementation of the survey, the researcher spoke at a staff meeting at each of the schools, outlining the research and its purpose, inviting staff to participate and assuring them of anonymity and confidentiality. Letters addressed to the participants were distributed explaining the study and the requirements of the participants in further detail (Appendix 6). Surveys did not identify participants, and were left at the school at a safe location and collected by the researcher at a later agreed time.

Safeguards of codes and consent were put into place to ensure participants' rights. Letters and consent forms were given to interview participants, outlining the research and its purpose, the voluntary nature of their participation and their right to withdraw from the study. They were again assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The process of data analysis, such as the use of transcripts, pseudonyms, member checking and coding of data, was explained to reassure the participants of anonymity and confidentiality.

All coding and data were safely and securely stored in accordance with Australian Catholic University (ACU) and Diocesan policy.

3.10 Chapter summary

The purpose of this qualitative case study research was to identify teachers' leadership aspirations and to examine the sources that form or discourage teachers under the age of 46 to aspire to school leadership. An interpretive approach was adopted as research design as this paradigm recognises the varied interpretations, shaped by the experiences

and background of the participants. A number of data gathering methods were used in this case study. Survey responses from 67 teachers, interviews with 23 teachers aspiring to school leadership positions and with 11 non-aspirants, and seven written reflections were the data gathering strategies used for this case study. The data were analysed using a constant comparative process. The following chapter presents the findings of the study.

Chapter Four – Presentation of the Findings

The purpose of this qualitative case study research was to identify teachers' leadership aspirations and to examine the sources that form or discourage teachers under the age of 46 to aspire to school leadership. This chapter reports the findings arising from the data collection: survey, interviews of open-ended questions and written reflections. The process of how data were content analysed and coded to establish emergent themes are presented in this chapter.

The following question guided the analysis and the findings: How do teachers form leadership aspirations? The following research questions provide a means to approach this question.

1.   What are teachers' leadership aspirations?

2.   What are the sources of teachers' leadership aspirations?

   Subquestion: In what ways have mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and personal characteristics formed teachers' leadership aspirations?

   Subquestion: Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?

3.   What are the sources that discourage teachers from aspiring to leadership?

   Subquestion: In what ways have mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and personal characteristics discouraged teachers' leadership aspirations?

   Subquestion: Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?

The data analysis has been presented using the following framework. The first part of the analysis reports on the data on aspirations of the participants to the positions of school principal and middle leadership. The reasons survey participants suggested that teachers aspire to leadership are also presented, answering the research question: What are teachers' leadership aspirations?

The second part of the analysis addresses the second research question: "What are the sources of teachers' leadership aspirations?" The data have been analysed according to themes guided by the theoretical underpinning of social cognitive theory and which have been generated through the coding process. The data from the survey is presented

first, as this offers a broad perspective from a greater number of participants. The theme is then explored through the data from the interviews and from the written reflections. This structure has been used to also address the subquestion, "Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?" The third part of this analysis addresses the third research question and subquestion: "What are the sources that discourage teachers' leadership aspirations? This section is also divided into the two age groups – teachers 20 to 32 years old and teachers 33 to 45 years old – to also address the subquestion, "Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?" The data is presented thematically, with the survey data offering a broad perspective, followed by the interview data.

4.1 Aspirations to take on school leadership positions

Survey participants and aspirants interviewed were asked about their aspirations to become a principal. A further question asked about teachers' aspirations to become a middle leader.

4.1.1 Survey

In the survey, teachers were asked to convey their aspirations to take on these leadership positions on a continuous rating scale. Figure 4.1 outlines the aspirations to take on the position of principal of survey participants in both age groups. Figure 4.2 indicates the survey results of aspirations to take on a middle leadership position of teachers from both age groups.
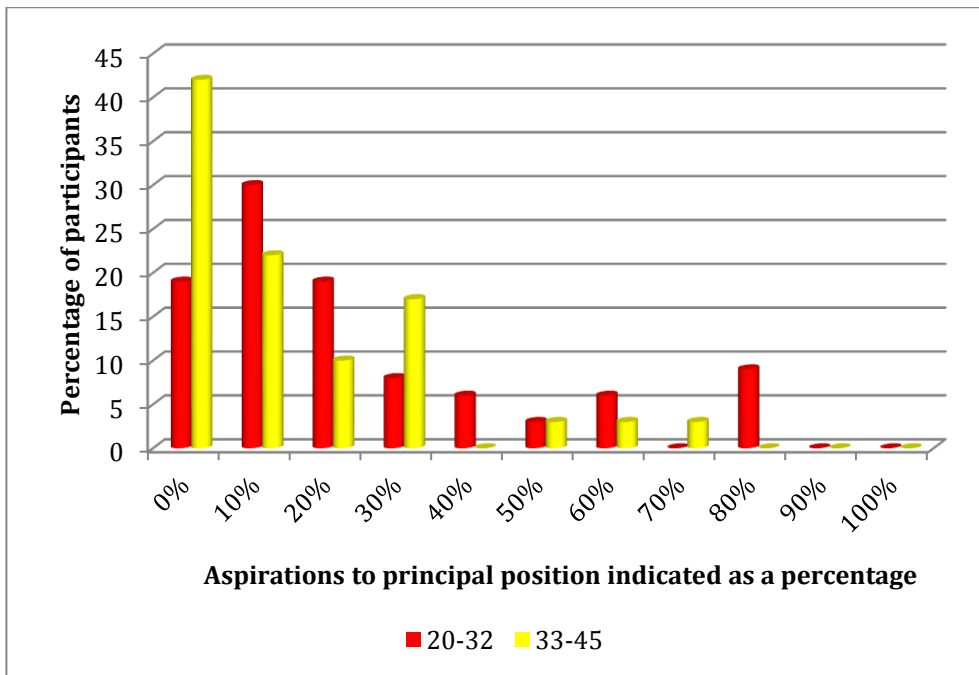
Figure 4.1 Aspirations to take on the position of principal by age group
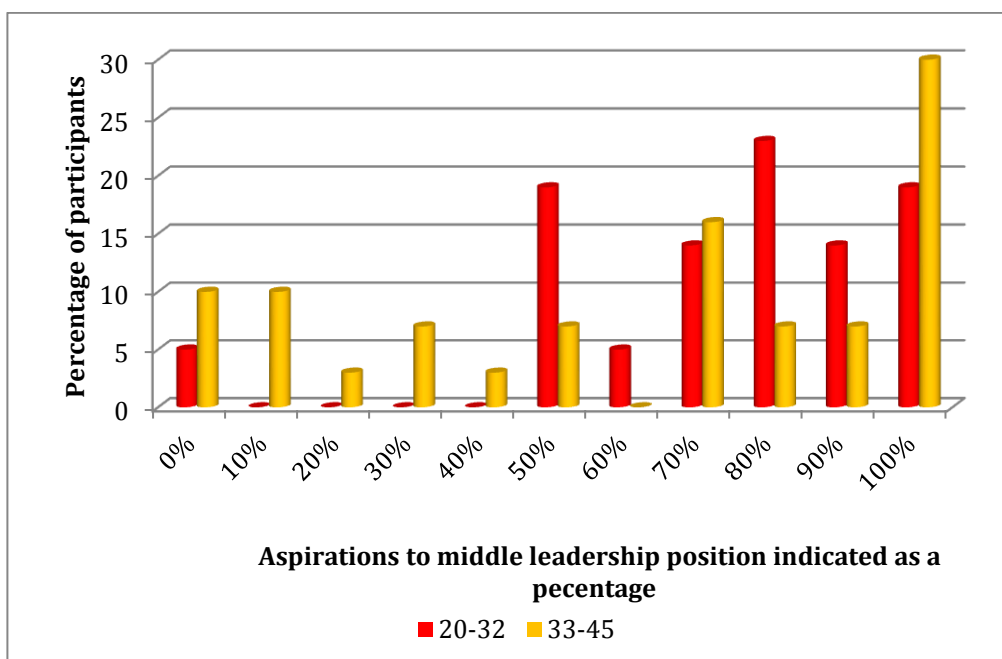
Figure 4.2 Aspirations to take on a position of middle leader by age group

As can be seen from this data, 68% of respondents in the 20 to 32 years age group showed a reluctance (20% or less) to aspire to take on the position of principal. Teachers in the 33 to 45 years age group were even less interested in taking on the position of principal than the younger age group, with 74% indicating little interest (20% or less) in taking on this position.

Whilst few participants indicated an interest in aspiring to the position of principal, many of the participants indicated their aspiration to take on a position of middle leader. The responses of the younger teachers (20-32 years old) clearly indicate that many of these respondents have aspirations to take on a middle leadership position as 55% of the respondents indicated a high level of interest (80% or higher) in taking on a middle leadership position, whilst only 5% indicated that they were not interested in becoming a middle leader. The range of responses of the older teachers (33-45 years old) to these aspirations is greater than that of the younger group. Of the older age group of respondents, 49% show an interest (80% or higher) in taking on a middle leadership position, whilst 23% indicated they were not interested in being middle leaders. Those who were middle leaders and were content to stay at this level account for the figures at 100%. The differences in aspirations in the two age groups were reflected in the number of participants in the interviews. Of the younger interview participants, 16 aspired to leadership and two did not, whereas seven older teachers interviewed aspired to leadership and nine did not.

4.1.2 Interviews

Interview participants were asked about their leadership aspirations. A few of the younger aspirants were noncommittal in their aspirations to become a senior leader in their interviews. Most of the participants voiced aspirations to take on a leadership position that was immediately above the position they were in, either Year Coordinator, Pastoral Coordinator or KLA (Key Learning Area) Coordinator. Four teachers were prepared to extend their aspirations to become a deputy principal, with some hesitancy about the workload and type of duties, which was referred to as administration (Paige, Dominic, May and Danielle).

One younger participant explained that she joked she wanted to be a principal one day; however, most participants were reluctant to articulate any desire for the position of principal, with two participants explaining that they did not aspire to take on the role of principal because it was too removed from teaching and the classroom, and they saw the role of principal having limited connection with the students.

Some of the older aspirants had considered taking on the position of deputy principal or principal, with some hesitancy about the workload and type of duties. Adella and Ben both were open to the idea of being principal; however, both expressed concern at the

workload because they considered it would detrimentally affect their young families. Ben also expressed some concern at the type of work involved, explaining that he saw the principal's position as "sweeping up the mess". "To me, that makes me question whether I am aspiring to assistant principal or principal, there is a lot of stuff you have to deal with that is out of your control in a lot of ways, whereas I think the lower levels of leadership you can control a lot more." One of the participants, Phil, was noncommittal in his aspirations to higher leadership in school, as he was already on the executive of his school and was enjoying the job he was doing. Nick and Janette were concerned that senior leadership positions in schools moved a teacher away from the classroom, "then it impacts on the very reason you became a teacher in the first place, which was to teach" (Nick).

As can be seen, there are some differences in the aspirations to a middle leadership position between the two age groups of teachers. Many teachers in both age groups, however, aspired to take on a position of middle leader.

4.1.3 Reasons to be or not to be a leader

While the main focus of the research is on the sources that form or discourage leadership aspirations, it is necessary to first report the reasons these participants may or may not choose to become leaders. Although the survey did not specifically ask this question, a number of participants indicated a reason for teachers to aspire or not to leadership, either within other answers or in the open-ended response at the end of the survey. Discussion of these reasons in the interview data is interwoven in the discussion of sources.

Reasons to be a school leader

Participants of the survey identified reasons for teachers to want to take on positions of leadership. There were some differences in the reasons reported between teachers of the two age groups. Table 4.1 presents the survey results on the reasons teachers chose to be leaders.

Table 4.1 Survey results: Reasons teachers chose to be leaders

20- to 32-year-old Teachers Reasons	Number of responses	33- to 45-year-old Teachers Reasons	Number of responses
Make a difference	9	Personal gain	5
Goals/ challenge	7	Make a difference	3
Positive encouragement	3	Goals/ challenge	3
Financial remuneration	1	Poor middle leadership	1

Both age groups of teachers considered that the opportunity to make a difference was an important reason for teachers to want to become leaders. Nine responses in the younger age group referred to this as a reason for teachers to take on leadership, with three responses in the older age group indicating this as a reason. This was described in various ways by the younger aspirants: "want to make a positive change", "a yearning to continue or better the quality of student experiences", "passion for the profession" and "an intrinsic desire to support others". In the older age group teachers described this reason as wanting to implement change "to student learning" and "assist in an organisation moving forward".

Challenge and job satisfaction were also reported as reasons teachers may want to be leaders. This reason was reported in the responses of seven of the younger teachers and three of the older teachers. This was variously described by the younger aspirants as "personal achievement …a new challenge", "achieve personal success", "ambition" and "wanting to be challenged".

Other reasons teachers in the younger age group considered that teachers wanted to be school leaders were encouragement and support from others, particularly in "identification of potential" and financial remuneration.

Participants of the survey in the older age group identified two other reasons for teachers wanting to take on positions of leadership: personal gain and poor middle leadership. The most frequently reported reason participants in this age range considered that teachers may want to become leaders is personal gain, indicating this in comments such as "climbing the ladder" and "promotional prestige". One participant suggested that teachers may become leaders because of "frustration with department direction".

Reasons for not being a school leader

Survey participants identified reasons for teachers not to aspire to take on positions of leadership. There were some differences in the reasons and their significance reported between teachers of the two age groups. Table 4.2 presents the survey results on the reasons teachers do not want to be leaders.

Table 4.2 Survey results: Reasons teachers do not want to be leaders

20- to 32-year-old Teachers Reasons Not to Aspire	Number of responses	33- to 45-year-old Teachers Reasons Not to Aspire	Number of responses
The influence of school culture and senior leaders	11	Stress/ workload	6
Work/life balance	6	Work/life balance	5
Perception of the role	6	The influence of school culture and senior leaders	1
Stress/workload	6	Poor remuneration	1
Lack of confidence	1	Perception of the role	1

Survey participants identified five reasons for teachers not taking on positions of leadership: work/life balance, stress and workload of the job, perception of the role, influence of school culture and senior leaders, poor remuneration and lack of confidence.

The difficulty of balancing work with other aspects of life was considered to be a reason that teachers did not aspire to leadership in both age groups. Teachers reported that the impact on family life was a deterrent. One response by a member of the older age group mentioned poor remuneration: "the realisation the extra work/time is not adequately compensated financially".

The perception of the role was also a significant factor in six responses by participants in the younger age group. These participants identified "negative interactions with students, staff or parents", confrontations, responsibility and accountability as reasons teachers may not like to take on a positional school leadership role. The reported factor of stress of the role, particularly the lack of time and support, was also given in six

responses by members of both age groups. Six responses by teachers in each age group referred to the stress of the role, with references to "leaders under immense workloads" and "time-poor and stressed" leaders. One participant specifically mentioned the role of middle leader in this context: "increasing demands placed on middle managers – growing nature of the job".

Both groups considered the influence of school culture and senior leaders as a reason that teachers did not aspire to leadership, although the negativity of senior leaders and co-workers was particularly considered a deterrent by teachers in the younger age group. Five responses by teachers in the younger group referred to negative attitudes of colleagues, citing comments made by others such as "inexperienced" and "too young". Another referred to the "tall poppy syndrome: don't want to see others succeed". Other responses specifically refer to "tension among staff" and "negative and unsupportive work environment". Four responses identified lack of opportunity, three indicated negative experiences with senior management, two indicated a lack of encouragement from senior leaders and another two reported undesirable role models as a reason teachers did not aspire to leadership. It is worth noting that these responses were from teachers across the three different schools. One teacher in the older age group also gave this as a reason. This response identified negativity of senior leaders and others about the role, about leadership and towards the teacher as a factor: "negative views towards leadership, putting down, not believing in ability".

Only one response, by a teacher in the younger age group, indicated that a lack of confidence in ability may deter teachers from being school leaders.

4.2 Sources of aspirations

The purpose of this research was to identify teachers' leadership aspirations and to examine the sources that form or discourage teachers under the age of 46 to aspire to school leadership. The following analysis answers the second research subquestion, "What are the sources of teachers' leadership aspirations?"

The analysis is organised according to the following themes: personal and professional experiences, vicarious experience (personal and professional role models), social persuasion in the personal and professional context and personal characteristics (beliefs, motivation, self-efficacy for leadership). The theoretical framework of the study, social

cognitive theory, provided the broader thematic structure; however, the subthemes within these broader themes were derived from the coded survey and interview data. The subquestion, "Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?" directed the structure of the presentation of the findings. The survey data for each theme is presented first, as it offers a broader perspective from a greater number of participants, followed by the interview data, which presents a deeper understanding of the themes. Within each theme the interview data from the younger aspirants is followed by the interview data of the older aspirants. Relevant data from the written reflection follows the interview data of each age group.

4.2.1 Mastery experiences

One of the main sources of leadership aspirations is experiences. In order to delineate the different types of experiences that may influence teachers to aspire to leadership, this theme was divided into personal and professional experiences. This served the purpose of identifying specific experiences in the teachers' past that may have influenced their leadership aspirations, and experiences that have occurred in the school setting which have encouraged these aspirations.

Personal experiences

In the survey, interviews and written reflections, participants were asked to consider the effect of personal experiences on the formation of leadership aspirations. The survey asked teachers to consider the extent to which personal experiences influence people wanting to become school leaders. Interview participants were asked to reflect on personal experiences that contributed to their leadership aspirations.

In the survey data, 58% of the younger teachers considered that personal experience was significant, 38% indicated personal experiences had some influence and only 2% considered that personal experience had little influence on aspirations. This contrasts with the older teachers, 71% of whom considered that personal experience was significant, 29% considered personal experiences had some influence whilst no responses considered that personal experience had a little influence on aspirations.

Interestingly, the older teachers considered that personal experiences have a greater influence on aspirations than the younger teachers did. Despite this, both age groups nominated similar types of personal experiences: successful leadership at school, within

families such as "being the oldest of siblings", birth of a child, family background, leadership positions in sport and previous responsibility in careers. Teachers in the older age group mentioned the influence of leadership in community areas and "significant life events" on leadership aspirations.

The analysis of the survey data reflected the particular personal experiences of the interview participants, and the influence that these experiences may have on their leadership aspirations. As in most other aspects of the survey data, these particular experiences were developed in greater detail in the interviews and written reflections.

Regarding the theme of personal experiences, participants in the interviews and written reflections either had early formative experiences of leadership, or had a transformative experience that encouraged them to pursue leadership. The interview data reflected some of the personal experiences highlighted by the survey data such as early personal experiences; however, transformative experiences were not mentioned in the survey data.

Early formative experiences

For 10 of the 23 aspirants in both age groups, experiences of leadership occurred early in their lives, in family, sport, church and school contexts, and they recalled experiences that developed their skills and understanding of leadership and confirmed their sense of self as leaders.

The younger aspirants were able to recount numerous early experiences of being a leader. Julia's early experiences of leadership began within her family as the eldest with two much younger siblings. "…growing up, I felt like a mum. They used to call me mum at home… So, I think they have always seen me as someone to look up to and a leader." Julia's adopted role within the family offered her many opportunities to develop her skills of managing and looking after others. Throughout high school, Julia continued to place herself in positions of leadership, finding sport offered her those opportunities. "In high school I used to coach and I'd coach any sport." By the time she had left school, and was working in a part-time job, her drive and skills in leadership led to further leadership opportunities. "I got a position at K's (activity centre) and I think just making myself available all the time, putting my hand up for things, I found myself in a position where I was one of the leaders in that career and I thought alright, I'll have

a go." Julia's comments indicated her sense of empowerment in being a leader and the contribution this experience has had in creating her present leadership aspirations:

> I liked having that role that people looked to for answers. They came to me for answers because I had the knowledge, I had the ability to manage the centre, … I liked having that position and holding it, and having that respect within the staff, so I think that has given me a taste of what leadership is like, so if I can work towards that same position in my now career of being a teacher, I would like to. (Julia)

From early experiences of responsibility within the family, Julia's sense of self as leader enabled her to experience a considerable number of leadership opportunities before she became a teacher.

Marissa, as the eldest twin, also took on responsibility for others within her family. "My family, even though I'm a twin, they see me as the older one, so they rely on me to cook or clean or take care of my sister." The expectation of her family ensured that she had numerous experiences of leadership. This filtered through into other contexts. She recounted her position as a captain in primary school, as well as leadership roles within her church. By the time that Marissa was at university, she was teaching Sunday school and running youth meetings for her peers, those who had finished school. "They rely on me a lot to be able to lead and organize church camps and church fundraisers." Marissa's comment about herself as leader echoed the reflections of the others in this age group who had this type of early personal experience. "From a young age I was able to take on that responsibility, so I was more comfortable being able to lead from a young age."

Michelle, Natalie and Dominic also recounted early and numerous experiences of leadership. Michelle was vice-captain in her primary school, and school captain of her high school. At university, she also took on student leadership roles. "At uni I was also an advocate for my year group and community in my course, so that has helped me become who I am and stronger in my leadership." She was nominated for a Rotary Youth Leadership Award, and had the experience of attending seminars, learning a variety of skills of leadership, first as an awardee, then as a leader. At this stage, Michelle was comfortable and knowledgeable in the role of leader, and this experience, "was just confirming what I had already been doing at uni and school". Natalie also

listed many experiences of leadership, assessing the impact of these experiences on her aspirations of leadership. "I was always a leader through high school, sporting teams, I was school captain, so leading comes pretty naturally to me, so I like to have those leadership positions, essentially." Dominic also had experience of leadership through sport and school. From the age of 12 he took on captaincy positions in sporting teams, and in high school was on the Student Representative Council. In his final year at school Dominic was appointed house captain. He considered that these "little leadership positions" were fundamental to becoming the person he is now:

> Playing junior sports, just being Captain of sporting teams has helped me to know at a very early stage what leadership is… to motivate people and organize people from a young age…and talking to people and being able to understand what their challenges are and helping to work through that with people. (Dominic)

These early formal positions of leadership gave each of these participants opportunities to develop their leadership skills and identify themselves as leaders.

For Rebecca, the personal experiences of leadership that formed her understanding of leadership occurred within her family. "I am the oldest of three, and my whole life I had to lead the way." She described a traumatic upbringing in which she was required to make adult decisions from an early age. These early experiences have formed her view that there is an expectation from others that she will lead. "When leadership positions do come up, people just generally look to me for the answers and to assume that role." Early experiences of leadership in her family have led her to the belief that any difficulties she encounters professionally in leadership positions will be easily overcome.

In her written reflection, Rebecca elaborated on the importance of her personal experience in forming her leadership aspirations. Rebecca wrote of her role within her family during the breakdown of her parents' marriage. "During this time, perhaps because I was the oldest, I assumed the role of leader over my siblings. I protected them, I told them what to do, I gave them money when they needed it for school, I counselled them when they were upset."

The impact of this experience on her leadership is eloquently expressed in her written reflection. "Throughout my adolescent experience I realised that the only way to control

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or to make a positive contribution to a situation is to take leadership over it." This experience formed Rebecca's ambition to be a teacher and her leadership aspirations:

> Part of my reason for becoming a teacher in the first place is that I know first-hand what some children are going through at home. Adolescence was the worst time of my life and now that I have come out the other end of it, I would like to help others through it. This experience also prompts me to want to take on a greater role of leadership probably at the pastoral level. (Rebecca)

As with the teachers interviewed in the younger age group, early personal experiences for the older aspirants created leadership aspirations. Four participants in particular, Adella, Ben, Phil and Mark, noted the influence of their personal experiences on their understanding of leadership and development of skills.

For Adella, her position in the family as the eldest grandchild of migrant parents brought expectations and responsibilities from an early stage in her life. She described her role within the family, preparing the meal for her family before her mother got home from work, and supporting her extended family by interpreting for her grandparents. She considered that these early experiences have given her the independence and drive to succeed.

Both Phil and Mark also described personal experiences that created a drive to succeed within their careers. Mark reflected on the values instilled in him of using his skills and talents. "When I was 15 and 16 I was running my own lawn mowing businesses, cleaning businesses and all that kind of stuff." As the eldest in his family, Phil took on responsibility. He also had early experiences of playing in sporting teams where there was an expectation for the older team members to lead by example.

> If you are going to be the person that you want to be you have to show those qualities, and that sort of lends you towards leadership roles. Because I think people like to see people acting and being the person they want to be, and that draws everyone along with you. (Phil)

His experiences clearly have led him to aspire to take on positions of leadership.

Ben, on the other hand, had similar experiences to members of the younger age group. He recounted many early experiences of leadership at school and in sporting teams, that

influenced his leadership aspirations. His early experiences of captaining sporting teams made him aware of the responsibility placed on a leader:

> You do lead by example and you are expected to play and some would say, behave in certain ways. You are expected to play well, and play fairly and act as a role model. I think those experiences were a taste of leadership, and I enjoyed that responsibility. (Ben)

He also enjoyed his role as school captain in his senior secondary year. "…that opportunity to have a bit more influence, and you were fairly visible in the school and, you know, you could run initiatives…" He considered these experiences "opened my eyes to leadership" and made him become a better person. He reflected on these early experiences in his written narrative.

> I enjoyed having the extra responsibility and trying to lead by example and I think this was an early experience that may have contributed towards my openness towards leadership. (Ben)

For six of the younger aspirants, numerous early experiences of leadership have formed their understanding and skills of leadership, influencing them to further aspire to leadership. In the older age group only Ben had formal leadership positions from an early age; the early informal experiences of three other older teachers, Phil, Mark and Adella, have driven them to succeed in their careers.

Other aspiring teachers in both age groups, however, did not necessarily have these early experiences. Instead, they seemed to have transformative experiences that awakened their leadership aspirations.

Transformative experiences

Danielle, Sinead and David each recalled a moment in their high school lives when they recognised their abilities as leaders and actively pursued positions of leadership. Recognition of her leadership aspirations occurred in year 10 for Danielle. After going on a World Vision Camp, she was inspired to organise the 40 hour famine at her school. Whilst she had participated at school and church in activities, she explained that she was quite shy and had never really had any previous leadership experiences. She described the successful response of this fundraiser as a "turning point" for her, leading her to take on the organisation of other school initiatives and eventually the position of school

captain. Danielle described this formal position of leadership as "not something I expected to get"; however, she found that it seemed to be a natural progression from her involvement in other activities. In her interview, Danielle expressed enthusiastically the enjoyment and sense of empowerment these leadership roles gave her. "I just thrived on that. I really loved it. I loved that I was doing something to serve and to help that wasn't for myself." These transformative experiences occurred at the same time as the death of a friend, which drove her to taking on further responsibility.

The transformative experiences for Sinead and David were very different to Danielle's experience. Both David and Sinead applied for formal positions of leadership as senior students, and missed out. David's comment on this explains his drive to take on leadership. "I didn't make it and I was pretty upset, and I guess since then it was always something I've wanted to do." As with David, not being formally recognised in a position of leadership at school became an incentive to aspire to leadership for Sinead as well. Sinead recalled her experiences of school as a difficult student who was not chosen by staff to be a school leader because of her behaviour. Her firm belief in her ability to take on the role of sports captain led her to assume the position of sports captain informally. She recounted how she adopted the role that she had missed out on, believing she had the support of the students. Sinead reflected on how these experiences confirmed her perception of her leadership abilities, despite the lack of formal recognition from others. This experience has influenced her to aspire to leadership as a teacher, as Sinead considered that her ability to approach difficult students is in contrast to the teachers she encountered in leadership positions when she was a student.

For each of these younger participants, these school experiences were empowering and life-changing, encouraging them to reflect on their goals and fulfilment of potential, and leading them to actively look for more leadership opportunities.

Three of the older age group of teachers, Janette, Phil and Mark, also recounted significant experiences that formed them as leaders. Janette's experience changed her impression of her abilities, whereas Phil and Mark's experiences clarified their understanding and purpose in being leaders.

Janette became aware of her abilities through her difficult experiences at school. "I didn't do too good in the HSC because of the hearing (impairment), I had missed out too much in primary school, so I actually believed there was something wrong with me,

that I had a learning disability." At one stage, after building another career successfully to a managerial level, Janette came to the realisation that she did have ability. This led her to study for a teaching degree. Janette considered that school leadership is an effective way to implement change so others do not have similar school experiences.

Phil's sense of purpose in leadership was also driven by a significant experience. At the age of eighteen, Phil's father died, and he took on the role of helping to support his mother in bringing up his two younger brothers. He took on two jobs whilst at university to provide financial support. This experience, for him, was transformative. "I saw how important it was to help out and to show that respect and concern for the people that you are working with… There was a pressure to try and make sure people were catered for and were helped and supported." He attributed this experience as profoundly influencing his desire to take on a pastoral leadership position in schools.

The experiences that Mark had in another career have shaped his thinking about leadership. Mark spent ten years in a career related to teaching, working long hours in a job he found fulfilling, but very demanding. Over time, he had taken on a senior leadership position in an organisation, and after a while considered his life was "a bit out of control…I had what I would probably call now…a burnout … I gave a big part of my life to it (the previous organisation) and leaving was heart-wrenching." He has taken on a leadership position in a school, but is wary about taking on more senior leadership positions.

Summary

Personal experiences have had a significant influence on the leadership aspirations for many of the teachers who participated in the interviews. Each of the participants gained clarity of their leadership aspirations through these significant personal experiences. Many of the younger teachers have been given numerous opportunities throughout their lives to experience leadership in a number of arenas, family, sport, church, school, university and work, before they started teaching. Such developmental experiences have fostered a sense of self as leader, as well as developed an understanding of the skills of leadership. Whilst several interviewees in the younger age group, such as Natalie, Dominic, Marissa, Julie, Michelle and Rebecca, had early experiences of leadership that formed their sense of self as leaders, other participants had transformative experiences that created an awareness of their ability and interest in leading others. Three

participants had transformative experiences as senior secondary students that stimulated a desire to be a leader. Not all the participants in this age group recounted significant personal experiences that shaped their aspirations. This difference indicated the influences of personal experiences on the development of their leadership aspirations. For those who recalled personal experiences, these experiences were considered to be valuable in understanding what is involved in taking on leadership, and participants saw these experiences as confirming their abilities as leaders.

Within the older age group of aspirants, four participants in particular, Adella, Ben, Phil and Mark, noted the influence of their personal experiences on their understanding of leadership and development of skills. As with the younger age group, several of these teachers have had transformative personal experiences that have engendered a reason to lead. Most of the older aspiring leaders believed that successes in personal experiences have developed their ability to be leaders, and therefore their leadership aspirations. Only one of the seven teachers interviewed in this age group did not recount any significant personal experiences. Four of the teachers described early personal experiences in a number of arenas that developed their understanding or skills of leadership, whilst two had transformative experiences that created an awareness of their desire to lead and developed a sense of purpose in being school leaders.

Professional experiences

Participants were asked about the influence of professional experiences on leadership aspirations. In the survey data, 70% of the younger teachers considered professional experiences had significant influence whilst 30% in this age group considered that professional experience had some influence on leadership aspirations. In the older age group, 77% considered that professional experience was significant, 20% considered professional experiences had some influence whilst 3% of the respondents considered professional experience had a little influence on aspirations.

Teachers in both age groups identified a variety of professional experiences as influences on aspirations such as successes as a teacher; professional development courses; experience of leadership, either in acting positions, supporting a leader, or leading initiatives in the school; and positive professional experiences working in a team or a faculty.

As part of the theme of professional experiences, two categories of experiences were formed: a school leadership role and professional development opportunities. These categories intersect with other categories as part of the theme of people influencing leadership aspirations; however, there are distinct professional experiences that have had an influence on leadership aspirations.

Experiences of school leadership

Most of the younger aspirants interviewed experienced some form of leadership position in schools, which they consider has encouraged them in their leadership aspirations. Several participants recounted being asked in their first year to take on informal roles such as looking after grade sport (Julia), monitoring, programming and creating assessments for a year group (Marissa), being part of or running senior retreats (Danielle, May, David), being patron of a house (Sinead), being a house parent (May) and running peer support (Paige). Others recount taking on an informal leadership role amongst their colleagues due to having expertise in a subject (May) or taking on an initiative such as middle school programming (Joshua). Participants saw these experiences as an introduction to leadership and reflected on their successes in these roles. Sinead considered that this was an opportunity for her to see how well she handled this responsibility. She reflected on her success at getting the students engaged and participating in the sports carnival, and explained this confirmed her wish to take on a role where she was "nurturing something to create a team spirit". Marissa also found that success in an early initiative gave her the confidence to continue aspiring to leadership:

> I thought, 'Oh I don't know if I am ready for it', but I did it, and after having a go I felt like I had achieved something, being part of something that I could take responsibility for, so I think that has helped me to like it even more. (Marissa)

These participants saw these professional experiences as stepping stones to leadership and that have allowed them to develop confidence in taking on school leadership. As Dominic explained:

> It's obviously a good learning curve, I think, being able to get the ropes a little bit and not have that full pressure and that full load on you, I think is

definitely a good way to start and ease yourself into leadership down the track in the future. (Dominic)

For Julia and Paige, early informal leadership gave them an opportunity to show their leadership skills to others. As Julia said, "So that was my first taste of leadership and having to facilitate that sport and work with the teachers and deal with the issues that were arising, and that's what the principal saw, just my ability to have a go and not complain about it and just get on with it". Julia, along with others such as Natalie, Danielle and Michelle, had considerable leadership experience before she started teaching, and sought opportunities to use these skills and prove her abilities as leader to the executive.

Many of these informal leadership opportunities required a pastoral contact with students, which channelled some of the participants into pastoral positions. In the school system that these participants work in, certain middle leadership positions, particularly pastoral positions such as coordinating a year group, do not have a minimum requirement of teaching experience. These two aspects have meant that nine of the sixteen participants have taken on formal leadership positions, such as Assistant Year Coordinators or Year Coordinators. The role of Assistant Year Coordinator had a strong influence on the leadership aspirations of one participant, Dominic: "… to be able to help them through even that little day to day issues that they are facing, I think that is what a leader is at a school, and that's what I want to do. It's why we all became teachers really. We didn't become teachers because we aren't interested in kids, so I think that has reinforced why I want to and given me more reasons why I want to become a leader in the future". Dominic's reflection on the pleasure of being in this pastoral role was echoed by a number of the participants. David explained why he enjoyed this role. "I just want to be there for the kids. I just want to be a good role model for them, I want to be someone they can go to for help, someone who can assist them, I guess."

Most importantly, however, these professional positions have encouraged participants to continue to aspire to school leadership. Kayla explains the effect the first position of leadership had on her aspirations: "I got this temporary Year Coordinator role, and I think that really started the whole, 'I do enjoy the extra responsibility and I want to pursue that and challenge myself a little bit more,' so that experience, that first initial getting a leadership role, cemented it, I would like to keep pursuing it down the track."

One of the written reflections focused on professional experiences as influences on leadership aspirations. In her reflections Paige writes about the three initiatives that she has coordinated: peer support, Assistant Year Coordinator and a program for gifted and talented students. She nominated herself for these positions for the challenge and development of leadership skills. Paige used these experiences to evaluate her ability to lead, and reflect on her performance as a leader. These successful experiences have also provided her with further opportunities by allowing her to demonstrate her abilities.

Four of the seven older aspirants, Adella, Phil and Ben, reflected on the numerous experiences of leadership they have had since early in their career. Adella and Ben have had middle leadership positions since their second year of teaching, and both Nick and Phil mentioned early experiences in middle leadership. Interestingly, all discussed being asked to take on particular leadership positions, approaching offers of new positions with thoughtful caution. Phil described his early experiences of leadership as "empowering", giving him "that confidence that what I was doing was making a difference, and I could actually help them become the people they wanted to be". This early position as Year Coordinator encouraged Phil in his aspirations. "Seeing the effect of that role on other people was a catalyst for me to maintain my middle leader position, and want to try and stay in leadership." Adella echoed this reflection in recalling the pleasure she took in seeing students who had been under her care graduate in year 12. Experiences have enabled these older aspirants to experience the impact that a leader can have, clarifying their views on leadership and developing their aspirations.

Professional development

Whilst survey results identified being involved in professional development courses as contributing to aspirations, very few participants recalled professional development courses that were designed to support and encourage aspiring leaders.

For the younger aspirants, the most significant course specifically aimed at nurturing aspiring teachers was one run by ACHPER (Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation) which was about leading the faculty of PDHPE. Two participants attended this day course, where they had opportunities to talk to different KLA Coordinators, were guided on the best ways to help students learn and gained an understanding of the position of KLA Coordinator. Paige attended the day and outlined the benefits that she gained: meeting different KLA Coordinators; planning a career

pathway; and recognising the important role of a KLA Coordinator in improving pedagogy in the school. Most importantly she met a leader who continues to mentor her.

The other courses referred to by the participants were offered to teachers once they were in leadership positions. A number of younger aspirants were completing a course, "Learning for Leadership", offered by the Catholic Education Office, Wollongong, which is designed for teachers aspiring to be leaders. David explained the benefits he gained from this professional development:

> You learn a lot, you learn a lot about yourself and I think that is what they are teaching us. You got to know yourself before you can lead anyone else. That's important. I didn't really consider that before the course, and how you communicate with others, how you show yourself at work, it just has a big impact on everything. (David)

Danielle found the benefits of this course were those of working with other leaders in the Diocese, and gaining leadership skills; however, she pointed to a number of limitations of this course. She found it difficult to initially gain entry to the course as numbers were limited, required nomination by the principal and was designed for people already in leadership. Her frustration at this lack of professional development extends to the content of the course, which did not include development of the skills she sees aspiring leaders need to have to be successful:

> I would have loved some professional development in how to manage teams of people, because that is essentially what you are doing, and the success, whether or not you will be successful in that role, all depends on your ability to communicate and manage people and to get people to come on board with your vision. (Danielle)

Whilst Danielle sourced her own professional development opportunities in areas outside of education (a counselling course, life skills course, Masters in Education), she lamented the lack of professional development courses available to aspiring school leaders, something which Paige echoed.

Aspirants in the older age group had difficulty recounting professional development courses that had contributed to their leadership aspirations. Ben, one of the youngest aspirants in the older age group, made a similar comment about the lack of professional

development opportunities as Danielle. He suggested there was a need for formal induction, with regular on-going support.

Two of the older aspirants sourced professional development courses that contributed to the development of their leadership aspirations. Denise discussed how a recent conference she attended raised her expectations of what leadership was, and encouraged her to see the impact other leaders had in their schools. Janette spoke in detail of a course which she had attended, and the program that she subsequently implemented in the school that led her into a leadership position. For Janette, this experience was the catalyst of her leadership aspirations, as she saw the advantages of being in charge of a program that could radically change the outcomes for students.

The interview data points to a paucity of professional development courses for aspiring leaders. Once they become leaders, one course, run by the Wollongong Diocese, has offered leaders the opportunity to develop their leadership skills.

Other professional experiences

Several participants mentioned other experiences as significant contributors to their aspirations. For the younger age group, these experiences were varied. The older age group recounted difficult experiences in formal leadership that influenced their aspirations.

Three interviewees in the younger age group, Paige, Danielle and Sinead, recounted significant interactions with students where they were able to help. Helping a student with mental health issues gave Paige direction in her aspirations to take on a pastoral middle leader position. Danielle also found that being part of a community program where she learnt to coach and mentor young people, then putting this in place in a school, gave her the skills and understanding of the pastoral role of a leader in schools. Sinead explained how she had been encouraged by students to take on a Year Coordinator's position. Abby noted that gaining a permanent position gave her the confidence to go further in teaching. She felt that this gave her a head start over others, and confidence in the belief that she deserved the position.

Other young participants mentioned their experiences working with colleagues. Both May and Joshua reflected on these experiences as showing to others that they had ideas

and skills that suggested that they are leaders. These small successful experiences encouraged these teachers to consider taking on leadership experiences.

Unlike the younger age group, several members of the group of older aspirants described either difficult situations in leadership or aspects of leadership that were unappealing. Adella and Phil recounted experiences where they became disillusioned or tired in their middle leadership roles. At one stage in her career, Adella had two middle leadership positions, both having responsibility for curriculum, and described herself as "drained". She attributed this to situational factors, "doing too much", and her response to this was to move schools. Within six weeks of this move she responded to a request to take on a middle leader position, and has since moved into a pastoral middle leader position that entails being part of the executive leadership team. Similarly, Phil also had a critical period in his career when he became disillusioned. He also attributed this to situational factors, and moved schools, stepping into a pastoral middle leader position that entailed being part of the executive leadership team. These experiences did not discourage these teachers to aspire to leadership, as they considered they were due to external factors, rather than their own abilities as leaders. These difficult experiences enabled these aspirants to reflect on their aspirations and views of leadership and helped them determine the type of middle leadership positions that they wanted.

Summary

Overall teachers in both age groups have taken many opportunities to experience school leadership, from small teaching experiences to informal and middle leadership positions. These early professional experiences of informal and middle leadership have influenced their aspirations, by giving the younger aspirants an introduction to school leadership, confidence in their ability to lead, opportunity to show others their skills as leaders and confirmation of the reasons why they want to lead. Experiences in professional leadership have influenced the older teachers' leadership aspirations by developing their skills and confidence in these roles. Generally, professional development courses to support these aspirations have been isolated events or available after taking on middle leadership positions.

Other professional experiences have had an influence on leadership aspirations. For some of the younger age group of teachers, these experiences have affirmed them as leaders. The older age group of teachers, however, have been challenged by some

difficult professional experiences in leadership positions. Phil and Adella recalled difficult experiences as leaders, reassessing their leadership aspirations and choosing different middle leadership positions.

4.2.2 Vicarious experiences

Participants were asked to what extent other people, as models, influenced leadership aspirations. In the survey, 53% of the younger respondents considered other people had some influence whilst 47% thought that people had significant influence. In the older age group, 49% considered that people had significant influence on aspirations, 48% considered people had some influence whilst 3% considered that the influence of people on aspirations was significant.

In the survey, teachers from both age groups mentioned a number of personal role models as influences on aspirations. Some of these responses specifically mentioned parents as role models, or "parents' work ethics" as important influences, whilst others mentioned the modelling of teachers during the aspirants' formative schooling years. Other responses indicated the positive impact of seeing other people coping with a role; family was mentioned as potentially having an impact on an aspirant and, more generally, it was said that positive role models could inspire people to take on a leadership role by seeing the impact that leaders have.

The majority of the responses given in the survey centred on models in the workplace. Whilst a few responses mentioned modelling by colleagues, by far the most significant influences professionally for teachers in both age groups were the leaders. Fifty-one references were made about the influence of leaders, mentioning that they provide encouragement and support and also opportunities for teachers to view leadership styles and make decisions about their own styles. The leader was also reported to influence aspirations by providing a supportive environment and experiences that nourish and encourage young teachers, being a part of a system that recognises and rewards excellence in an authentic way, with young teachers receiving positive feedback and recognition of hard work. Participants discussed the need to observe "leaders who are effective and passionate in their roles," who are "modelling effective skills in the workplace". One respondent explained that the leader, "gives a person who wants to be a leader somebody to look up to and work towards being a good leader". A number of respondents outlined the influence of ineffective leadership in developing aspirations.

"If a leader is ineffective it could encourage a teacher to become a leader in the hopes of making an improvement." One participant pointed to incompetent current leaders enabling the aspirant to "see the need for change and wanting to do something about it."

Two main themes were evident in the data – role models in the personal context and role models in the professional context.

Role models in the personal context

The interview data revealed that three groups of people were seen as role models in the personal context: family members, teachers whilst a student at school and others. The interview data reflected the models in the personal context that had been identified through the survey data – families and teachers.

Family members as role models

Participants in both age groups pointed to the modelling of members of their family in forming their leadership aspirations.

Six younger aspirants described the family members as role models, inspiring them to also take on a leadership role. Both Dominic and Abby referred to their older brothers as models, prompting the participants to achieve in a similar way. Abby's goals mirrored those of her brothers, as she thought to herself when she was younger, "keep working and I'll get to where they are one day". Sinead, Marissa and Patrick each referred to the attributes of their fathers, whom they would like to emulate. Patrick admired his father's ability to control situations and Sinead spoke of the respect her father had earned by working hard and overcoming challenges. Marissa remarked on her father's ability to be strong, yet caring, and "not let anything stand in his way". She explained, "I think that, from a young age, I always wanted to be like him". Natalie's parents, who are both school leaders, were identified as her role models and Kayla called her mother, a school leader, a role model. Natalie also mentioned her boyfriend, who is of a similar age and has taken on a leadership role in another profession. "He is under (sic) the belief that it doesn't really matter how young you are, if you are capable you can do it." The similarities in their leadership aspirations in the workplace heightened her own belief in her ability to lead.

Role models were a predominant theme in the written reflections. Both Sinead and Marissa highlighted the impact of their fathers on them. Both pointed to the work ethic of their fathers, and the respect that other people show towards them. Mariam described her father's attributes with passion in her journal. "Those qualities of determination, perseverance, love and self-sacrifice, strength and also humanity is what I one day would love to have."

The older aspiring leaders also were able to point to role models in their family. Adella and Mark spoke of their parents, who ran successful businesses. They pointed to the attributes they admired in these models: loyalty, organisational skills, persistence and initiative. Nick identified his parents and friends as leaders in their workplaces. Phil explained the leadership modelling behaviour of his father. "I liked that he never gave up on anybody, my father, he never ever said that they couldn't be better, they couldn't be a better person than what they were, and he was always constantly looking for that last bit of improvement." Phil has adopted this in his own leadership, but with an emphasis on empowering and motivating people to look for improvement, rather than adopting the autocratic approach of his father.

Teachers as role models

Teachers were also seen as role models; however, only by the younger age group. Marissa considered that two of her high school teachers displayed a strong sense of purpose, mediated by care for the students. She described the impact these models have had on her. "When I look at a leader, that is the way I judge them." These models have set a standard of leadership for Marissa. Dominic also has modelled his standard of leadership on the leadership of a teacher when he was at school.

For one participant, Danielle, interaction with a teacher through year 12 as she coped with the loss of a close friend formed her intentions to teach and become active in pastoral care. She now holds the position of Pastoral Coordinator in her school. "…having those teachers who had influenced my life so positively, I knew I wanted to have that opportunity to try and do that for other students."

In her written reflection, Sinead also discussed role models in her school life that encouraged her to pursue leadership. She pointed to the deficiencies in school leaders who "were very much out of touch with the emotions of teenagers". Her ability to deal

with these students, she wrote, gave her the drive to aspire to leadership. "This is something I know I am good at zoning in on. I have the ability to sense the way to approach difficult kids that most people get irritated with instantly." Sinead considered that leaders who were not actively involved in every aspect of the school wasted their opportunities, and compared herself favourably to them.

Other role models

Participants in both age groups identified other role models in their personal lives that influenced their leadership aspirations.

Dominic and Rebecca mentioned others who have been models of leadership in their personal lives. Dominic took on a student leadership role whilst at school, because he admired and wanted to emulate the qualities of the football captain who had died. Rebecca referred to her mother's boss, who was a role model in his compassionate response to the difficulties her mother was facing. She attributed this compassion to valuing the work her mother did for him. "…she knows that her work is valued, and that she is valued as a person, not just as an employee, and I think that makes all the difference, that there is obvious care and concern for people that work under him." This attribute of leadership, care and concern for those being led, is evidently important for many in this age group.

In her written reflection, Paige referred to a school leader and family friend who has been a positive role model:

> He is very significant in developing my aspirations to become a leader in the school environment as he provided a quality learning environment based on support, respect and he wanted to make a difference … His presence was felt and he was appreciated by everyone he encountered due to his nature and goals for education. (Paige)

As a principal and then a leader in the school system, this family friend's sense of purpose as an educational leader and interactions with others influenced Paige in her career.

In the older age group, Denise and Ben recounted the impressions that other role models had left on them. Denise's first manager modelled leadership behaviour that has inspired her. In her description of this model Denise explained the aspects of leadership

that she would like to emulate. "She never backed away from confronting an issue with staff, but she always did it in such a supportive way."

Ben described the actions of a priest who gave away his car to a family who needed it. "To me the priest had the power to help other people and give that, I think in a leadership position you can help other people as well." The impact of this model had implications for Ben in terms of his leadership aspirations. "I think that ability to help other people and make a difference to people is probably the key thing that makes me want to be a leader."

Role models in the professional context

The interview data reflected the models in the professional context identified by the survey data – aspirational and not coping models. Two categories of aspirational models emerged – accomplished and proficient. As in most other aspects of the survey data, these particular models were developed in greater detail in the interviews.

Aspirational professional role models: Accomplished

Participants identified a number of aspirational professional role models. These models were seen as highly accomplished, with particular attributes which the participants identified and hoped to emulate. Some of the models were praised for their approachable leadership style by Rebecca, Dominic, Sinead, Katherine, Patrick and Paige. Dominic added that the leaders he admired were professional and strong, yet were aware of what was happening in the school and with the staff and addressed how the individual was feeling. Danielle praised a leader in the school for her ability to be a lateral thinker in the way that she solved problems. Abby and Sinead spoke about professional models that showed ability to interact with students in pastoral and positive ways.

Other leaders were recognised as models for their effectiveness as teachers and leaders. Patrick referred to his past KLA Coordinator as a positive influence, as he inspired students to "be good people, good citizens". This attitude gave Patrick a sense of purpose in being a teacher. "He taught me what teaching is all about." Katherine and Paige praised the abilities of their KLA Coordinator.

In her written reflection, Kayla wrote of a colleague who held the position of Year Coordinator. "He was someone who was passionate about his role and the responsibility he had as a Year Coordinator and these were qualities that I saw as important and wanted to develop them into my own style of leadership." The most important quality that Kayla identified in this leader was compassion. "He was also a person who listened to people, both colleagues and his students. People felt comforted by him and that he truly cared."

The older aspirants also identified a number of accomplished models who have influenced their aspirations. Many of these models had already reached positions of assistant principal, principal or a leader of school systems. Phil described such a leader as an "ever-present, inspirational person". Janette, Adella and Ben recalled school leaders who inspired them to leadership because of their honesty, approachability and ability to address issues.

Generally though, rather than one specific model, these teachers discussed the qualities of leadership they saw in a number of role models. They saw good models as people who were balanced in their approach: professional but personable, compassionate yet firm in their interactions, admired as teachers, knowledgeable, seeing leadership as more than just administration, able to focus on building community. For a number of these leaders, Adella, Mark, Nick, Phil and Ben, role models have served as guides; however, they have grown beyond these in their own leadership experiences.

Ben explained the impact that accomplished professional models have had on his aspirations, not only of being a leader, but of being a role model for others. He also recalled conversations with principals who were positive about their roles. These accomplished models, in leadership positions that were seen as prestigious, demonstrated the style of leadership that these teachers would like to adopt in their own leadership roles, heightening their aspirations.

Aspirational role models: proficient

Quite a number of the younger teachers indicated the influence of a proficient role model, with only one teacher in the older age group, Ben, relating the influence of a similar model. For these younger participants, even more persuasive in heightening aspirations than the accomplished models, were successful colleagues who were close

in age and career stage. These models were teachers that the participants had observed take on leadership roles and the aspirants described them as proficient and capable teachers and leaders. Aspirants identified attributes of these models such as their ability to interact with students: "He was a great role model because I could see the influence he had on his students" (Kayla), or their confidence: "I admire her ability to just be so confident within herself and know what she wants" (Julia). They were able to place themselves in the position of these models as they considered the models' career stage and performance as achievable.

The participants voiced their aspirations to follow the career pathways of these models.

> Watching in assemblies, all those types of things, that respect that she gained from the kids, I thought that was something I could do. I think it was also because of her youth that I thought it made it more achievable for me. Because she's not that much older than me and look where she's come. …So if I could be at that position where she was, at her age, I think I would be pretty happy with myself. (Sinead)

This comment is not an isolated one. Julia explained, "If S. (colleague) could do it, then I surely can do it", and Dominic pointed to his model's role in the school: "That is definitely something I could aspire to, and I think it is something I am capable of down the track".

In her written reflection, Sinead also commented on these proficient leaders and drew out the similarity between herself and these models. "When I think of young leaders within our school, I see people who have taken a risk, something which I would also do". The similarity the participants saw between the attributes and skills of their models and themselves has encouraged them to pursue their leadership aspirations, through the pathways of their models.

In the older age group only Ben mentioned a proficient aspirational model: a friend who has taken on senior school leadership positions. The influence of this model was different from the influence of similar models on the younger teachers. Ben's observation of this model has made him wary to proceed further in leadership. "To me it's sometimes, when I see that stress that they are under, I think is it really worth it, do I really want to do that role? So I think it is important to think about each kind of step

that you take." However, in his written reflection, Ben wrote about the positive influence this friend had been as both a mentor and role model.

> An influence of mine would be a friend, an assistant principal, who has always been very driven and motivated towards leadership. They have been significant to the degree that they have been very open about their own goals and aspirations and have given me an insight into the impact you can have as a leader. (Ben)

Ben admired this person for his leadership style: "authoritative – high care – high accountability style where they aim to develop strong relationships with students and staff but also demand high expectations from those they work with. They are very approachable and open to new ideas but will also question and challenge ideas and can be seen to be working in the best interests of the school." Ben explained that he learnt by watching how his role model handled difficult situations.

Adella and Mark both noted the lack of proficient models for their roles. Mark wished for a role model at the level at which he is working. Adella explained that she had no one who could show her what to do. She felt that she was given little direction, and that she had no one to show her how to do her job well. As a consequence, she is very aware of this need for aspiring leaders.

Role models who were not coping

Aspirational role models, or those who were just ahead of the participants in terms of age, experience and position, were not the only form of model identified. Several participants in the interviews also commented on the impact that role models who were not coping would have on their aspirations.

In the younger age group, Katherine and Melissa explicitly stated that people who were not competently leading would motivate them to take on leadership. Melissa was in such a position at her previous school. She explained, "I feel that I have done the job that they are supposed to do anyway, without the recognition". She considered the injustice of someone not leading well; "not picking up your load" is the main reason she wants to take on leadership. Sinead explained that she identified people whom she considered poor leaders and rejected their style of leadership. In her written reflection May discussed the influence of poor leaders on her own leadership aspirations.

I felt that the lack of leadership was a driving force for me to eventually aspire to a position of leadership. The continual failure to take responsibility by those who were in roles that governed my own practices and a sheer lack of competence by these leaders, have made me seriously consider eventually assuming a similar position [in an attempt to do a better job]. (May)

The greatest impact on the older group of teachers was made by leaders who were not coping. Models who were considered to be poor leaders motivated teachers like Adella and Ben to take on the leadership position. Models who were not coping also encouraged self-reflection of their own weaknesses and strengths, and the qualities they would like to develop as leaders. "If I see poor leadership and I think I could do a better job, I would like to do that" (Ben). Being exposed to these models also encouraged these participants to reflect on what is good or weak leadership and the impact that difficult times have on leaders. For Ben and Nick in particular, these reflections make them cautious about their choices of leadership positions, and ensured they continually reassessed their reasons for being in leadership.

Summary

Each of the younger participants was able to identify the attributes of leadership evident in the respective role models that they most admired. They each expressed a desire to develop those attributes within their own leadership style. Aspirational role models, both accomplished and proficient, heightened leadership aspirations as the aspirants indicated they wanted to emulate leadership styles and career pathways. Leaders who were not coping led to reflection and rejection of their leadership style and encouraged some of these teachers to take on leadership.

For the older age group, models did not appear to have had as great an influence. Each of the participants struggled with this question. This may be because over time, the impact of these models has lessened; however, it could also be because this age group has not been exposed to as many models for the positions that they are taking on in schools.

4.2.3 Social persuasion

Participants considered encouragement and support influenced aspiration to school leadership.

Responses in the survey from both age groups of teachers pointed to the support and encouragement of people in both the personal and professional contexts. Family, teachers and friends were identified as supporting aspiring leaders in the personal context. Responses also identified people who offered support and guidance in the professional context. Whilst colleagues were mentioned as supportive, many of the responses noted the persuasive power of leaders supporting aspirants to leadership. This age group referred to the role of the leader in encouraging, mentoring and offering opportunities. Having "positive relationships with leaders" who "nurture" and "offer advice and insight", and "affirming their qualities" and "open dialogue, guidance, support, open avenues for growth" were considered by many examples of crucial influence. Some participants talked about the leaders offering opportunities and setting goals. One participant mentioned leaders who "push professional development, encouraged to apply" and give "feedback in current role". Leaders were also an important influence in the way they conveyed school leadership. One participant mentioned the need for "other teachers' testimony about how good it is to be a leader", while another response highlighted the need for leaders to "talk about their experiences in the role". Yet another respondent noted the need for leaders to "show the achievements they have made and the improvement they have made to students and/or the school community". A further comment was that aspirations are developed when leaders give "leadership a purpose".

Social persuasion in the personal context

The interview data reflected the people who supported aspirants in the personal context identified by the survey data. The interview participants elaborated on the support they had been given by family, friends, teachers and others.

The younger aspirants described how family, friends, teachers and others in their personal context have bolstered their self-efficacy in leadership and influenced their aspirations. Family members have played a significant role in expressing faith in the capabilities of these teachers, and in raising their beliefs in their abilities as leaders.

Parents have encouraged these younger participants to pursue goals in their lives; for some these goals are specifically leadership. "I guess my whole life I have been pushed that little bit further to keep challenging myself, by my mum, by my teachers, by everyone" (Rebecca). Sinead, Kayla, Natalie, Marissa and Angela all related comments

where parents have bolstered their efficacy. In her written reflection, Sinead explained that her father has encouraged her to be the best she could be. Natalie explained this succinctly. "I was never told I can't do something, I was never told I was too young, I was never told I wasn't capable; it was always, 'You can do it, anyone can do it.'" Patrick, Natalie and Kayla had parents who were also leaders in education, and this has affirmed their self-efficacy. "It's always good to have someone higher up like a deputy or someone who is a family member who will say, 'You can do it, you are capable of doing it'" (Natalie). Three participants noted their partners encouraged and supported them in their aspirational goals. Abby, David and Natalie each drew similarities between the career pathways for their partners and themselves, and mentioned their support and encouragement.

Younger aspirants also recalled being empowered by teachers, particularly in their senior years. Five of the participants mentioned interactions with teachers when they were at school that raised their self-belief in the skills they had as leader. Dominic mentioned being tapped on the shoulder by a teacher, who encouraged him to apply for student leadership by saying, "This is the kind of person that we want you to be and who you are". Others noted the close relationship and support a teacher gave them, encouraging them to achieve their potential.

These younger participants also engaged with other people in their personal lives who have had an impact on their aspirations. Part-time work undertaken while at university offered the chance to experience leadership for some of the participants. Melissa mentioned the feeling of self-efficacy brought about by others' trust in her abilities. Katherine and Julia reported the same feelings of accomplishment brought about by managers who valued their abilities.

Aspirants in the older age group also identified the importance of people offering support in the personal context, in both the surveys and interviews. Whilst this older age group have had support in the personal context, the interview participants did not indicate they had received the same level of social persuasion as the younger age group. Two participants spoke of the support and guidance of others. Nick explained that he was encouraged to pursue leadership in his part-time job when he was at university. Phil mentioned the mentoring of a football coach who challenged him to do his best, and who recognised Phil's skills and qualities. "He made you feel that you had achieved something each session you would put in with him."

Social persuasion in the professional context

Overwhelmingly the majority of the responses in the interviews centred on the significant contribution colleagues and particularly school leaders made to leadership aspirations. This reflected the importance of the support of these people in the survey data. The influence of supportive school environments, particularly the support of leaders, in nurturing teachers and encouraging them to take on leadership roles, became a recurrent theme. It also became clear that other people, sometimes through an incidental meeting or comment, had some influence on aspirations in the professional context.

Many responses of the younger aspirants outlined how important colleagues were in encouraging, inspiring, offering guidance, advice and emotional support. Interview participants discussed the role of peers in encouraging and supporting their leadership aspirations. A number pointed to colleagues who had encouraged them to apply for leadership positions. "I've also had a female colleague say, 'You've got to do it, make sure you apply. You're good for the job, don't doubt yourself, go for it'" (David). These views were echoed by others. "People are just supportive in what I do" (Patrick). These participants were encouraged by others who were also young teachers in leadership positions. "There's a lot of younger staff here, and a lot of us are going through the same thing,… so we are all pushing each other to be better as well" (David). The remarks made to these young leaders centred on their skills and ability to be leaders.

Not all social persuasion was positive for this younger group. Quite a number of staff recalled negativity by older staff as many younger staff members were appointed to pastoral positions. They expressed their disappointment in discouraging comments, yet processed these evaluations as unfair. Abby considered this was a fear of change on the part of older teachers. Natalie's parents encouraged her to take on the position and she recalled thinking, "Criticise me once I've done something wrong, don't just criticise me because I am young", and Kayla explained, "Someone's put me in this role because they saw I had something positive to give, so I'm going to run with it and just prove to them that it doesn't matter how old I am or how little experience I have, everyone has to start somewhere". Michelle found that peers were unsupportive; however, she explained: "People's perceptions are that you are trying to do too much, rather than your perception that you are coping." May had experienced a lack of professional support from her immediate leader. This questioning enabled them to recognise their high self-

efficacy for leadership and thus their aspirations and career goals. Critical colleagues have also made these teachers reflect that learning to lead is a process.

Leaders have had a strong influence on the aspirations of this younger group of teachers. Natalie, David and Dominic recounted being "tapped on the shoulder", and being offered leadership opportunities. "I guess I had some of the executive, one day, with the tapping on the shoulder, and being at camp, asking what I thought about leadership and if I ever wanted to do it. When the position came up here, I was again asked if I was applying. I wasn't a hundred per cent sure I wanted to, I guess I got a little push to apply and I did" (David). Some leaders have been open in discussing their own career progression as a form of encouragement. "One (member of the executive) told me how he got into leadership, and he was saying maybe it's time I start thinking about it in the future and considering it" (David).

Younger participants discussed how leaders offered both positive affirmation and constructive feedback. Leaders have appraised the leadership skills and behaviour of these participants, which has enhanced their self-efficacy. David recalled a day when the executive affirmed the leadership of these young teachers. Leaders also offered professional development to many of these young aspiring leaders. In her written reflection, Kayla elaborated on the important role her previous Year Coordinator had in her pursuing leadership, helping her to acknowledge the skills that she had. "The feeling of support and encouragement [given by this Year Coordinator] helped me to follow this desire to become a leader and be confident in my skills".

Access to leaders who were willing to affirm and guide young aspiring leaders was not restricted to within the school for this younger group of teachers. Paige noted the value of professional development days specifically because of the access to leaders and the opportunity to ask for advice. Many of these people were in positions of leadership and encouraged the participants, helping them set goals and develop a plan for career progression. Paige recognised how lucky she has been to have a family friend who was a principal who guided her in her career. In her written reflection, Paige discussed in detail the mentoring that she had received from this family friend. "G. wanted me to focus on my strengths and encouraged me to pursue leadership otherwise I would not be achieving my education goals. He emphasised to always undertake challenging opportunities to improve your skills and accept roles of responsibility."

Aspirants in the older age group in both the surveys and interviews also identified the importance of leaders and colleagues offering support in the professional context. These participants had also received support and guidance from colleagues and school leaders. Ben, Denise, Adella, Mark and Nick recalled supportive colleagues who encouraged them in their career goals. Ben explained how a school leader had mentored him by discussing his own goals and career pathways.

Despite some social persuasion, four of the participants were keen to discuss the lack of support in the system. Phil and Ben recognised that they had been fortunate in finding mentors, but pointed to the need for formal avenues of support for aspiring leaders. Phil explained that there is a high level of support needed for middle leaders, but this is not necessarily evident, and Ben proposed ways in which systems could provide more formal avenues of support to both aspiring leaders and those already in positions. Adella also explained that there was a lack of guidance, proposing a shadowing of mentors as a means of gaining some support. Mark also pointed to the lack of support in his position.

Whilst these leaders have found social persuasion in their personal lives, and informally within their professional lives, several saw a need for a formal system of support that develops leadership skills and raises the efficacy of the aspirants and leaders.

Summary

Participants in both age groups have noted the importance of support from a number of people in both their personal and professional contexts. Teachers in the younger age group were able to recount many more examples of people who supported them both in the personal and the professional context. Leaders have had a strong influence on the aspirations of this group of teachers, and many of them have had good access and strong support from school leaders.

Whilst the teachers in the older age group have found social persuasion in their personal lives, and informally within their professional lives, several saw a need for a formal system of support that develops leadership skills and raises the efficacy of aspirants and leaders.

4.2.4 Personal characteristics

Whilst this aspect was not addressed in the survey or written reflections, interview participants were asked about personal characteristics which they considered they would bring to leadership. The answers to this question led to a number of themes related to personal characteristics – beliefs, motivation and self-efficacy. These themes are explored in the following sections.

Beliefs

In the process of coding the data, it became clear that people's beliefs about themselves, teaching and leading contributed significantly to their aspirations. Participants formed expectations about gaining positions and remaining in school leadership roles based on these beliefs.

Beliefs about self

The younger aspirants were confident in their self-appraisals. They placed importance on their ability to interact with people, with ten of the participants considering their approachability and concern for others the most important quality that they offered as leaders. This was described in various ways – "easy to get along with" (Natalie), interact well with others (May), and easy to relate to (Sinead). Danielle explained that she tried to be present to people, "people need to be able to feel comfortable in speaking to you about certain issues and they need to feel if they do, and they do take that risk in voicing certain opinions, that they feel valued and that they feel listened to". Other characteristics participants suggested that they offered were organisational skills (David, Dominic, Marie, Renae, Marissa) and the ability to listen and understand the needs of students (Rebecca, Sinead, Danielle, David, Abby).

A few other characteristics were mentioned, specific to one participant. Rebecca explained her understanding of herself as a leader had developed from others' opinions of her: "I think it's more that people's perception of me puts me as a leader." Danielle explained that she thought laterally, offering different solutions to problems: "I felt I was a visionary person, I could look at a situation and then go, this could be improved, we could do this, this and this, and that could make that situation better."

It is clear that the influence of these beliefs has helped form their leadership aspirations, as their beliefs about their personal abilities align with their beliefs about the qualities of a leader.

The aspirants in the older age group also conveyed beliefs about themselves that supported their leadership aspirations. Three of these teachers (Ben, Denise and Adella) also mentioned their approachability. Ben explained that the qualities he felt he brought to leadership were calmness and level-headedness, maintaining objectivity, and Nick also emphasised a similar quality, explaining that he was task-focused and issues-based. Both Phil and Nick discussed their emphasis on empowering others, whilst Nick and Adella described the quality of respect: Nick spoke about treating people with respect, as competent professionals, and Adella mentioned being respected by the students.

Participants also offered characteristics different from each other. Adella focused on what she considered her strengths: being discrete, empathetic and supportive. Mark suggested that his initiative was a quality he brought to leadership. Both Janette and Denise were circumspect about identifying their qualities.

Beliefs about teaching

The beliefs about teaching expressed by interview participants reflected the reasons they chose teaching as a profession and for aspirants, why they aspire to leadership.

The comments made by the younger aspirants about teaching were enlightening, revealing what they thought about leadership as well as teaching. A number of participants voiced the view that teachers should gain experience in the classroom before taking on a position of responsibility. Katherine, May, Rebecca and Marissa all explained that, although they are interested in taking on school leadership, they felt they were still learning in the classroom and were not yet ready for leadership. This impacted on not whether but when they would take on a position of responsibility. Julia, who has taken on several leadership positions from her first year of teaching, commented on the conflict of not being fully prepared in the classroom. Julia resolved this dilemma herself by saying that she knew there would be future opportunities to work on her lessons, and the opportunity to be a leader was more important for her.

Another view expressed by these younger aspiring leaders was that developing skills in leadership supported other aspects of teaching. David expressed that "taking on a

pastoral position brings out the best in me and brings out the best in my teaching, so that affirms why I wanted to do teaching in the first place". David's reason to lead was integrally related to his reason to teach.

The aspirants in the older age group also expressed views of teaching that influenced their aspirations. Denise indicated that being competent in the classroom enabled her to understand the broader needs of the school. "You get to a point where classroom teaching is under control, and you look a bit broader to what is happening in the school." Janette explained that as a leader she could see progress and improvement in results in a number of classrooms across the school.

Each of these beliefs about teaching reflects these teachers' beliefs about leadership, and their aspirations as school leaders.

Beliefs about leading

For the teachers who aspired to leadership, their reasons for wanting to lead are reflected in their views of leadership.

The younger aspiring leaders outlined the roles of leaders in their interviews, which enticed them to become leaders. Abby, Natalie, Danielle, Rebecca and Marissa all outlined one of the main roles of a leader is to be caring and nurturing. They each described the allure of a pastoral leadership position in being able to care for others. Another attractive element of the role was empowering others, giving people a voice. This was mentioned by twelve of the participants. Many also described the role of the leader as someone who was passionate, who wanted to make a difference. This was described in a variety of ways: "needing to make a change" (Natalie); "have an impact" (Paige); and "a real desire to do what is best, beyond what is best for themselves … that you know that they are working not for themselves, but for the good of the group" (Danielle). Joshua explained his understanding of leadership. "If anything it's not so much your control over those people but your ability to assist and to strengthen and in many ways to lift those people up to a higher expectation of themselves." These ideas of the role of leadership appealed to the participants, encouraging them to aspire to take on a position of middle leadership.

In many ways, the older aspirants presented similar ideas of leadership. They considered leadership a means of empowering people and discussed the positive role of

leadership in making a change. Denise, Adella and Janette spoke about the need for a leader to be an advocate for students.

Mark expressed leadership as a mission of evangelisation. He explained what drove him to school leadership:

> This whole thing of the new evangelisation, the message is the same, but we have to find new ways to deliver it. Pope Benedict is putting a challenge out through the World Youth days to all the young people, I am still just in that category, even though I am forty and I am going grey, but I still feel challenged by the message that he puts to young people to be heroes of the new millennium. This generation desperately needs leadership, not only my age, but young people, and that's where my passion lies. (Mark)

Each of these views of leadership reflects the reasons these teachers aspire to leadership.

Self-efficacy

A number of the participants spoke of their confidence in assuming a leadership position. This data is reported under the theme of self-efficacy.

The younger participants commented on the important experiences or people who helped build their confidence. Two teachers, Sinead and Danielle, indicated the importance they placed on measuring themselves against others. For others, personal or professional experiences gave them confidence. Abby recalled several empowering experiences in her schooling. She explained that she went to an all-girls school, and left with the belief that, as a woman, she could do anything she wanted. Many of the younger aspirants indicated they had confidence in their ability as a leader, developed over time in both personal and professional contexts. Paige spoke of the confidence she gained in implementing the peer support program successfully. "I'm a confident person, but seeing the success of some things I have done, and hearing feedback from others, has made me confident in knowing I can do the role."

Support from others was mentioned by other younger teachers. In applying for a student leadership position while at school, Sinead asserted that, "everyone believed I had the qualities to do it". For many of these teachers recognition by others of their ability to lead served to confirm their own beliefs in their abilities. David and Sinead spoke of

affirmations from staff and students that gave them the confidence to aspire to leadership. Abby and May explained that their confidence grew as colleagues and leaders believed in their ability to lead. Both David and Danielle related instances where support from others encouraged them to apply for leadership positions that they would not otherwise have aspired to take on, believing that they did not have enough experience.

Most of these younger teachers, however, articulated high self-efficacy in their ability to lead, explaining that their experiences confirmed what they already believed about themselves, which was also confirmed by people. Comments such as "I may as well use my talents" and "It [leadership] filters into every aspect of my life" (Natalie); "I believe in myself" (Michelle); and "I have a 100% certainty that I will do it, and that I will fulfil it, and I feel that with anything that I take on board" (May) were reflective of the confidence shown by many of these teachers.

For most of the younger aspirants, discussion about discouragements highlighted their self-efficacy as leaders. Several participants had experienced negativity from a number of colleagues for taking up positions as school leaders at early stages in their career. They rationalised these negative reactions as a fear of change, or a revelation of the insecurities of those who reacted negatively (Kayla, Sinead, Abby, David, Julia, Natalie). They have externalised failure and internalised success. Each referred to others and their own beliefs in their leadership abilities, and expressed comments such as the following: "Someone's put me in this role because they saw I had something positive to give, so I'm going to run with it and just prove to them that it doesn't matter how old I am or how little experience I have, everyone has to start somewhere" (Kayla). Sinead explained how she responds to negativity: "No-one has told me no and I would avoid people who do." Many (Paige, Sinead, Danielle, Joshua) evaluated negativity as to whether it was constructive, and took comments on board to improve their leadership ability. "I love constructive criticism. It gives me a focus on where I can improve. I know I am not perfect in any way, so to know that and go ok this is how I can change this is how I can do things better" (Paige).

Not all the teachers in this age group displayed high self-efficacy in leadership. Julia expressed a wish to be more confident in her decisions as a leader. Rebecca explained that she had "more faith in others' confidence in me than my own" and that she did not compete with others, suggesting she did not like to fail. Katherine explained that

negativity in the workplace lowered her confidence and made her start questioning herself and consider that she was not doing a good job. These comments, though, were not reflective of most of the participants' views.

Three of the five teachers who submitted a written reflection (Kayla, Sinead and Paige) considered that their confident approach to life was important to remark on in their reflections. Kayla referred to the negativity of colleagues as a motivating influence, confirming her belief in her ability to be a leader.

> It was these negative comments that fuelled in me a desire to succeed even more. I felt that I was capable of taking on this role of responsibility and that my aim now was to ensure that I exceeded people's expectations and proved to them that no matter what age or amount of experience, it was my desire for this role and my own personal qualities that would allow me to succeed and perform this role to the best of my ability. (Kayla)

Sinead also referred to negative experiences as motivation to show her abilities to others, as she rejected others' appraisal of her leadership skills.

Paige referred to her successful professional experiences that have confirmed in her that she has the ability to be a school leader. "The experiences I have undertaken so far in my teaching career have given me confidence to pursue a leadership role in the school." The written reflections supported the comments made in the interviews with the younger aspirants, generally showing that these teachers had a strong belief in their abilities as leaders.

The teachers in this younger age group generally expressed high self-efficacy in leadership. Some of the teachers referred to experiences or people who had encouraged them; however, most reflected on their innate confidence, explaining that these experiences and people confirmed what they already knew about themselves.

The teachers in the older age group were less sure of their confidence as leaders. Four of the teachers related interactions with people that gave them confidence. Adella, Ben, Janette and Phil described discussions with leaders affirming their ability and giving them confidence. Phil stressed the importance of this affirmation, and that he needed this feedback in order to maintain confidence in his leadership ability. Janette spoke of comments by students that confirmed for her the reasons she felt she needed to be in leadership. Several comments by Phil also affirmed his ability as a leader.

Adella and Ben spoke of their self-efficacy as leaders, both recognising their confidence in dealing with difficult situations. Ben commented that he was able to live with mistakes, which he explained was part of leadership. Both Nick and Adella revealed that they tended to take risks cautiously, considering their options and acting when there was likelihood of success. Adella described visualising herself successfully achieving in a position before she took it on.

However, three of the teachers were less assertive about their abilities as leaders. Both Denise and Janette spoke of the self-doubts they had. Denise spoke of the voices in her head about her ability to be a school leader that overrode the other voice which suggested that she was not capable. She feels, because of this, that she is not yet ready for leadership. Janette revealed her lack of confidence in the role of leader. "I think, if I can be honest, I find sometimes I don't have the confidence to take on a leadership role. I feel like an imposter." Despite this, she feels she has a compelling drive to see change and get the best outcomes for students, which she believes can happen in a leadership role. Phil called himself an "unsure or self-doubting kind of person" and spoke about a time when his confidence in his leadership was undermined. He elaborated on the need for reassurance and support by others to maintain the confidence of a leader.

Motivation

Participants in both age groups discussed an intrinsic motivation to be a leader. Many of the interview participants in the younger age range spoke of an intrinsic desire to attain personal success. Some spoke about the need to be challenged (Abby, Paige, Sinead and Kelly), and discussed their motivation or drive. The reasons for this motivation varied. Danielle, Sinead and Marissa were driven by a desire not to become stagnant or complacent. "I think my greatest fear in life is mediocrity, and I always feel that I want to push myself outside my own boundaries to try to be better than what I am, or not better than what I am, but explore what my potential is" (Danielle). This concern was echoed in many of the interviews. Rebecca valued leadership as a measure of success. She explained that she did not want her childhood experiences, growing up in an abusive household, to define her. Others attributed their motivation to aspects of character. May and Paige cited their need for perfection and to give 100% to every job as a driving force. Kayla did not identify a particular aspect of her personality as a motivating influence, but defined herself in the following way: "For as long as I can

remember, I have always been a fairly motivated and driven sort of person, and so once I achieve one thing I'm looking for the next thing to achieve." This sense of achievement was a driving force for Michelle, who explained that she wanted to take on a leadership role because of the feelings of self-worth that success gave her.

Many of these younger participants' motivation was their need to set personal challenges or goals. May, Danielle, Paige, Kayla, David and Julia all spoke about setting and achieving goals. David explained that his goal was to develop his skills in leadership. Abby was motivated by a goal that she had developed from an early age, to "be a career woman". Kayla was also driven by a challenge to prove that colleagues were wrong in criticising the choice of a young teacher as careers advisor. "I was just going to make the most of it and prove everyone wrong and make the positive difference that I wanted to make. It drove me even more to proving that I had that ability." Paige explained, in her written reflection, the reason she had taken on different leadership positions. "I nominated to undertake these roles to provide myself a challenge and to demonstrate what I have to offer." She attributed her success to her personal capabilities, and motivated herself to further challenges. Sinead also wrote about her motivation in her written reflection. "Leadership is something that provides me with a purpose. I personally aspire to leadership for several reasons, one being that I need to challenge myself constantly, so when I feel I am being complacent I know it is time to try something new." Sinead was aware of looking for challenges in leadership as personal motivations for future accomplishments. Kayla also looked for new challenges. In her written reflection she analysed the reason she aspired to school leadership: "I think the most important aspect had been my own desire to achieve. I've always been a driven and motivated person looking for the next challenge. Leadership felt like a natural progression."

Some participants were motivated by a moral purpose, such as a need to lead change (Joshua, Katherine, Natalie, Paige, Danielle and Julia). Danielle indicated the reason that she is in a leadership role was a moral purpose, a commitment to a vision. "If I come back to my real moral purpose for being in schools, that is what it is, and I feel like, being able to be in a pastoral role, and leading the pastoral direction of the school, I really have the most amount of influence in how we do that here." Natalie described her drive by saying that she could not stand by and not do anything if she saw a need, whereas Julia held the belief that she would always take opportunities that were offered.

Each of these teachers was highly motivated and guided their actions towards attaining school leadership.

The aspirants in the older age group were also driven by a need to be challenged. Phil, Adella, Mark, Denise and Paul all spoke of the need to have challenges, to constantly improve. They discussed this need as intrinsic, an aspect of their personality, and described setting goals for themselves.

Other older aspirants were driven by a sense of moral purpose. Denise and Janette were looking for better outcomes for students, whilst Adella spoke of success from previous positive outcomes as a source of motivation. She also noted that if she saw a need, she would act on it.

Summary

For younger aspirants, the influence of beliefs about self has helped form their leadership aspirations, as their beliefs about their personal abilities align with their beliefs about the qualities of a leader. Each of these teachers' beliefs about teaching reflects their beliefs about leadership, and their aspirations to be school leaders.

The teachers in this younger age group generally expressed high self-efficacy in leadership. Some of the teachers referred to experiences or people who had encouraged them; however, most reflected on their innate confidence, explaining that these experiences and people confirmed what they already knew about themselves. These teachers motivated themselves and guided their actions towards attaining school leadership.

In describing their personal characteristics, the older participants were more reticent in identifying their qualities. Their views of teaching and leading reflected the reasons these teachers aspire to leadership. As with the younger age group, these teachers did not see leadership as a burden. These participants also expressed an intrinsic need to be motivated, explaining that they were driven, and that they set goals for themselves.

4.2.5 Summary of sources that encourage aspirations

Personal experiences have had a significant influence on the leadership aspirations for many of the teachers who participated in the interviews. Other participants had transformative experiences that created an awareness of their ability and interest in

leading others. Overall teachers in both age groups have taken many opportunities to experience school leadership, from small teaching experiences, to informal and middle leadership positions. Generally, professional development to support these aspirations has been isolated events or available after taking on middle leadership positions. Participants in both age groups have noted the importance of support from a number of people in both their personal and professional contexts. For aspirants, the influence of beliefs about self has helped form their leadership aspirations, as their beliefs about their personal abilities parallel with their beliefs about the qualities of a leader.

4.2.6 Age related differences

Many of the younger teachers have been given numerous opportunities throughout their lives to experience both informal and formal leadership in a number of arenas, whereas the older aspirants tended to recall informal personal experiences. The older age group of teachers have been challenged by some difficult professional experiences in leadership positions. Teachers in the younger age group were able to recount many more examples of people who supported them both in the personal and professional context. Aspirational role models, both accomplished and proficient, heightened the younger teachers' leadership aspirations. The older group considered they did not have many models to emulate. The teachers in the younger group generally expressed high self-efficacy in leadership, whereas the older participants were more reticent in identifying their qualities.

4.3 Sources that discourage

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to identify teachers' leadership aspirations and to examine the sources that form or discourage teachers under the age of 46 to aspire to school leadership. The following analysis answers the third research question: What are the sources that discourage teachers' leadership aspirations? The analysis is organised according to the same themes as the previous section – personal and professional experiences, vicarious experiences, in both personal and professional contexts, social persuasion in both personal and professional contexts, and personal characteristics.

4.3.1 Mastery experiences

Participants in the survey and interviews were asked about experiences that discourage leadership aspirations. Personal and professional experiences in the teachers' past and in the school setting have deterred leadership aspirations.

Participants in the survey identified a number of personal experiences that would deter people from taking on school leadership. Teachers explained little family support, and family commitments were discouraging, as well as "failure in domains other than teaching", "pressure to be perfect from media and parents" and lack of success in personal life were discouraging personal experiences.

Personal experiences

Of the two younger non-aspirants interviewed, only Alicia considered that she had any significant personal experiences of leadership. Alicia described her early experience in a leadership position in another career that served to confirm her desire not to take on school leadership. She discussed the difficulty of managing people and the lack of balance between work and other aspects of her life. Whilst she felt that she was successful at management, she explained that she did not enjoy it, and she would not consider taking on leadership again, particularly in light of having a family. Neither of the participants could relate experiences that would have encouraged them to pursue leadership.

The personal experiences of non-aspirants in the older group who were interviewed were more varied, yet were still different from those identified in the survey data. Kirsty spoke of leadership experiences in sport and in an earlier career. She revealed that she was uncomfortable challenging others. "I find it hard to tell people they aren't doing the right thing." She was concerned that she was not doing the right thing, and these experiences "got me thinking I don't like being in charge". She disliked challenging others when taking on the captaincy of a sporting team. "There were times when I had to say stuff and I'd either come across too aggressive or I didn't say anything at all, and again it made me think, I don't want to be a leader."

Deanna also had an experience of leadership in another career. She described how she enjoyed the role at times; however, she had what she described as a "terrifying" experience, where she felt unsupported in her middle management position. The effect

this had on her family life, and her sense of disillusionment with those in higher positions, led her to the conclusion that she was happy not to be in a leadership position in a school.

Each of these teachers was adamant that they would not pursue leadership.

Professional experiences

Negative professional experiences identified by the teachers in the survey were revealing of the discouragements teachers face. A recurring theme was the relationships with current leadership, with several respondents citing disagreements with either middle management or senior management, or with an unsupportive work environment. Tension among staff was also noted. These responses were given across the three schools. Several of the younger teachers explained that the pressures of workload and responsibility were hard enough in the role of teacher, let alone leader. The professional experiences considered most influential in discouraging people to apply for leadership positions in the older age group were past failures. These included poor appraisals, a lack of success in the position in the past and failed attempts to achieve a position. A lack of opportunity was also noted. Many non-aspirants had some experience of school leadership, and found that these experiences cemented their resolution not to take on school leadership.

Both non-aspirants interviewed in the younger age group discussed their successes in the classroom as one of the reasons they did not want to take on school leadership. Alicia pointed to the importance of building the relationships with her students, and felt that leadership would take her away from having time to build on her teaching skills. Maddy described her passion and enjoyment of teaching:

> I just love being in the classroom so much, that to lose time with that puts me off. I do love the fact that in education there are so many avenues you can move towards, but the classroom is where I belong, so that is where I stand. (Maddy)

Maddy described her concern when taking on the position of acting KLA Coordinator for a number of weeks. She expressed her frustration at the administration in the role, and the difficulty of completing the job within the time constraints. She felt she was given little guidance and support, and there was an expectation that she would know

what she was meant to be doing. However, what troubled her most was the time taken out of the classroom. The reason she would not take on leadership was expressed by her comment "I didn't feel like a teacher anymore". Far from influencing Maddy to aspire to leadership, her experiences in this middle leadership position led her to believe that she did not want to become a leader. Both Alicia and Maddy cite their commitment to the classroom as the main reason they would not take on leadership.

These two reasons for not aspiring to leadership, success and commitment as a teacher and challenging experiences in middle leadership positions, are also given by the older age group of teachers interviewed. Of the nine interview participants in this group, three (Margaret, Deanna and Anne) identified family commitments as the main reason they do not wish to be in a leadership position, but these three also mentioned other reasons such as politics and the difficult tasks that a leader has to carry out. The other six participants discussed their successes and enjoyment of teaching as reasons not to become leaders, and recounted unfulfilling school leadership experiences.

A common theme was positive experiences of teaching. Brendan emphatically explained, "I want to do my job, my main job is teaching and I want to do that the best I can". Mia, Rose and Justine all expressed their passion and drive for teaching. "I don't want to be in school leadership because it takes me out of the classroom, and that's what I love, I love the classroom" (Rose).

However, six of these teachers also recalled their negative experiences of taking on a school leadership position. For each of these teachers, these roles were difficult. Justine, Brendan and Kirsty described the frustration of paperwork, administration and the lack of time.

> The one thing that does not appeal to me is that there is a very small amount of time to get work done. It's high pressured, and often if you are doing the leadership role well, you are not giving the time required to your class preparation. (Justine)

Kirsty described her school leadership role as "thankless, exhausting", whilst Rose went further and described the tasks a leader had to carry out as "ugly". Both Mia and Tara considered that a lack of support and guidance hindered their attempts at being good school leaders. Tara's experiences in a leadership position led to needing time off. She described this experience in her interview:

> Halfway through this year I suffered from severe stress, I actually had depression, and I just went, I can't do this anymore…. But probably out of 100% I think 95% of it was the job. It was affecting everything, every aspect of my life, including teaching, working here, my health, my health was really suffering, my family, my relationship with my husband, and I just went, I can't do this anymore. I can't do this anymore. (Tara)

Participants had formed the view, from these experiences, that leadership was all consuming, and could affect health and family life (Mark, Deanna, Anne, Tara, Rose), was exhausting and thankless (Kirsty), uncomfortable and alienating (Rose). Experiences of leadership also reinforced beliefs that some of these teachers had about themselves: a fear of making mistakes, a lack of confidence, an inability to handle conflict and generally a belief that they were not good enough to be a leader (Kirsty, Mia).

The non-aspirants to leadership clearly have two reasons they will not pursue leadership: the importance of allotting their time and energy into their teaching, and the nature of school leadership. Each of these teachers reflected on the difficulties involved in school leadership, and the toll it takes on their performance in the classroom, and even on their health. Their perception of the roles of school leadership, developed from their experience, has mitigated any aspirations to pursue this option in their careers.

4.3.2 Vicarious experiences

Both survey and interview participants reported other people discouraging leadership aspirations.

Survey participants reported "stressed and overworked leaders" and "seeing what other leaders are experiencing" as models who discouraged leadership aspirations. Negative impressions of leaders, such as "leaders who are not passionate or people oriented", "ineffective leaders" and "time poor and stressed leaders", were poor role models who deter aspirants.

The two younger non-aspirants interviewed only discussed negative role models that they had encountered in the professional context. The leaders that they observed were negative about their positions. Both Alicia and Maddy spoke of their observations of leaders dealing with resistant staff, and their observations of the workload and

expectations of leaders. "Just watching and observing and being around Year Coordinators and seeing what they are going through, I just find that it is so heavy" (Maddy).

The non-aspirants in the older age group observed models of leadership who generally were not coping in the professional context. The perception of leadership, for a number of these participants, is that it is a stressful role. "I just see coordinators and everyone running around trying to do all their stuff plus teach as well, so there's no down time, very stressful and no relaxation time" (Margaret).

Several participants recalled the decisions of colleagues who had chosen to step away from leadership (Anne, Brendan, Tara and Rose) and each of these participants had made this decision themselves. Anne had been discouraged from leadership when she saw people trying to juggle family and their responsibilities at work, and Kirsty recounted the effect on a principal who was unhappy and unsupported, lacking the ability to change staff. She highlighted that this resistance and negativity was beyond what she considered that she could handle.

Interestingly, these teachers had different responses from the younger teachers when observing models that were not competent. Mia, Kirsty and Rose voiced their frustration at people who were in leadership positions, but were not competent. Kirsty described this as a lack of self-awareness, whereas Rose described this as an injustice. For each of these participants, unlike those teachers in both age groups who aspired to leadership, observing others not coping had the effect of confirming that they, themselves, are not leaders. "I think when I look at people in leadership I think, 'Well, don't you realise that's not a strength you have?' I just feel like I am being self-aware and I wouldn't enjoy it" (Kirsty).

The non-aspirants tended to recall examples of models who were not coping. Each of these teachers reflected on these models who struggled with the difficulties involved in school leadership. Their perception of the not coping models in school leadership mitigated any aspirations to pursue this option in their careers, a different reaction from that of the teachers who aspired to leadership.

4.3.3 Social persuasion

Colleagues and leaders also had the persuasive power of deterring people from leadership, which was noted in the majority of the responses in both age groups, in both the survey and the interviews. This was either through a lack of support and encouragement or negativity from colleagues about leaders in schools. Further, a lack of mentoring, or poor mentoring, was cited by survey respondents in both age groups. A lack of support became evident as a theme in the interviews with teachers who did not aspire to leadership.

The younger non-aspirants interviewed did not mention any people who had suggested they apply for a leadership position, or offered support in developing their career pathways. Alicia explained that she had shown little interest in taking on a leadership position, so had not expected any support. Maddy was more vocal about the lack of support that she experienced when in an acting KLA Coordinator position. She described this role as stressful and exhausting, made more so as she was not sure that she was doing the job competently:

> I think, had I been given some sort of handbook, at least that would have helped. Or for people to come up to me… when it came down to needing help, not many people could actually help me out at the time, and so the encouragement and the support and the am I doing this right, am I doing this wrong? (Maddy)

She considered that this experience, with little support, left her feeling disillusioned in taking on a leadership position. "I would say there could have been things that could have been done to make me change my mind about things, I guess just based on what I have gone through so far, it doesn't entice me."

Maddy also relayed discussions with other leaders who were negative about the leadership position they had. "Hearing stories about people having experiences that have put them off makes me think twice about whether I want to venture into that direction." These comments, along with a lack of support when she experienced leadership, have made her question whether taking on a school leadership position is an appropriate career pathway for her.

A lack of support was also one of the main reasons the older non-aspirants interviewed did not want to take on leadership. These teachers had not been approached to take on

leadership, and felt that there had been fewer opportunities made available to them. Several have been in positions of leadership and described the lack of mentoring, support or encouragement at a professional level. Tara detailed her recent experience of leadership, explaining that the high expectations of leaders without offering support left her vulnerable. She criticised the lack of clear guidelines or role descriptions, and the fact that leaders were left on their own to handle incidents, yet received criticism from leaders if the job was not well done.

The main deterrent to leadership appears to be the persuasive power of colleagues. Each of these teachers described the negative interactions between colleagues and leaders. Margaret, Mia and Kirsty have been discouraged from taking on a leadership position when they see the criticism levelled at leaders. Mia related how, in an acting position, she received little support or respect from the younger staff she was leading, and from the experienced staff who she felt should have supported her. Mia's comments about a general lack of support or recognition are haunting:

> I suppose people have never given me encouragement like 'You could do it' or, that is, in teaching in general and I have been in it twenty-four years, I couldn't say I have ever been given a pat on the back or a 'You're wonderful' or 'You've done that well' or anything. So I suppose that discourages you. (Mia)

Both these age groups of teachers relate a lack of support from colleagues and leaders, and a lack of mentoring.

4.3.4 Personal characteristics

Interview participants suggested a number of personal characteristics discouraged them to take on leadership. This led to a number of themes related to personal characteristics: beliefs, motivation and self-efficacy. These themes are explored in the following sections.

Beliefs

The teachers interviewed offered beliefs about themselves, teaching and leading that they felt stopped them from aspiring to leadership.

Beliefs about self

Only one of the teachers in the 20 to 32 years age group offered a comment on her self-belief. Alicia explained that she would be frustrated trying to guide others. She liked being in control of herself and did not like relying on others. She explained that even as a child, she preferred individual sports to team sports. "Whatever training I put in was my responsibility, if I made a bad transition or if I misjudged the race plan, then it was back on me." This preference, she felt, meant that she did not particularly wish to aspire to leadership.

The older teachers also presented a number of personal characteristics that they felt made leadership an unattractive option for them. Brendan explained that his personality lent itself to the classroom, simplifying ideas for students "rather than trying to get all these other educational theories".

The other teachers reflected more on their interrelationships with people as leaders. Rose explained that she is not ready yet to take on a leadership rposition as she needed to learn the best way to handle people in a professional management position. Anne reflected on skills that she had for leadership, but explained her preference for "just be[ing] one of the little players rather than being involved in decisions that rock everyone's world and upset them". Deanna explained that she gets stressed when she sees inequity, and speaks her mind, "and that doesn't go down well". She felt she needed to be more politically correct.

Mia, Kirsty and Tara reflected on their personal characteristics, and the effect that interactions they would have as a leader would have on them. Tara felt that she was mentally and physically better when she was not a leader. "As a woman … you absorb a lot of emotions… that was impacting on me." In a pastoral position, she found that she tried to do too much, please everyone, and did not draw boundaries. Kirsty explained that she also struggled with distancing herself:

> I'm too sensitive, so I get upset too easily, and then I do care what people think, and I don't let that go, and I stress about what people are thinking, even if they are not thinking about it, I still worry that they are thinking it. (Kirsty)

She also questioned her ability to deal with conflict, and, in a leadership position, was always worried that she would do something wrong. Mia echoed this discomfort at others not liking what she was doing:

> I'm scared that people will go, 'Well she's not very good, I could do a better job than her,' and I could get frightened by that… I don't like to disappoint people, I don't like to have confrontations, I don't like to ask too much, I don't like to delegate in case people don't do it well enough, so if I don't have a job I don't have to worry about all of that. (Mia)

Each of these teachers expressed beliefs about themselves that discouraged them from aspiring to leadership.

Beliefs about teaching

The challenges of the classroom, together with their perceptions of the tasks involved in leadership, have formed these teachers' convictions that they should not aspire to leadership.

The two younger non-aspirants interviewed considered their role in the classroom as challenging and rewarding. Neither wanted a leadership position that they felt drew them away from their priority, which was teaching. Alicia explained that she preferred to be looking after the relationships with her students, rather than take on a pastoral role, which she saw as disciplining for other teachers. Maddy spoke about her passion for teaching. She explained she loved working with children and doing what she was trained for, perfecting her craft and building resources. Spending time in the classroom, she clarified, was preferable to spending time completing the administrative tasks of a leader.

The older non-aspirants interviewed also related their passion for teaching. The idea that teaching requires expertise, and that leadership takes you away from teaching was mentioned throughout each of these interviews. Brendan firmly explained that his expertise is in teaching, not leading. Justine was eloquent about her role as a teacher. She described how the classroom was an opportunity to treat children as individuals and be with them pastorally. For her, teaching was a matter of passion for the individual students in her class and in her subject area. Her view of teaching clearly reflected her view of leadership. "Teaching in the classroom is one of the most important roles, one

of the most important leadership positions (in the school)." Mia and Rose share this passion for teaching, both expressing that they love being in the classroom.

Teachers in both age groups considered that leadership would draw them away from their passion for teaching.

Beliefs about leading

The non-aspirants had differing views of leadership. In the younger age group, Alicia considered that a good manager needs time and Maddy's view of leadership was one of high workload, paperwork, chasing up discipline matters. She considered there was poor remuneration for the amount of work, and that this was a stressful job. Maddy and Alicia's views revealed why they do not aspire to school leadership. Maddy also noted that this is the impression that she has been given by school leaders. She explained that people needed to enjoy the role if they wanted others to aspire to school leadership.

The older non-aspirants were able to present some positive aspects of leadership: having passion, honesty and integrity, compassion, the ability to challenge others and handle conflict, being proactive, reasonable in their expectations, able to be present to people and supportive of staff. Yet they did not see these qualities as aspirational for themselves, but for others.

These teachers presented mainly negative views of leadership in their interviews. All discussed the lack of time, high workload, administration and paperwork, and poor remuneration of school leadership. Brendan and Tara pointed to the emotional impact that some tasks have on the leader. All the participants mentioned that time spent on paperwork took away from classroom preparation. "I just don't feel good in here knowing that my class is going to get mediocrity and I am eating into that time because I am chasing up discipline issues for other teachers or paperwork or admin" (Justine).

Each of the participants also mentioned that the time spent in school leadership and the stress of the role had a negative impact on family. Anne, Rose and Deanna explained that the politics involved in leadership was unappealing. Both age groups of teachers considered leadership in mainly a negative light.

Self-efficacy

The younger teachers did not address their confidence in their ability as leaders. Maddy only offered the comment "I don't think I would do a good job" without further explanation.

Two teachers in the older age group, Kirsty and Mia, spoke in detail about their lack of confidence as leaders. Mia found leadership stressful, as she was constantly worried that she would let people down. She mentioned that she was brought up believing that if she did not do something perfectly, then it was not good enough. She spoke compellingly of the reasons she felt like this:

> I always got put down at school, my teachers always put me down, you're never good enough, you're never good enough, so I don't think I am good enough to be a leader. So there are lots of things when you look back, that's probably why I don't, I just don't have the confidence and I don't wish to be in that role. I don't want to be knocked down by people, I don't want to be disliked by people. (Mia)

Certainly, for Mia social persuasion and experiences have led her to doubt her self-efficacy.

Kirsty was also forthcoming about her lack of confidence in her ability to be a leader. She believed she could not cope with leadership, and explained, "But really I just can't see myself being ready for it". She explained that this assessment of herself was based on self-awareness that she did not have the personality to be a leader.

4.3.4 Summary of sources that discourage aspirations

The non-aspirants reported several reasons for not aspiring to leadership. Some of the non-aspirants recalled challenging experiences in middle leadership positions. All of these teachers considered that a leadership position would draw them away from their passion for teaching. The non-aspirants had a heightened awareness of professional models in leadership positions who were not coping. A lack of support was also one of the main reasons the older non-aspirants interviewed did not want to take on a leadership position. Each of these teachers expressed beliefs about themselves that discouraged them from aspiring to leadership.

4.3.5 Age related differences

Very few age-related differences were evident. Both age groups of non-aspirants interviewed reported negative role models as a discouraging factor, with the older teachers also voicing their frustration at people who were in leadership positions, but who were not competent. A further difference was that the younger teachers did not address their confidence in their ability as leaders, whereas some of the older non-aspirants spoke in detail about their lack of confidence as leaders.

4.4 Chapter summary

This chapter explored the data gathered in the surveys, interviews and written reflections on teachers' leadership aspirations. The first part of the analysis addressed the first research question, "What are teachers' leadership aspirations?" Findings indicate that whilst most teachers were unwilling to aspire to take on the position of principal, many teachers in both age groups aspired to take on the position of middle leader, for several reasons, including wanting to make a positive change.

The second part of the analysis addressed the second research question: "What are the sources of teachers' leadership aspirations?" Aspirants in both age groups had numerous experiences of leadership in their personal and professional lives. Some aspirants, who did not have early formative experiences of leadership, had transformative experiences that created a sense of purpose. Role models and social persuasion also encouraged aspirants to become leaders, particularly those in the younger age group. Personal characteristics, such as beliefs about leadership, self-efficacy and motivation, also influenced leadership aspirations.

The third part of the analysis addressed the third research question: "What are the sources that discourage teachers' leadership aspirations?" Non-aspirants had negative experiences of school leadership roles, where they felt unsupported and under pressure. This contrasted with positive teaching experiences. These teachers had a heightened awareness of models who were not coping, and the negativity which colleagues showed towards leaders. Many of these non-aspirants had low self-efficacy for leadership.

Chapter 5 will discuss these findings in light of the question: "How do teachers form leadership aspirations?"

Chapter Five – Discussion of the Findings

The purpose of this qualitative case study research was to identify teachers' leadership aspirations and to examine the sources that form or discourage teachers under the age of 46 to aspire to school leadership. To this end the following question was developed and explored through a case study approach: How do teachers form leadership aspirations? As stated above, the following research questions provided a means to approach this question:

1.   What are teachers' leadership aspirations?

2.   What are the sources of teachers' leadership aspirations?

      Subquestion: In what ways have mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and personal characteristics formed teachers' leadership aspirations?

      Subquestion: Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?

3.   What are the sources that discourage teachers from aspiring to leadership?

      Subquestion: In what ways have mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and personal characteristics discouraged teachers' leadership aspirations?

      Subquestion: Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?

This chapter addresses the conclusions drawn with regard to each research question.

5.1 Teachers' leadership aspirations

What are teachers' leadership aspirations?

5.1.1 Aspirations to become a senior leader

Consistent with studies reported in the literature review, the participants of the current study generally were not interested in attaining the position of school principal. Only 4.5% of the teachers who participated in the survey in the two age groups of 20 to 32 years of age and 33 to 45 years of age indicated high aspirations (70% or higher) to the position of school principal. Even the teachers who nominated themselves as aspirants to middle leadership and participated in the interviews did not aspire to take on the

position of principal. This is slightly higher than the 1.1% of teachers who indicated they would apply for a principal's position in the next three years reported in the 2013 Staff in Australian Schools report (McKenzie et al., 2014). This difference may be accounted for by the difference in the phrasing of the question: The Staff in Australian Schools report asked participants to indicate if they hoped to apply for the position of principal in the next three years, whereas no time frame was placed on the participants in the study.

The teachers in the study reported two main reasons for not aspiring to the position of principal. One reason was the perception that the principal was not as involved in the lives of the students as teachers and other leaders in the school, and they felt this role removed them from the teacher-student relationships they valued. This is consistent with the study by Smith (2011b), who found that female teachers considered that the role of principal was incompatible with their pupil-centred values. Smith (2011b, p. 529) posits that the prioritisation of relationships with pupils is founded on a "feminised view of the teaching role" as caring. The current study found that both male and female teachers indicated that the distance from the teacher-student relationships was a reason that they did not aspire to take on the role of principal, indicating that teachers of both genders prioritise relationships with pupils, a finding at odds with Smith's (2011b) conclusion that this is a feminised view of teaching. Most significantly, however, this finding indicates that teachers of both genders perceive the role of principal as having limited connection with students.

The participants in the study also indicated that another reason for not aspiring to the position of principal was the difficulty of balancing work and other aspects of life in such a role. This reason for not aspiring to the position of principal has been reported by Dorman and d'Arbon (2003), who found that the impact on personal and family life was an impediment to many of the teachers who participated in their study.

This present study found that some of the participants of the interviews, whilst not aspiring to the position of principal, indicated an interest in becoming deputy principals. The literature has previously reported a difference between aspirations to take on the position of principal and that of a deputy principal. McKenzie, Weldon, Rowley, Murphy and McMillan (2014, p. 110) reported a higher percentage of teachers (6.4%) intended to apply for a position of deputy principal compared to the lower percentage (1.1%) of teachers who intended to apply for a position of principal, with teachers

describing the strong appeal of the deputy principal's position in Lacey's study (2003). Cranston's (2007) study of the aspirations of deputy principals also reported this perceived difference in these two senior leadership roles. The participants in the current study considered that the two main differences between the roles of principal and deputy principal were the perception that the time demands of the principal's position were much greater than those of the deputy principal's position, and that deputy principals were still involved in classroom teaching.

5.1.2 Aspirations to become a middle leader

Despite this lack of interest in aspiring to the position of principal, many of the teachers in the study reported an interest in attaining middle leadership positions. The study found a significant and important difference in leadership aspirations to take on the position of school principal versus a position of middle leadership. Only 4.5% of the teachers surveyed indicated a willingness to become a school principal (70% or higher) whereas 65% indicated a willingness to be a middle leader. Further, the study found differences in aspirations in the two age groups studied. Of the younger teachers, aged 20 to 32 years, 70% indicated high aspirations (70% or higher) to middle leadership positions, compared to 60% of the teachers aged 33 to 45 years who indicated high aspirations (70% or higher) to middle leadership positions. This confirms McCrindle's study (2006) which identified the younger age group as goal-oriented and success driven, with high expectations of themselves, and who are looking for increased responsibility. The percentage of teachers interested in becoming leaders in the current study is much higher than the 45.4% of younger teachers (up to 35 years) who showed interest in career advancement according to the Staff in Australian Schools report (McKenzie et al., 2014). The current study also found a higher percentage of teachers in the group of teachers 33 to 45 years old aspired to school leadership in general, including middle and senior leadership positions (41.9%), compared to the 30.2% of teachers 36 to 50 years old in the Staff in Australian Schools report who indicated that they intended to seek promotion in the next three years (McKenzie et al., 2014). Whilst the differences are evident, this percentage of teachers 33 to 45 years old is still higher than expected from the studies which consider this age group is less interested in taking on a leadership position. Previous research has suggested that this older group of teachers would be less interested in leadership positions because they had little support

from school authorities or any effective induction early in their careers (Preston, 2003), instead valuing personal autonomy and being concerned with seeking a balance between work and personal life (Skilbeck & Connell, 2004). One explanation for the difference in results regarding the older teachers' interest in leadership positions between the current study and the studies by Preston (2003) and Skilbeck and Connell (2004) is that these studies reflect the aspirations of this older group of teachers ten years ago, when they have had fewer opportunities for responsibility and leadership, having been in the shadow of a larger group of older, more experienced teachers (Preston, 2003).

5.1.3 Factors that encourage aspirations

The study found a number of factors encouraging teachers to aspire to take on middle leadership positions: the desire to make a difference, the need to be challenged and positive encouragement from senior school leaders. Aspirants to middle leadership in the study were motivated by the wish to effect educational change. This factor has previously been reported in the literature as a reason to aspire to take on the position of principal. Other studies have identified "the desire to make a difference" (Hancock & Müller, 2009, p. 301) and "the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others" (d' Arbon et al., 2002, p. 478) as a significant reason to aspire to take on the position of principal. The aspirants to middle leadership in the current study expressed ways in which they felt they could make a difference, such as improving student wellbeing or developing effective professional practice, and they felt empowered to achieve this in middle leadership positions. The need to be challenged and achieve goals was a significant reason aspirants in the study wanted to be middle leaders. The authors of the Staff in Australian Schools report found that 65.5% of secondary teachers who intended to apply for a position of deputy principal or principal in the next three years reported as a significant factor "wanting challenges other than classroom teaching" (McKenzie et al., 2014, p. 110). The current study also found that positive encouragement from leaders was a significant reason for teachers to aspire to take on a middle leadership position. This is consistent with the study by Howley, Andrianaivo and Perry (2005) which reported that positive encouragement was a reason for teachers to aspire to take on the position of principal. The findings in the current study indicate that teachers are motivated to become middle leaders for many of the same reasons as teachers wish to become school principals.

5.1.4 Factors that discourage aspirations

Many of the reasons for not aspiring to middle leadership positions in the study are similar to the reasons reported in the literature for teachers not aspiring to the position of principal. The current study found that the view of leadership as stressful and demanding was not limited to senior leadership positions, but was also a factor discouraging teachers from aspiring to take on middle leadership positions. Non-aspirants in the study were deterred from taking on middle leadership positions because these positions were also seen to be stressful, with high workloads. They reported that middle leadership was exhausting and thankless, impacting not only on family life, but also on health. Sperandio and Kagoda (2010) reported that deputy principals considered the role of principal unattractive because of the stress of high workloads and duties. The difficulty of balancing work and personal life, and poor remuneration, were factors that deterred the deputy principals in d'Arbon et al.'s (2002) study from applying for the position of principal. In the Staff in Australian Schools 2013 report, 54.7% of teachers indicated that they would have difficulty maintaining a satisfactory balance between work and personal life in a senior leadership position, whilst 26.5% reported that the salary was not sufficient for the responsibilities in the position of principal or deputy principal (McKenzie et al., 2014), factors that influenced the decision of teachers not to apply for these senior positions. The findings of the current study indicate that non-aspirants did not distinguish deterrents to leadership for different types of leadership.

Other aspects of the middle leadership role that were also seen as deterrents in the study included the uncomfortable interactions a middle leader may have with staff and parents. This finding suggests that the middle leader position is perceived as being isolated from others and becoming unpopular, perceptions that have previously been attributed to the role of principal (Smith, 2011b). The present study also found that non-aspirants did not want to take on a leadership role because of a lack of confidence in their ability. This finding is consistent with the study by Fletcher-Campbell (2003) who reported that a lack of confidence deters teachers from applying for promotion positions. Fletcher-Campbell (2003) reported that support from middle and senior leaders encouraged teachers who lacked confidence to take on a promotions position. This social persuasion had not been offered to the non-aspirants of the study.

A further finding of the study was the significance of school culture as a mediating factor of aspirations to take on a position of middle leadership. Some participants

reported the interactions of colleagues and school leaders as a deterrent to taking on a school leadership position. In the Staff in Australian Schools 2013 report, 20.5% of secondary teachers indicated that a lack of encouragement from school leaders was a factor influencing their decision not to apply for a position as principal or deputy principal (McKenzie et al., 2014). In the same report, 8.6% of teachers indicated that a lack of "encouragement and support from colleagues" (McKenzie et al., 2014, p. 112) was also a contributing factor to not applying for these senior positions of school leadership. Cubillo and Brown (2003) reported on the reluctance of teachers to aspire to take on school principal positions because of a lack of peer support. Non-aspirants in the current study reported a lack of encouragement from senior leaders and lack of opportunity as discouragements to aspire to take on middle leadership positions. Participants in the current study also reported negative attitudes of colleagues towards leaders, an unsupportive environment and negative experiences with senior management as further reasons not to aspire to take on middle leadership positions. The findings from the current study highlight the importance of aspects of school culture in discouraging aspirations to become a middle leader.

5.2 Sources of leadership aspirations

The following section addresses the second research question and subquestions: What are the sources of teachers' leadership aspirations?

> Subquestion: In what ways have mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and personal characteristics formed teachers' leadership aspirations?

> Subquestion: Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?

Based on the theoretical framework of social cognitive theory, the study investigated four sources of teachers' leadership aspirations: mastery experiences, vicarious experience, social persuasion and personal characteristics. Aspirations developed in both the personal and the professional contexts. These sources are discussed below.

5.2.1 Mastery experiences

The most influential source of efficacy or perceived capacity, according to Bandura (1997), is mastery experience, the result of one's own previous performance. Studies on

the sources of self-efficacy have focused on quantifying the correlation between self-efficacy and sources of teachers' aspirations, consistently finding a high correlation between mastery experiences and self-efficacy (Bentz, 2010; Britner & Pajares, 2006; Joet, Usher, & Bressoux, 2011; Usher & Pajares, 2009). The current qualitative study was not concerned with correlating the influence of mastery experience on self-efficacy. Instead, the focus of the study was on exploring the types of mastery experiences that have enabled these teachers to perceive they have the ability to be leaders, and the ways in which these mastery experiences formed leadership aspirations.

In exploring the mastery experiences that contributed to formation of the participants' self-efficacy for leadership, teachers described two types of experiences: formative experiences and transformational experiences. The term "formative experiences" is used as it suggests not only that these events represent sets of associated events, but that they are instrumental in the formation of the individual. Other terms used in the literature, such as "general events" (Conway, 1996), "originating events" (McAdams, 2001; Pillemer, 2001) or "recurring events" (Fivush, Habermas, Waters, & Zaman, 2011), do not indicate the importance of these experiences in forming self-efficacy for the domain in which these events occur. The term "transformational experiences" has been used in preference to "turning points" (Pillemer, 2001) and "trigger events" (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) for the same reason, namely the suggestion that these events are transformative for the individual.

Personal formative experiences

Formative experiences occurred throughout the childhood of these aspirants, offering numerous leadership opportunities. Many of the aspiring teachers in both age groups had numerous formative leadership experiences in their personal lives. These experiences were both informal, such as their experiences within families, and formal, such as being captains of sporting teams or having positions of responsibility in schools.

Several of the aspirants were the oldest in their families and described themselves assuming the role of leader over their siblings, even taking on parental responsibilities. Studies have reported that first-born children are over-represented in political leadership (Andeweg & Berg, 2003; Steinberg, 2001), and further study of aspirants to educational leadership may suggest a similar over-representation.

A number of study participants reported leadership experiences in sporting teams. The relationship between participation in sport and leadership development has been a contested area in the literature. Dobosz and Beaty (1999) found that "athletes demonstrated significantly greater leadership ability than non-athletes" (p. 215). Extejt and Smith (2009) questioned the relationship between leadership skill development and athletic team participation, finding no association between sports team experience and leadership skills. In the current study a number of participants reported that experiences captaining sporting teams developed their leadership skills; however, not all participants were positive about the leadership skills they learnt in the leadership of sporting teams. One non-aspirant recalled her negative experiences in this role. One explanation for this difference is in the mediating effect of the cognitive processing of these experiences. Bandura (1997) explains that the same type of experience – in this case being a sporting team captain – "may raise, leave unaffected or lower perceived self-efficacy for leadership, depending on how various personal or situational contributors are interpreted and weighted" (p. 81). One of these contributors, amongst others, is the way these experiences are cognitively organised and reconstructed in memory (Bandura, 1997). For a number of participants, these sporting experiences were reflected upon as positive affirmations of their ability to lead, whereas for the non-aspirant, leadership in sporting teams was recollected as a negative experience, confirming a low self-efficacy for leadership.

Findings from the study show that, for some participants, these mastery experiences raised self-efficacy for leadership by developing leadership skills and an awareness of what it means to be a leader. The study also found that formative leadership mastery experiences, and the resultant raised self-efficacy, influence the motivation to continue in leadership, functioning in the way suggested by Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory. Zeldin, Britner and Pajares' (2008) study, amongst others (Britner & Pajares, 2006; Usher & Pajares, 2009), has found that mastery experiences are used to create and develop efficacy beliefs. The current study found early personal experiences, when recollected positively, developed a sense of empowerment and self-efficacy for leadership that led the participants to take further opportunities in leadership. The study outlines different types of formative experiences and the influence of these formative experiences on aspirations. The formative personal experiences of teachers have received little attention in the literature to date.

Professional formative experiences

The professional formative experiences for a few of the younger aspirants in the study included leadership courses. The educational literature concerned with the development of leaders predominantly focuses on the skills and attributes needed for leadership, and the courses that can be offered to develop these skills. Moorosi and Bush's (2011) study of leadership development courses across 10 countries found common topics taught included financial management, team leadership and educational policy. The aspirants in the current study who had access to leadership courses found them valuable, not only for their content, but also for the opportunities of networking with other colleagues and finding mentors. They reported these courses had raised their beliefs in their abilities to acquire skills, presented guided career pathways and modelled requisite skills. Yet only a few of the participants in the current study had access to these courses, and the experiences of professional development for leadership have been isolated events, usually occurring after a participant had taken on a leadership position. Cardno and Youngs (2013) found that a leadership development program was effective because it was specifically individualised and relevant to the career stage of the experienced principals in their study. The study found that leadership courses have not been available to all aspirants, nor were they individualised or catering to different career stages. This suggests that further development of the leadership development needs of aspirants, relevant to their career stage, is necessary in order to ensure effective and appropriate professional development opportunities of future school leaders.

Many of the teachers in the study had many informal experiences of leadership and middle leadership experiences in their professional lives. Some of the teachers had assumed a middle leadership position in some capacity in their first years of teaching, and have continued to pursue opportunities to be school leaders. Experiences such as looking after grade sport, being part of a retreat team, monitoring, programming and creating assessments for a year group or middle school, and being in charge of initiatives such as peer support, supporting a leader or acting in leadership positions built efficacy for leadership and developed leadership skills. The aspirants in the study reported that such professional experiences build self-efficacy for leadership and develop a leadership identity. These findings are consistent with the study by Zhang and Brundrett (2010) of leaders in schools in England, who reported that most participants attributed their leadership learning to experience within schools. Leadership learnt by

moving through the ranks from classroom teachers through middle leadership positions to school principal has been dismissed as "the traditional apprenticeship model" (Su et al., 2003, p. 50). In fact, professional development experiences were not considered as influential as mastery experiences in developing the school leaders in the current study. The study found that professional leadership experiences were influential in developing confidence and leadership aspirations, suggesting that informal leadership development within the school should be considered in programs of leadership development.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that it is not just the numerous successful experiences that have developed efficacy for leadership, but the self-reflection on these formative experiences that has established the participants' perception of themselves as leaders. Aspirants reported that their reflections on early professional leadership experiences were empowering and motivating, and the older aspirants indicated it was their impact on others, particularly on students, which was a catalyst for these aspirants to continue in middle leader positions. This is consistent with findings by Fivush et al. (2011) that recurring event reflections can be self-defining and therefore an important part of our identity: "Who we are is very much defined by the way we remember and reconstruct our past experiences" (p. 324). Labone (2004) explains, "for the development of positive efficacy beliefs, self-monitoring must focus the individual's attention and recall on successful experiences" (p. 346). The reflection of the participants on their numerous early leadership experiences in their professional and personal lives supported their development of high self-efficacy for leadership and their awareness of their identities as leaders. This finding suggests that explicit attention to reflection on positive experiences may help support leadership aspirations.

Transformative experiences

Transformational experiences also developed leadership identity by forming an understanding of what being a leader means and establishing a purpose in being a leader. For some aspirants in the study, a transformational experience confirmed and strengthened their self-efficacy for leadership. Both Sinead and David reported on the transformative experiences of missing out on leadership opportunities as school students. Each explained that their belief in their self-efficacy for leadership encouraged them to pursue success as a leader, despite missing out on these student leadership positions. This is consistent with Zeldin and Pajares' (2000) who found "The self-

efficacy beliefs that people hold influence the choices they make, the amount of effort they expend, their resilience to encountered hardships, their persistence in the face of adversity, the anxiety they experience, and the level of success they ultimately achieve" (p. 218). For other aspirants, a traumatic or transformational experience such as the death of a peer, a parent or a slightly older acquaintance who was seen as a model, occurring usually in mid to late teens, required the participant to take on leadership in their personal lives, challenging his or her life direction. This finding is consistent with the claim by Pillemer (2001) that these episodes are perceived to redirect life plans, and "Recurrent memories of turning points continue to focus and fuel the pursuit of new goals" (p. 127). Danielle describes her goals as a personal ethos, or vision, to provide pastoral care in a similar way to the support she was given after the death of a fellow student. Phil attributes his understanding of taking on a parental role after his father died as profoundly influencing his desire to take on a pastoral leadership position. This is further empirical evidence of the importance of personal experiences in developing personal ethos, as acknowledged by Yoeli and Berkovich (2010), Bennis and Thomas (2002) and Avolio and Hannah (2008). In fact, Avolio and Hannah (2008) explain that "originating events are seen as establishing the basis for one's belief or life focus" (p. 335). This is most clearly expressed by Rebecca whose traumatic experiences within her family have framed her goal of taking on pastoral leadership in schools to support students who may also be experiencing difficulties. "I know first-hand what some children are going through at home. Adolescence was the worst time of my life and now that I have come out the other end of it, I would like to help others through it."

The influence of transformational experiences in forming aspirations may be explained by the cognitive processing of these experiences. In the study, some aspirants who had difficult experiences cognitively processed these experiences to overcome perceived inefficacy. A transformational experience enabled Danielle and Janette to recognise their capabilities as leaders. Danielle explained that before a transformative experience, she was quite shy and had not had any other leadership experiences. The death of a friend, a successful leadership endeavour and the support and encouragement of a teacher reformed her view of herself and her capabilities as a leader. Yoeli and Berkovich (2010) reported examples of traumatic experiences through which an individual shapes their identity, values and goals. Avolio and Hannah (2008) contend that high impact leader development experiences can create a point of disequilibrium

and heightened self-awareness…this disequilibrium can occur from both positive and negative trigger events and that each can facilitate growth, provided the leader is otherwise developmentally ready" (p. 335). The current study has extended the field of knowledge on the effect of transformational events on leader development into educational leadership literature. In accepting Avolio and Hannah's (2008) premise that trigger events occur when the leader is developmentally ready, the study has highlighted that this developmental readiness can occur as early as adolescence. A further finding of the study was the significance of both formative and transformative events during adolescence in developing self-efficacy for leadership. The study suggests that adolescence may be a sensitive period for leadership development, a time, according to Bornstein (1989), when skills are more rapidly and easily developed. This further highlights the importance of taking a longitudinal perspective on leader development, recognised by Murphy and Johnson (2011).

These experiences, for several participants in the formative years between 16 and 18, coupled with social persuasion, motivated them to take on leadership roles in their personal and professional lives. Danielle and Dominic both reported that the support of a teacher while they were senior students had an impact on their decision to teach and to lead. Whilst literature studying the sources of self-efficacy has considered the relationships between the sources, finding quantitative correlations between mastery experiences and social persuasion (Usher & Pajares, 2008), these authors explain the agentic bonds between these sources by explaining that a student who gets a high mark may receive high praise, gaining a sense of self-efficacy form these combined sources. The findings of the current qualitative study differ in that the transformational experiences recalled by the participants have sometimes been traumatic, rather than affirming; however, the agentic bond between these sources is evident, as social persuasion has influenced the formation of self-efficacy for leadership and consequently the formation of leadership aspirations.

A strong personal agency and internal locus of control was evident in the interviews of many of the aspirants in the study. Aspirants recalled a difficult experience and attributed this to external agents. When Sinead missed out on a leadership position as a school student, she attributed this as an injustice by the staff, while Adella and Phil moved schools when they encountered difficulties in their leadership positions, attributing these difficulties to situational factors. Smith (2011a) found that women who

position themselves as agents in their decisions define their own career path. This notion is extended as, for both male and female aspirants in the current study, the beliefs in their ability to be leaders supported this personal agency and directed their career paths. For these aspiring teachers, early personal and professional successful experiences have contributed to their self-efficacy for leadership, allowing them to recognise that they have leadership capabilities that are not the product of external circumstances. These participants' beliefs in their capabilities encouraged them to intensify their efforts to gain leadership positions in their professional lives.

In conclusion, exploration of both formative and transformational mastery leadership experiences of teachers who aspire to leadership has received little attention in the educational literature. The current study, concerned with both male and female aspiring leaders, found that the influences of experiences developed self-efficacy for leadership, personal agency and leadership aspirations. The study also found that vicarious experiences, formed leadership aspirations.

5.2.2 Vicarious experience

Those participant teachers who aspire to leadership have been exposed to many varied models, both in their personal and their professional life. Models that the participants identified with were noted and admired for particular leadership skills and attributes that they displayed. Many of the teachers in the 20 to 32 year group recalled observing such models in their personal and professional lives.

Studies in the sources of self-efficacy of school students have found inconsistent correlations between vicarious experience and self-efficacy (Usher & Pajares, 2008), possibly because of the multidimensional nature of this variable, with peer and adult models having different influences on students at different developmental stages. However, studies of sources of self-efficacy with adult participants have found that vicarious experience helped form self-efficacy for specific groups such as women with careers in mathematics, science and technology (Zeldin & Pajares, 2000). Studies in education have also reported on the influence of role models in leadership development. Zhang and Brundrett (2010) found that middle leaders in schools felt the role models of previous head teachers were essential in shaping their leadership and Young and McLeod (2001) found that administrative role models had had a profound effect on women school administrators' decision to enter administration. The current study

identified specific role models, finding that the positive and motivating influence of role models contributed to the development of self-efficacy for leadership and the formation of aspirations for both female and male aspirants.

Personal role models

The most frequently reported role models in the personal context by both men and women were male role models such as fathers, brothers or family friends, whilst three participants discussed both parents and two female participants noted the influence of their mothers as role models. The participants identified with these models and wanted to emulate their attributes and their success at leadership. Cubillo and Brown (2003) reported similar findings, reporting a predominance of influential paternal male models which the authors propose is "a pragmatic realisation of the father's dominant authority in a patriarchal society" (Cubillo & Brown, 2003, p. 286). Mendez-Morse (2004), in one of the few studies of educational leaders which included the influences of role models in personal lives, found mothers or both parents were the role models of the Latino women educational leaders. The findings of the current study are consistent with the study of Geis, Boston and Hoffman (1985) who found that men are more often credited as leaders, even against empirical evidence, reflecting established perceptions. The predominance of male role models in the personal context in the current study may be explained by a lack of exposure to either female or less traditional role models in leadership. Despite this predominance, the attributes admired in the models in the personal context were not specifically masculine. Participants identified personal qualities such as loyalty, love, self-sacrifice, humanity, compassion, persistence, organisational skills, determination, strength and initiative, that gave them a standard for leadership by which other leaders in their lives were measured. This is further evidence of the masculine construct of leadership decreasing over time, which Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell and Ristikari (2011) found in their meta-analysis.

Professional role models

The aspiring teachers have either identified with or resisted the models they encountered professionally. Bandura (1997) proposes a diversity of models: competent models, who perform calmly and faultlessly; coping models, who begin timorously but gradually overcome their difficulties by determined coping efforts; and models who are

not coping. Bandura's models do not effectively explain the models reported in the study as they refer to specific tasks and the role of leadership is more general. Young and McLeod (2001) categorised the models reported in their study according to the participants' responses: satisfaction, identification and resistance, which represent the influence of these models on leadership aspirations. These authors found that teachers who were satisfied with the leadership of their principals saw little reason to go into leadership themselves; teachers who identified with their principal's leadership considered moving into leadership whilst teachers who were critical or uncomfortable with their principal's leadership were more likely to either leave the school or the teaching profession or become school leaders themselves to remedy the problem. The models in the current study have attributes of both Bandura's (1997) and Young and McLeod's (2001) models; however, the professional role models found in the current study are best described by two categories: aspirational role models and negative role models.

Aspirational role models

Participants identified with accomplished, competent professional models, recognising in these aspirational models the skills and qualities of a school leader. Brooks (2013) found that enthusiasm for the role, flexibility and being an outstanding teacher were attributes considered to be characteristics of effective middle leaders. Dinham (2007) found that interpersonal skills, such as interest and enthusiasm and professional skills, particularly being an effective teacher, were qualities of highly effective middle leaders. Consistent with these studies, the leaders who were considered aspirational models in the current study were praised by the aspirants particularly for their enthusiasm, open-mindedness and effectiveness as teachers. The participants admired role models for their approachable leadership style, their trusted manner, the respect of others, their compassion and their ability to interact with students and staff.

The younger aspirants in the study also identified with professional aspirational proficient models who were close in age and of the same gender, often in a desired position of leadership and often in a supervisory role to the participant. In the study, the teachers who were seen as models and in some cases mentors were considered to have gained leadership positions because of their abilities and performance. For the aspirants in the study who identified with this type of model, the observed benefits of the model

served as motivation to achieve in their careers in a similar way. This is consistent with research by Young and McLeod (2001), who found that women who identified with the leadership style of a female school leader saw these leaders as role models and considered the possibility of becoming school leaders themselves. The difference in the current study is that the role models of the younger aspirants were not only of the same gender, but were close in age to the aspirants, being only a few years older than the aspirants themselves. According to social cognitive theory, "Modelling has the greatest influence when the models are perceived to be similar to the observer"(Zeldin et al., 2008, p. 1037). This would explain the influence of these role models on the younger aspirants. The noteworthy finding of the study is that the younger aspirants were able to identify a proficient role model with similar attributes of gender and age as themselves. This possibly reflects the growing number of young teachers who are taking on school leadership. The older aspirants had more difficulty identifying a particular model, instead naming the qualities they saw in a number of models. This suggests either that they had grown beyond a model in their leadership skills, or that they were not as exposed to role models with similarity attributes.

Study participants who identified with aspirational role models cognitively appraised their own ability as leaders by comparison with these models. The younger aspiring teachers considered that the people they identified as models not only had qualities of leadership they wanted to emulate, but through observational learning helped them assess their own skills as leaders and reflect critically on their performances. This finding supports Bandura's (1997) assertion that vicarious modelling is an effective and persuasive tool in judging one's own capabilities. The findings from the study reveal that vicarious experiences shape attitudes and behaviour. For several participants, the career pathways of role models shaped their leadership aspirations to take on similar leadership positions. Whilst Young and McLeod (2001) reported that role models may influence others to aspire to take on the position of principal, the current study extends this understanding by reporting on the influence of role models in outlining a career pathway of various positions of school leadership and providing a benchmark or anchor values against which to measure developing leadership skills.

Role models who were not coping

Teachers in both age groups discussed the effect that negative role models had on their aspirations. Aspirants were particularly concerned with the effect of poor leaders on others and the injustice of a leader not leading well. Unlike the groups of teachers who did not aspire to leadership, role models who were not coping encouraged the aspirants in the study to take on a leadership position, consistent with other studies. Fletcher-Campbell (2003) found that some teachers were inspired to seek promotion to middle leadership positions because of role models they encountered as young teachers who were not coping with leadership, and Young and McLeod (2001) reported that some participants were inspired to seek promotion to school administration to remedy problems they saw in existing school leadership. Young and McLeod also found that other participants who encountered role models whom they resisted were likely to leave the school or teaching. Whilst some of the older participants in the current study were also motivated to be leaders because of role models they considered were not coping, a further effect of these types of role models was to make these older aspiring teachers more cautious in their decisions about leadership positions. This finding reveals the varying influences of role models who were not coping on teachers' leadership aspirations as either deterring or motivating aspirants, or as developing a cautious attitude to applying for leadership positions.

These personal and professional role models influenced teachers' leadership aspirations. A further finding of the study was the understanding of the way in which social persuasion also formed these aspirations.

5.2.3 Social persuasion

Aspirants who were 20 to 32 years old and the younger aspirants in the older age group have had considerable support and encouragement to take on a leadership position in both the personal and the professional context. Many of the teachers have been supported by family and friends in the formation of leadership aspirations. This is consistent with a number of studies which have found that women in leadership positions relied on personal support in these positions and for their formation as educational leaders. Coleman (2001) found that the nearly all the female principals in her study had been encouraged to apply for promotion, particularly by former principals. The female educational leaders in Mendez-Morse's (2004) study found

informal mentors in their personal and professional lives, with only the younger women in her study reporting experiences of formal, organisational sanctioned mentoring. Nurturing by senior and middle leaders encouraged the middle school leaders in Fletcher-Campbell's (2003) study to become middle leaders. In the current study, teachers of both genders considered the personal and professional support given to them was instrumental in developing their leadership aspirations.

Personal context

In many cases this support started early in aspirants' personal lives. Aspirants recalled the support of parents who encouraged them to succeed. Mendez-Morse (2004) found that the female educational leaders in her study were taught specific skills by their mothers which were instrumental to success. Rather than teaching them skills, the aspirants in the current study reported being affirmed in their self-efficacy for leadership by their parents. Five younger aspirants reported teachers who had an impact when they were senior students, convincing them of their leadership ability, encouraging them to achieve their potential and motivating them to succeed. Others were given this support by sporting coaches or managers in part-time work, who recognised their skills and qualities. This support has confirmed for many their ability to be leaders, enhancing their self-efficacy for leadership. Dahlvig and Longman (2010, p. 938) reported as "defining moments" in women's leadership formation those when the encouragement that some women had received had reframed their self-perception and their understanding of themselves as leaders. A similar conclusion can be reached in the current study, regarding teachers of both genders. Social persuasion by teachers reframed these participants' understandings of leadership and changed their self-perception.

Professional context

The aspiring teachers in the current study, particularly the younger aspirants, also received support in the professional context. Youngs (2008, May) contends that relationships of trust and open, honest communication are critical in allowing emergent forms of distributed leadership to occur. The senior leaders who offered support to the aspirants in the current study intentionally created a relationship of trust that served to develop leadership aspirations. Supportive relationships developed informally rather

than through a formal mentoring program. For many, this support came from colleagues as well as senior leaders. This builds on the finding of Mendez-Morse (2004) who reported that the participants in her study had constructed mentors informally to mitigate the absence of professional, formal, traditional mentors. Many of the younger teachers with high self-efficacy for leadership in the current study sought out this relationship, whilst others were "tapped on the shoulder", rather than receiving formal mentoring. Such support may have overcome some of the problems with formal mentoring programs which have been addressed in the literature. Grogan (2002) posited that formal mentoring may become a process of privilege and exclusivity and Moorosi (2012) reported on the complexity and lack of clarity about what constitutes effective mentoring models. Grogan (2002) suggests that the best mentoring is often a haphazard one, which is consistent with the way the participants' professional supportive relationships were formed.

Gender seemed to impact on the type of support given, with male teachers recounting career mentoring as significant, whilst the female teachers acknowledged the psychosocial support they had received through informal mentoring. This finding has previously been reported in studies in accounting-related occupations (Allen & Eby, 2004) and in a variety of mainly male-dominated occupations (Ortiz-Walters, Eddleston, & Simione, 2010). The present study has relevance for educational literature and supports the proposition that leadership development, including mentoring, should meet the specific developmental and psychosocial needs of the individual.

Benefits of social persuasion

The professional and personal support offered to these aspiring leaders developed their aspirations and self-efficacy for leadership. Colleagues, senior leaders, family and friends affirmed their ability to lead, offered guidance and encouraged these teachers to apply for leadership positions. Kayla's comment reflects this support: "Someone's put me in this role because they saw I had something positive to give." This is consistent with several studies which have reported the influence of support in building confidence in leadership ability, although the focus of these studies is on senior leadership positions. Hu (2008) found that support and encouragement from senior leaders raised the confidence of the participants in their leadership ability, stimulated a growing interest in becoming leaders and provided opportunities for these teachers to learn skills

of leadership. Young and McLeod (2001) reported that support and endorsement from senior leaders boosted the female administrators' confidence in their leadership ability. The current study found that social persuasion raised the self-efficacy for leadership of the aspirants, encouraging the participants to apply for leadership, and motivating the aspiring leaders to succeed in leadership.

The study also found further benefits of personal and professional persuasion; specifically it reduced the impact of negativity from colleagues. Most notably this occurred when a number of younger teachers, both male and female, were faced with criticism by colleagues when appointed to middle leader positions within one school. Significantly, situation variables influence how middle leaders are supported, as reported by Gurr and Drysdale (2013). In the current study, the situation variables were particularly the proactive support of senior leaders and a collaborative school leadership culture, which countered negativity. In their interviews, aspirants revealed the encouraging and motivating influence of supportive people that helped them overcome negativity from colleagues. The analysis revealed that one reason this criticism from colleagues may not have had the impact seen in other studies could be that the professional social persuasion given was from senior leaders, who had taken up an informal mentoring role with some of the younger group of aspirants. This persuasion impacted on the way the aspirants cognitively processed the harsh criticism, dismissing negativity as irrelevant. Kayla explains: "Someone's put me in this role because they saw I had something positive to give, so I'm going to run with it and just prove to them that it doesn't matter how old I am or how little experience I have, everyone has to start somewhere." Discussions with senior leader mentors supported many younger aspirants through offering opportunities, supporting setting of goals and giving positive feedback that focused on achieved progress. Importantly, these evaluations were trusted because participants believed that these leaders were skilled in leadership and in evaluating aspirants. This supports Bandura's (1997) tenet that, "the impact of persuasory opinions on efficacy beliefs is apt to be only as strong as the recipient's confidence in the person who issues them…People are inclined to trust evaluations of their capabilities by those who are themselves skilled in the activity" (p. 105). Further, the influence of these leaders may be greater as many were also reported to be role models. This is consistent with the findings from the study by Young and McLeod (2001) that the impact of modelling is even greater when coupled with encouragement.

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One further influence of professional persuasion from senior leaders in developing leadership is role socialisation. Studies report that mentoring transmits knowledge, values and beliefs (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Crow, 2006), which is evident in the current study. Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2004) found that leadership mentoring can assist teachers through the difficult role transformation from teacher to principal. Professional persuasion from senior leaders who identify, sponsor and promote the aspiring leaders is reported as positive in Moorosi's (2012) study of school leaders. Senior leaders in the current study took on the role of sponsor for some of these aspirants, identifying potential, offering opportunity and giving positive feedback. In an interview, Coleman (Berta, 2005, p. 16) explained that the difference between a mentor and a sponsor is that a mentor "gives you the formula of what it takes to succeed…but a sponsor has the ability to promote". Whilst questions have been raised as to bias in the selection of aspirants with similar attributes, skills and styles through sponsorship, a concern expressed by Gronn and Lacey (2006) in relation to principal candidates, the aspiring young leaders in the current study reported the benefits of professional persuasion from senior leaders. Social persuasion has had a formative effect on the aspirations and self-efficacy for leadership of the younger aspiring teachers in the study.

The teachers in the current study have benefited from the professional and personal support that they have been given, in developing confidence and being affirmed in their abilities to be school leaders. The fourth source of leadership aspirations found in the study is personal characteristics, which is discussed in the next section.

5.2.4 Personal characteristics

The study found that beliefs about teaching and leading and beliefs about self were influential in forming leadership aspirations.

Beliefs about teaching and leading

The aspirants' beliefs about teaching and leading influenced their leadership aspirations. Among the aspirants, beliefs about teaching and leading varied considerably. Some younger aspirants, specifically those who were not already in a leadership position, indicated that they wanted to gain expertise as teachers in the classroom before taking on a position of middle leadership. Similarly, some of the older aspirants considered the importance of being an experienced teacher in leading school improvement and

fostering learning. This is consistent with the study by Fletcher-Campbell (2003) who found that principals require middle managers to be successful in the classroom. This view of the middle leader as an excellent teacher is reflected in the study by White (2001) which found that middle leaders in charge of learning areas were expected to act as role models, focusing on what is conducive to excellent teaching. In contrast to these findings, many of the younger aspirants in the current study indicated that expertise as a teacher was not a prerequisite to leading, considering that there would be future opportunities to develop teaching practice. These aspirants did not see teaching as improving their leadership, but rather as leadership improving their teaching practice. Most of the aspirants with this view were in pastoral middle leader positions, a position which has received less attention in the literature than the role of subject coordinator, as acknowledged by Brooks (2013). This may explain the contrast between the views of these participants and the findings of other studies.

Another belief that influenced leadership aspirations was the belief that leadership affirmed their sense of purpose in being an educator. The analysis revealed that aspirants believed that taking on a leadership position was necessary to pursue their personal vision or mission. Many aspirants explained their understanding of leadership was as other-centred, describing skills such as understanding the needs of students and staff, listening to others, being discrete, empathetic and supportive. The values they attributed to leadership, such as empowerment of others or being an advocate for students, led them to aspire to leadership. This suggests a moral purpose or moral dimension to their leadership, as advocated by Starratt (2004), Fullan (2001), Branson (2014) and others, recognised as ethical or authentic leadership, Yet, despite the selection of participants from Catholic schools, there was little mention about moral purpose being Catholic in nature, with only one participant framing his aspirations within an understanding of the Catholic school as a faith community. Buchanan's finding that school leaders need opportunities to critically review their existing beliefs in the light of being leaders of religious schools (Buchanan, 2013) may be pertinent in the light of the findings of the current study.

Beliefs about self: Self-efficacy and motivation

The study found that the central motivating factor of the decision to be a leader was the belief about self, specifically self-efficacy for leadership. As has been explained, self-

efficacy, unlike any other self-belief, by its very nature is a future-focused belief, predicting future behaviour and actions, and is therefore the most significant factor to investigate in the study of leadership aspirations.

In social cognitive theory, the theoretical basis of the study, people are agents of experience as emphasised by Bandura (1997); self-efficacy and values give structure and limitations to the planning of action and guide the execution of the behaviour. Therefore these personal characteristics become determinants of the leadership aspirations.

In the current study, many of the aspiring leaders generally displayed high self-efficacy for leadership. They indicated they had the attributes and skills to be leaders and discussed their personal goals, motivation and beliefs, revealing their high self-efficacy for leadership.

The aspiring leaders were highly motivated to achieve personal success, and took proactive steps to find further opportunities to take on leadership and develop leadership skills. This finding is consistent with studies in self-efficacy which have established that self-efficacy is related to the motivation to become leaders in undergraduate student leaders (Bardou, Byrne, Pasternak, Perez, & Rainey, 2003) and in business leaders (Paglis & Green, 2002). The confidence that the aspiring leaders in the current study in education had in their leadership ability resulted in greater effort in developing those skills through experience. The aspiring leaders who had a strong belief in their capabilities intensified efforts when they failed to achieve what they sought and persisted when they succeeded. This was true of Sinead and David who both missed out on a leadership position as senior students, so pursued their wish to be school leaders in their professional context. Further, the self-reflection on their leadership skills and knowledge encouraged them to aspire to take on further leadership positions and become confident in their ability as leaders. Lord and Hall (2005) posit "Over time leadership skills and knowledge become inextricably integrated with one's self-concept as a leader" (p. 592) and individuals will become increasingly motivated to develop new leadership skills. This is confirmed in the findings of the current study.

The aspirants' self-efficacy enabled them to believe that they would rise to the challenges of leadership. Many of the aspirants had a high expectation of success. Previous successful leadership experiences in the personal context allowed them to

believe that they had the ability to be school leaders, a finding supporting the accession stage of Gronn's model (1999) of school leader formation.

The aspirations of the participants were influenced by their self-appraisal of their capabilities, encouraging them to form new challenges. Bandura's explanation of the cognitive process linking self-efficacy with motivation is evident in the leadership aspirations of these teachers. "Much human behaviour, being purposive, is regulated by forethought that embodies cognised goals. The stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the higher the goals people set for themselves and the firmer their commitment to them" (Bandura, 1997, p. 116). The younger participants were more driven by the need for personal challenge; however, all of the aspirants expressed an intrinsic need to be motivated, to set goals for themselves. Many of the participants reflected on their abilities as leaders, and the goals they wanted to achieve. Most of the aspirants were confident that they had the qualities needed to be an educational leader, such as organisational skills, being approachable, empathetic and level-headed. The participants identified similar skills as those of their role models, which were qualities consistent with the characteristics of an effective middle leader reported in Dinham's (2007) study.

Forethought guided the actions of the participants in the study, allowing them to form beliefs about what they could do. Aspirants saw situations as reasonable opportunities and they visualised successful scenarios. This perspective was found in the interviews of a few of the participants. Adella remarked, "I'm a very visual person, so if I can see myself standing up and doing it, then I know I have a pretty good chance, I think I know I can do that". This finding is consistent with Zeldin et al.'s (2008) study of men and women in Mathematics, Science and Technology Careers. The current study applies this finding to the domain of educational leadership.

The high self-efficacy of the aspiring leaders in the current study not only enabled them to enlist new challenges as motivators, it also determined how environmental opportunities and impediments were perceived. Negativity from colleagues, a reason given in the survey for people not aspiring to leadership, was rationalised and dismissed. Any negative evaluation of their leadership was considered incorrect or a lack of understanding on the part of the evaluator. This confirms the tenet of Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory which holds that preset efficacy beliefs reduced the impact of discordant efficacy information. In rejecting negative appraisals from others, one participant explained how this confirmed and reinforced her own belief in her

ability to lead. Another participant, Kayla, referred to the negativity of colleagues as a motivating influence, confirming her belief in her ability to be a leader. "It was these negative comments that fuelled in me a desire to succeed even more. I felt that I was capable of taking on this role of responsibility and that my aim now was to ensure that I exceeded people's expectations and proved to them that no matter what age or amount of experience, it was my desire for this role and my own personal qualities that would allow me to succeed and perform this role to the best of my ability." Other younger aspirants took negative comments as constructive criticism, as a means of providing a focus to improve. This finding confirms Bandura's assertion that people with high self-efficacy for a particular domain will persist in their efforts, despite difficulties. "People who credit their successes to personal capabilities and their failures to insufficient effort will undertake difficult tasks and persist in the face of failure. They do this because they see their outcomes as influenceable by how much effort they expend" (Bandura, 1997, p. 123).

There was a perception by the study participants that they exerted their personal agency. Some of the older aspirants reported a period of disillusionment. They attributed this to situational factors and moved schools. The aspirants made choices and planned and initiated their own career decisions. Smith (2011a) reported that women who position themselves as agents make decisions and choices that define their career path. The current study has extended Smith's (2011a) finding to include the influences of self-efficacy for leadership and personal agency in the career decisions of both men and women.

The study shows that aspirants are influenced by their self-efficacy, motivations and beliefs to become school leaders and that aspirations are built through mastery experiences, social persuasion and vicarious experiences.

5.2.5 Age-related differences

Whilst there were more similarities than differences between the two cohorts of teachers in sources of aspirations and self-efficacy for leadership, there were some differences between aspiring leaders according to which age groups they belonged. These differences were identified in each of the sources – personal characteristics, mastery experiences, vicarious experiences and social support.

Most of the teachers in the younger age group confidently spoke of their abilities as leaders, with tentative comments made by only a few participants. The younger aspirants believed they had the skills and attributes of leaders, showing confidence in their ability as leaders in comments such as "I believe in myself" (Michelle) and "I have a 100% certainty that I will do it, and that I will fulfil it, and I feel that with anything that I take on board" (May). Notably the three teachers in the study who indicated they would be interested in being principals were all in the 20 to 32 years age group. Whilst most of the 20 to 32 years old aspiring leaders were more likely to attribute their personal capabilities as a reason for their success, aspirants in the 33 to 45 year age group were less self-assured, considering their success a product of their efforts. Three of the teachers in the older group spoke of their self-doubts in taking on a leadership position, whilst the others expressed caution, taking on leadership positions only when they felt there was a likelihood of success. Many of the younger aspirants indicated a need for personal challenge as motivation, whereas many of the older participants indicated their motivation was other-centred, such as improvement of student outcomes. The differences in self-efficacy beliefs of these age groups have received considerable attention in the literature, with studies by Twenge and Campbell (2008, 2009) reporting increased positive self-views in people in the same age group as the younger teachers compared to people in the same age group as the older teachers in the current study. Although Twenge and Campbell's conclusions have been contested by Trzesniewski, Donnellan, and Robins (2008) who found no evidence that levels of narcissism and self-enhancement have increased in young people over the last 40 years, the findings of the current study are consistent with the studies by Twenge and Campbell (2008, 2009). Over time, personal challenges and further opportunities may become less available for aspirants in the younger age group, and they may be less inclined to remain in leadership positions, a possibility that presents a concern for sustainability in leadership.

Another reported difference between the two age groups was the source of mastery experiences. Many of the teachers in the younger age group had experiences of leadership positions in their personal and professional lives. These formative experiences encouraged these aspirants to pursue further leadership opportunities, consistent with other studies which found the motivating influence of mastery experiences as reported in Usher and Pajares' critical review (2008). The older aspirants' experiences of leadership were usually taken on because of an expectation by

others. The professional leadership experiences of the older aspirants were also adopted after persuasion by others. In the older age group, difficulties in leadership positions had the effect of making the aspirants wary of taking risks until they felt they were developmentally ready or when they were sure of success. To some extent the career paths of several of these older leaders are more consistent with the gradual advances in career described by the principals in McLay's (2008) study.

Another significant finding is that whilst the younger aspirants of both genders and the older male aspirants were able to identify professional models, the older female aspirants noted with frustration the lack of models. This latter finding is more consistent with other studies which have reported on the lack of female role models in educational leadership. McLay (2008) noted the lack of female models for other women in her study of female principals, and Sperandio and Kagoda (2010) reported that the under-representation of women in educational leadership meant there were few examples of female leaders to provide models for success for the deputy principals in their study. The fact that the younger aspirants in the current study nominated a number of professional role models of the same gender suggests that they have had greater exposure to female leaders in the professional context.

Teachers in the younger age group were also able to recount more examples of social persuasion in the personal and professional context. Some older aspirants could recount varying degrees of social persuasion, ranging from a comment from a colleague or leader to more specific support such as informal mentoring. Coleman (2001) reported a similar finding, with just over half of the female principals in her study having received mentoring. In the current study the lack of mentoring was reported by both men and women. Several were critical of the lack of formal or informal mentoring that had been available to them. For some of the older aspirants, this lack of support encouraged them to mentor other leaders, while others found mentoring difficult as they had not received mentoring themselves.

The numerous mastery experiences, models and social persuasion which have been available to the younger aspirants in the study may call into question the privileging of experience, that is, "time in the field" (Eacott & Hodges, 2014, p. 8), as the means by which teachers gain the professional status to become a school leader. Eacott and Hodges (2014) call for a revision in thinking on temporality in teaching in the light of the embedding of professional standards. Younger aspirants may be able to meet the

Australian national standards of highly accomplished or leading teacher, therefore having the performance ability to be school leaders early in their career.

5.4 Sources that discourage leadership aspirations

The following section explores the third research question and subquestions:

What are the sources that discourage teachers' leadership aspirations?

> Subquestion: In what ways have mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and personal characteristics discouraged teachers' leadership aspirations?

> Subquestion: Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?

The study investigated four sources that discouraged teachers from aspiring to leadership. These sources, mastery experiences, vicarious experience, social persuasion and personal characteristics, contributed to lower self-efficacy for leadership of the non-aspirants.

5.4.1 Mastery experiences

Unlike the aspirants in the current study, most non-aspirants in both age groups did not have early or numerous experiences of leadership. Whilst some of these teachers had experience in competitive sport, they noted their preference for individual sports rather than team sports. Their responses to these experiences corresponded to the findings of Extejt and Smith (2009), that sport does not necessarily enhance leader development. This lack of recurring events in leadership suggests that the non-aspirants did not have the formative experiences that may have developed self-efficacy for leadership and formed aspirations. This is consistent with the study by Amit, Popper, Gale, Mamane-Levy, and Lisak (2009) which found that soldiers who were perceived as leaders had more leadership experience in their youth than those who were perceived as non-leaders. The current study extends this finding of the comparison of early leadership experiences between non-leaders and leaders to the domain of educational leadership.

The non-aspirants in the study had difficulty recounting positive mastery experiences in leadership. Those who did recall leadership experiences, in both personal and professional contexts, considered these discouraging. Avolio and Hannah (2008) explained that transformative or trigger events create heightened self-awareness. For

some of the non-aspirants these events were transformative as they formed the basis for them to believe they were not capable of leadership. Difficulties in leadership positions have also had the effect of convincing these teachers they do not have the skills, attributes or volition to take on leadership. This is shown in Kirsty's comment: "There were times when I had to say stuff and I'd either come across too aggressive or I didn't say anything at all, and again it made me think, I don't want to be a leader." Some of the non-aspirants have taken on the belief that leadership is an attribute which cannot be learned. In maintaining this belief, the non-aspirants indicated an external locus of control with fixed ideas about their abilities. Conceptions of ability as an inherent aptitude, rather than an acquirable skill, erode a sense of efficacy, which creates further bias in cognitive processing of performance (Bandura, 1997). Yet studies have shown that, whilst there is a genetic influence on leadership emergence and occupancy, environmental influences have a much greater influence (Arvey, Zhang, Avolio, & Krueger, 2007). The current study highlights the importance of teachers accessing leadership programs which recognise that leadership can be learned.

For several of the non-aspirants, the stress involved in assuming leadership positions was overwhelming. The teachers who recalled difficult experiences of leadership selectively attended to and recalled past leadership positions as failures. These non-aspirants recalled these events as stressful, even leading to anxiety and depression. Mood-based recollections of these experiences reinforced the non-aspirants' perceived inefficacy for leadership. Bandura (1997) explains, "People who selectively attend to and recall their poorer performances are likely to underestimate their efficacy" (p. 85). Bandura suggested that self-appraisal of efficacy from failures, when much effort has been exerted, can have a crushing effect. "By conjuring up aversive thoughts about their ineptitude and stress reactions, people can rouse themselves to elevated levels of distress" (Bandura, 1997, p. 106). This interplay between physiological factors and experience through cognitive processing deterred these non-aspirants from further leadership experiences.

Non-aspirants recounting discouraging leadership experiences voiced their concern at receiving little guidance or support. This is in contrast to the finding that many of the younger aspirants related many examples of support. Gurr and Drysdale (2013) note "contextual or situation variables", such as "the attitudes, expectations and capabilities of senior leadership, are crucial to how these [middle leader] roles are constructed and

supported" (p. 66). The finding of the current study suggests that, even within a school, access to the support of senior leaders may be inequitable. One reason for this may be that social persuasion is more noticeable and beneficial to teachers who had developed high self-efficacy for leadership. This is consistent with the study by Usher (2009) who found that middle school students with high self-efficacy in Mathematics were particularly attentive to persuasive messages. The current study confirms the relationship between social persuasion and mastery experience in forming leadership aspirations.

As has been discussed, the low self-efficacy judgements held by many of these non-aspirants were evident in their perception of their personal agency. Reflecting on past successful leadership performances, non-aspirants attributed success to other factors, such as support from others. Kirsty's comment reflected this external locus of control: "When I did sport, everybody was really supportive, but J. [colleague] had done so much work before he left that it was pretty easy for me just to step in and do it." This confirms Bandura's (1997) argument that people who doubt their coping efficacy are more likely to distrust their success experiences, attributing success to external factors rather than to personal capabilities. Non-aspirants in the current study also considered that the career choice of being a leader was outside their control because of such factors as a lack of opportunity or failed attempts at achieving a role. This finding is consistent with the study of Smith (2011a), who found that women who had an external locus of control, considered that these constraints had determined their choices. The current study extends Smith's finding by acknowledging the relationship between self-efficacy for leadership, personal agency and the choice of teachers to become leaders.

Non-aspirants were discouraged from leadership by a lack of personal or professional experiences, or difficult leadership experiences, as well as a lack of role models or negative role models.

5.4.2 Vicarious experiences

Models who were not coping with leadership were the most significant form of modelling influencing some of the teachers in the survey and the non-aspirants interviewed. Some of these models were considered not to be coping because of external factors not under the leader's control, such as stress, lack of time or lack of support. This is consistent with research by Cranston (2007) and Fletcher-Campbell

(2003) which found that people are deterred from positional leadership by leaders who are stressed or overwhelmed.

Several of the teachers in the older age group attributed the performance of the models who appeared not to cope with leadership to a lack of awareness of their inability to lead. The possibility of gaining leadership skills or resilience through professional development or self-reflection, as advocated by Branson (2007) and Steward (2014), was not considered, as leadership attributes were considered fixed rather than learned. This is confirmed by the responses of frustration towards the models who were not coping, whom non-aspirants considered to be unaware that they did not have the attributes or skills to be leaders.

Regardless of the reasons given for the poor performance of these models, observing similar others fail discouraged those with low self-efficacy from taking on leadership. This finding is consistent with Bandura's (1997) assertion that self-efficacy appraisals can be self-limiting when based on similarities to the personal characteristics of models, such as gender and age, rather than comparative performance experiences. There was evidence of this in the interviews in the current study, with at least two female teachers recounting the stressful experience in leadership of another female teacher of similar age. Both these teachers identified with her situation to the point of saying, "I never ever want to do that" (Anne).

No comment was made by these teachers about coping or competent models, nor the models found by Young and McLeod (2001) in their study of female administrators. Interestingly, the non-aspirants did not compare themselves negatively to the aspiring leaders. This suggested a heightened awareness of models who were not coping, which supported these teachers' reasons for not aspiring to leadership.

Models who were not coping confirmed for these teachers that they had no wish to aspire to leadership. Non-aspirants in the study also were not encouraged to become leaders.

5.4.3 Social persuasion

Unlike many of the younger teachers who aspired to leadership, teachers who did not aspire to leadership were not encouraged to take on a leadership position. The survey responses and the non-aspirants in the interviews noted this lack of encouragement,

support and mentoring as a deterrent to aspiring to leadership. Several female teachers who did not aspire to leadership mentioned that this lack of encouragement was a reason they would not take on a leadership position, as others did not see them as leaders. In their study, McKenzie et al. (2011) reported similar findings for teachers of both genders. The influence of the lack of support and mentoring in discouraging teachers from becoming leaders has been reported in a number of studies, particularly in relation to women. Moorosi (2010) found that many female principals revealed a lack of institutional and professional support. Sperandio and Kagoda (2010) and McLay (2008) also found the lack of support a hindrance to women's leadership aspirations. The current study found that the lack of support from both senior leaders and colleagues impacted negatively on leadership aspirations.

Non-aspirants who had taken on acting middle leader roles were also discouraged from further leadership because of lack of support, not only from other middle leaders and senior leaders, but from the teachers they were leading. Turner (2006) emphasised the importance of informal learning such as mentoring and professional feedback for the support of inexperienced middle leaders. Brooks (2013) reported that the position of middle leader has become increasingly complex with higher expectations, demands and accountability, yet the scope and expectations of these positions is not clearly defined. Non-aspirants in the current study reported that a lack of mentoring or clear role descriptions left these teachers feeling vulnerable in acting positions. The findings of the study highlight the discouraging effect the lack of support and clear guidelines can have on teachers in acting middle leader positions.

Negative evaluations of leaders by colleagues also deterred non-aspirants in the study from wanting leadership positions. The criticisms and negative perceptions of leaders referred to in both the survey and the interviews have discouraged teachers from leadership, as several were adamant that they do not want to be subject to this type of comment. Consistent with this finding, Sperandio and Kagoda's (2010) study found a lack of institutional and social support discouraged female teachers from applying for promotional positions. Rhodes and Brundrett (2009) assert the importance of a culture of mutual support as an important facet in developing leadership. The current study explicitly describes the negative impact that other teachers can have on the formation of leadership aspirations through lack of support and a culture of negativity towards leadership.

Whilst a lack of support deterred the formation of leadership aspirations, many of the non-aspirants in the study recounted personal characteristics such as beliefs in teaching and leading, and self-beliefs, as sources that discouraged leadership aspirations.

5.4.4 Personal characteristics

A number of personal characteristics that discouraged the formation of leadership aspirations became evident through the interviews. These were beliefs about teaching and leadership, and the motivational processes and cognitive processes that, in these cases, encouraged appraisals of perceived low self-efficacy for leadership.

Beliefs about teaching and leading

The values and beliefs about teaching and leading that the non-aspirants held discouraged leadership aspirations. Being a teacher and being a school leader were seen as competing demands for time and values. Several studies reporting on the reasons teachers would not aspire to leadership have presented similar findings, for example, Lacey (2004) and Smith (2011b). The teachers in the current study were inclined to believe teaching and leading had conflicting purposes of working in a school. The following comment made by Brendan was repeatedly echoed by other non-aspirants: "I want to do my job, my main job is teaching and I want to do that the best I can." Many of the non-aspirants expressed a passion for teaching and a belief that their skills lay in being teachers, not leaders. This is consistent with the findings of Vignoles, Regaloia, Manzi, Golledge, and Scabini (2006) that people construct their identities to cultivate or maintain a sense of belonging, bolster their self-esteem and gain coherence in their self-views. One non-aspirant in the current study provided a further glimpse into her understanding of her role as teacher. She discussed the role of all leaders to support teachers in the classroom, and firmly centred her understanding of the teacher as leader in her decision not to aspire to school leadership. This finding, which supports the importance of the teacher leader in contrast to the positional leadership view taken by the study, is consistent with the concept of leadership incorporated in the Australian national standards for lead teachers, with its emphasis on leaders' professional knowledge and practice supporting teaching and learning (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, n.d.).

The non-aspirants were able to identify the characteristics of a good leader: passion, honesty, integrity, compassion, ability to challenge others and handle conflict, being proactive, reasonable in expectations and present to others; they thus identified similar qualities as the aspirants. The non-aspirants differed from the aspirants in that they saw leaders with these qualities as aspirational to others, not to themselves. Bandura and Locke (2003) explain that whilst individuals may have the skills necessary for a task, these skills can be easily overruled by self-doubts. The reason the non-aspirants may not see leaders with these qualities as aspirational may be in their self-appraisal of their self-efficacy for leadership.

Beliefs about self: Self-efficacy and motivation

The study found that efficacy beliefs have influenced the decisions of some of these teachers not to aspire to leadership. Many of the older non-aspirants considered that they do not have the attributes to be a leader, whilst the younger ones revealed that they believe that they have not yet developed these attributes. Non-aspirants identified a lack of knowledge of leadership skills in interacting with colleagues, such as difficulty dealing with conflict, as a reason for not wanting leadership. Non-aspirants were concerned at the emotional impact of leadership, explaining that they were unable to gain distance, and they feared making mistakes and disappointing others. Some of the non-aspirants construed certain leadership situations as risky; for example, Mia explained why she would not take on a leadership position, having considered future scenarios: "I don't want to be knocked down by people, I don't want to be disliked by people." This finding is similar to Smith's (2011b) study which reported that the fear of isolation is a reason female teachers did not want to become principals. The current study found that teachers perceive being in a school leadership role can be isolating, not just the position of principal. Kirsty also used forethought, visualising future scenarios as a leader where she would be uncomfortable. Both these teachers consider they do not have the attributes to be leaders. The current study found that, for some, their leadership inefficacy was formed because of a lack of social persuasion, rather than because of discouraging comments. For others, however, discouraging comments even from early in their lives has framed their identity of themselves and impacted on their self-efficacy and motivation to be leaders. This low self-efficacy for leadership discouraged these teachers from taking on leadership, confirming Bandura and Locke's (2003) assertion

that self-efficacy beliefs contribute considerably to motivation and performance. This is consistent with the study by Rhodes (2012) who noted, "Persistent low self-efficacy may lead to avoidance or disengagement from a leadership journey and in some cases unreasonably derail those who could lead well but whose talent may be lost" (p. 444).

The low self-efficacy judgements held by some of these non-aspirants were evident in their perception of their personal agency. The study by Popper, Amit, Gal, Mishkal-Sinai, and Lisak (2004) found that non-leaders had lower self-efficacy and greater external locus of control. This perspective was readily supported by the data of the study. Several of these non-aspirants identified factors external to them limiting their career progression, such as a lack of support by senior leaders identified by Tara. Non-aspirants, particularly two teachers in the 33 to 45 years age range, attributed success to situational factors and failures to deficiencies in ability. This is consistent with Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory which highlights the role of efficacy judgements in personal agency.

5.4.5 Age-related differences

No significant age-related differences in the sources that discouraged leadership aspirations were found. A possible reason for this was the smaller size of the participants, particularly in the younger age group. This factor in itself may support the findings from Galinsky, Aumann and Bond's (2011) longitudinal study which reported that the desire to have jobs with more responsibility among young workers has increased since 1997.

The findings of the study focused on four sources that encourage or discourage leadership aspirations: mastery experiences, role models, social persuasion and personal characteristics. Analysis of these sources in the study has led to a model of leader formation, discussed in the next section.

5.5 Model of leader formation

Models of leader formation were critiqued in the literature review. From this critique, three aspects were seen to be essential to studies on the formation of a school leader: that formation occurs in both the personal and professional context, and is an on-going, lifelong process; that the development of self is essential in understanding the formation of a school leader; and that the influences of both people and experiences in the

personal and professional context need to be considered in formation of the school leader.

In the light of these aspects, and the findings of the study, a model of the formation of a leader is presented in Figure 5.1.
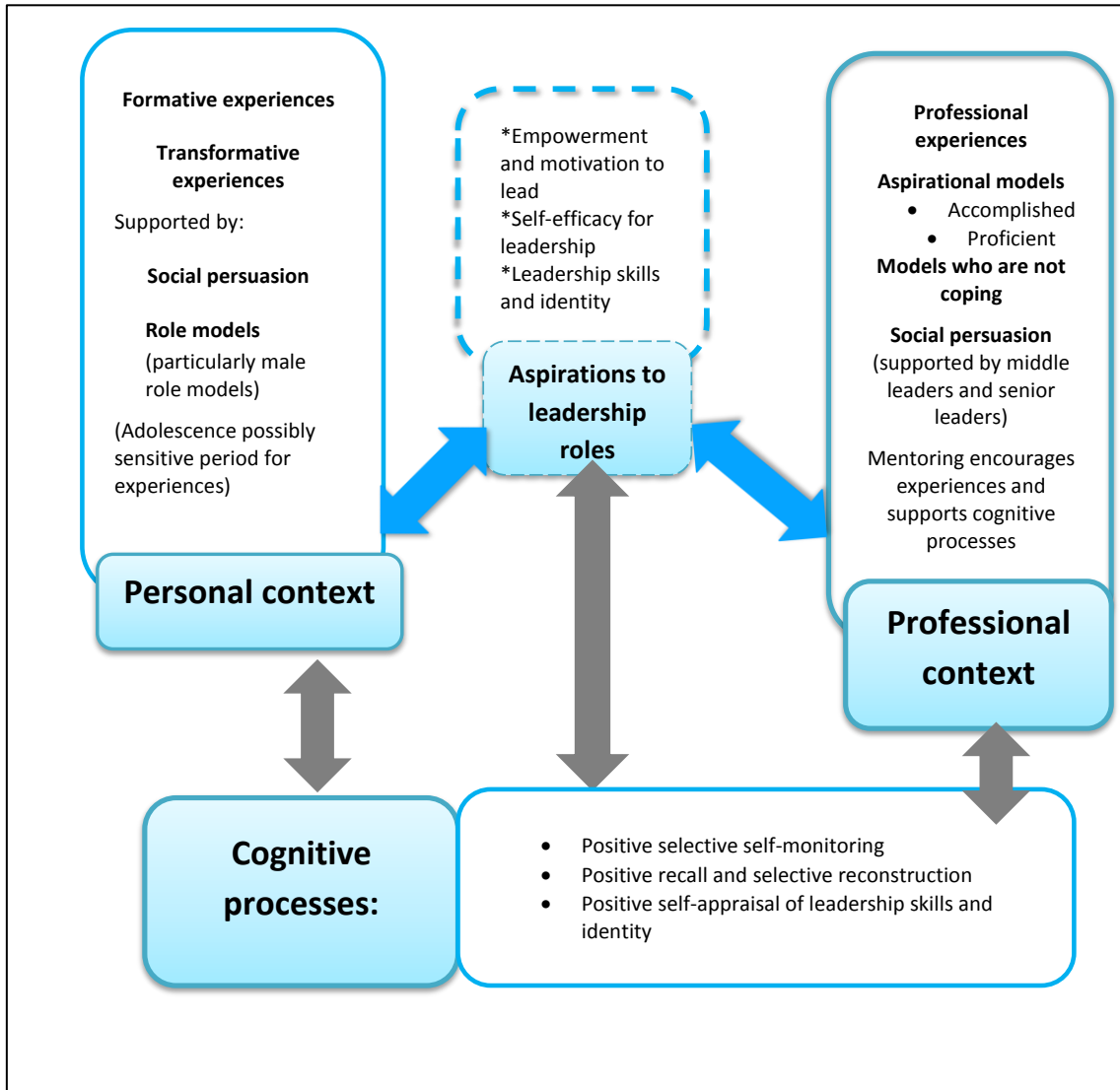
Figure 5.1 Model of leader formation

This model of leader formation suggests the on-going development of the leader by influences which include experiences, social persuasion and vicarious experience. The model reflects the findings of the study. In the personal context, aspiring leaders have taken on informal experiences of leadership, particularly within families, and formal experiences, such as being captains of sporting teams or having positions of responsibility in schools. Some of the aspirants had formative experiences in their early

lives, whilst others had transformative experiences, many during adolescence. The aspiring leader was encouraged, and continues to be encouraged, by social persuasion and role models. These aspiring leaders found role models in both the personal and the professional context, contributing to their self-efficacy for leadership. Many of these models in the personal context were male role models, particularly fathers and brothers. The experiences, role models and social persuasion were empowering and motivating, raising self-efficacy for leadership and awareness of what it means to be a leader, and leading to aspirants developing leadership skills and identity. Most of the aspiring leaders entered the profession with these attributes.

In the professional context, aspirants had early professional mastery experiences such as acting leadership roles, leading initiatives in the school such as peer support, and taking on other informal and formal leadership positions. Aspirants sought and received considerable personal and professional persuasion, particularly from middle and senior leaders. Social persuasion, in the form of mentors and sponsors, encouraged the developing leader to achieve their potential, convinced them of their leadership ability, and supported the cognitive processing of the experiences. Aspirants were influenced by aspirational models or models who were not coping in the professional context. Aspirational role models motivated the developing leader to emulate the attributes and success at leadership of their models, guided career pathways and provided a benchmark or anchor values against which to measure developing leadership skills. Models who were not coping encouraged aspirations or create a sense of caution in the choice of leadership experiences. The agentic bonds between each of these influences (experiences, social persuasion and role models) heightened their impact on the development of the leader.

Each of these influences is assessed through cognitive processing. Processes such as selective self-monitoring and reconstruction of enactive experiences, self-reflection and self-appraisal judgements of their efficacy for leadership, forethought and social comparison rationalise and dismiss negativity and establish the developing leader's perception of self as leader. Cognitive processes may also lead to the development of beliefs about teaching and leading that create a sense of purpose. The cognitive processes also develop, confirm and strengthen self-efficacy for leadership. These beliefs may then focus and fuel goals, building a sense of personal agency that leads to

further experiences and a heightened awareness and receptivity to social persuasion and vicarious experience.

The empowerment and motivation to lead, self-efficacy for leadership and leadership skills and identity developed by these experiences, role models and social persuasion encourage the teacher to aspire to leadership roles.

The model in Figure 5.1 presents the formation of the aspiring leader. This applied model has been informed by the study and differs in several aspects from the conceptual framework of this study, presented in Figure 2. The conceptual framework highlights the influences of experiences and people in both the personal and professional context in both the formation of aspirations, and on the decision not to become a leader. The applied model presented here provides the detail of the particular types of experiences in both a personal and professional context that support leadership aspirations, as well as the particular types of roles models and social persuasion that support aspirations to leadership. Additionally the applied model informed by the study highlights how interaction of both experiences and people can empower and motivate teachers to aspire to leadership. The applied model distinguishes between the personal and professional contexts, rather the division between people and experiences evident in the conceptual model, because the study revealed the interactions of experiences and people occurred distinctly within either the personal or the professional context. In relation to mediating processes, while the conceptual framework acknowledged mediating role of cognitive processes in building leadership aspirations, the applied model details the types of cognitive processes that support aspirations. Finally, the applied model extends the factors that contribute to aspirations beyond self-efficacy to include empowerment and motivation as well as the development of leadership skills and emerging leadership identity. Importantly, both the conceptual framework presented in Figure 2.7 and the applied model in Figure 5.1. recognise the on-going development of the leader through these influences and processes.

5.6 Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings of the study in light of the three research questions and the theoretical underpinning of Bandura's social cognitive theory. The findings identify teachers' leadership aspirations, and the sources that form or discourage these aspirations and a range of understandings from the literature have been

confirmed and extended. Experiences, models and social persuasion have been found to have an influence on the formation of aspirations. The findings supported the development of a model of leader formation.

Conclusions and recommendations for planning and practice will form the basis for the following chapter.

Chapter Six – Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this research was to identify teachers' leadership aspirations and to examine the sources that form or discourage teachers under the age of 46 to aspire to school leadership. The following question served to guide the study: How do teachers form leadership aspirations? This question was explored through the following research questions:

1.   What are teachers' leadership aspirations?

2.   What are the sources of teachers' leadership aspirations?

> Subquestion: In what ways have mastery experiences, vicarious experiences,social persuasion and personal characteristics formed teachers' leadership aspirations?

> Subquestion: Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?

3.   What are the sources that discourage teachers from aspiring to leadership?

> Subquestion: In what ways have mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and personal characteristics discouraged teachers' leadership aspirations?

> Subquestion: Are there age-related differences in the sources of aspirations?

This chapter provides a brief summary of the findings and discusses the major conclusions and recommendations for practice and further research.

6.1 Summary of findings

The analysis of the data from the study and the discussion has led to an understanding of teachers' leadership aspirations, the sources that form these aspirations and the sources that discourage these aspirations. The study contributes to understandings of the sources of leadership aspirations, which has received little attention in the educational literature. These findings will be summarised in the following sections of this chapter.

6.1.1 Leadership aspirations

The study found a significant and important difference in teachers' aspirations to take on school principal and middle leadership positions. Whilst only a few teachers in the

study indicated an interest in being a school principal, 65% of teachers showed significant interest (70% or more) in becoming a middle leader. This interest in being a middle leader was even higher for the younger teachers, aged 20 to 32 years, compared to the 33 to 45 years age group. The reasons reported for aspiring to a middle leadership position were similar to the reasons for aspiring to the position of principal found in other studies.

6.1.2 Sources that form aspirations

The study found that teachers who aspired to leadership in both age groups had high self-efficacy for leadership and exerted personal agency. The younger age group appeared to have greater confidence in their ability to lead, not expressing the self-doubts of the older generation of teachers. Aspirants were motivated by personal challenge, with many of the teachers in the older age group indicating a strong sense of purpose.

Aspirants had numerous mastery experiences in their personal and professional contexts, and in the encouragement that they have received. These experiences were both informal, such as the experiences within families, and formal, such as being captains of sporting teams or having positions of responsibility in schools. Some of the aspirants had formative experiences, whilst others had transformative experiences, many during adolescence. These experiences were empowering and motivating, raising self-efficacy for leadership and awareness of what it means to be a leader, and leading to aspirants developing leadership skills and identity.

A further finding of the study was the significance of both formative and transformative events during adolescence in developing self-efficacy for leadership. The study suggests that adolescence may be a sensitive period for leadership development, a time when skills are more easily and rapidly developed. This further highlights the importance of considering a longitudinal perspective on leader development.

Another conclusion of the study is the importance of social persuasion during a transformative event. The event itself triggers a need for support. The effectiveness of this social persuasion is heightened, enhancing self-efficacy, motivating the recipient and encouraging the development of a personal ethos. For the participants in the study, this occurred as senior students, which appears to be a crucial stage of development.

This finding suggests an interaction between transformational events and social persuasion that influence the formation of self-efficacy for leadership.

These aspiring leaders found role models in both the personal and the professional context, contributing to their self-efficacy for leadership. Many of these models in the personal context were male role models, particularly fathers and brothers. Aspirants were influenced by aspirational models or models who were not coping in the professional context. A noteworthy finding of the study is that the younger aspirants were able to identify a proficient role model with similar attributes of gender and age as themselves. This possibly reflects the growing number of young teachers who are taking on school leadership. The younger aspiring leaders looked to the model for guidance on leadership behaviour and attributes and in defining a career pathway. This was an unanticipated finding of the study. Unlike the groups of teachers who did not aspire to leadership, negative role models, particularly those who were not coping, encouraged the aspirants in the study to take on a leadership position.

Aspirants sought and received considerable personal and professional persuasion, particularly from middle and senior leaders. The study concludes that the influence of competent modelling and informal mentoring is significant, particularly the relationships within the school between the aspirant and senior and middle school leaders. Leaders who are negative about their roles, or dismissive of early career teachers who aspire to leadership, can deter potential leaders from aspiring to school leadership. Senior leaders who offered aspiring leaders the opportunity of becoming leaders early in their career, guiding them in this experience, allowed the aspirant to develop confidence as a leader and a leadership identity.

Further, the study found the importance of cognitive processes in the development of leadership aspirations. Processes such as selective self-monitoring and reconstruction of enactive experiences, self-reflection and self-appraisal judgements of their efficacy for leadership, forethought and social comparison rationalise and dismiss negativity and establish the developing leader's perception of self as leader. Cognitive processes may also lead to the development of beliefs about teaching and leading that create a sense of purpose. The cognitive processes also develop, confirm and strengthen self-efficacy for leadership. These beliefs may then focus and fuel goals, building a sense of personal agency that leads to further experiences and a heightened awareness and receptivity to social persuasion and vicarious experience. The reflection of the participants on their

numerous early leadership experiences in their personal and professional lives supported their development of high self-efficacy for leadership and their awareness of their identities as leaders. This finding suggests that explicit attention to reflection and other cognitive processes may help support leadership aspirations.

There were more similarities than differences in the sources that formed their leadership aspirations in the two age groups of aspiring teachers in the study; however, some generational differences were evident in these sources. Many of the teachers in the younger age group had experiences of leadership in formal positions in their personal and professional lives, whilst the older aspirants recalled informal leadership experiences. Another generational difference was that the younger teachers have had considerably more exposure to competent and coping models, as they have been given more informal and formal mentoring and were able to identify role models in the professional context. The older female participants, those between 33 to 45 years, noted with frustration the lack of models and were critical of the lack of formal or informal mentoring that had been available to them.

6.1.3 Sources that discourage aspirations

The study found that, unlike the groups of teachers who aspire to leadership, the values and beliefs about teaching and leading held by teachers who did not want leadership had discouraged aspirations to leadership. Being a teacher and being a school leader were seen as making competing demands on time and values. Efficacy beliefs have also influenced the decisions of some of these teachers not to aspire to leadership. Many of the older non-aspirants considered that they do not have the attributes to be a leader, whilst the younger ones revealed that they believe that they have not yet developed these attributes. The low self-efficacy judgements held by some of these non-aspirants were evident in their perception of their personal agency. Non-aspirants, particularly two of the older teachers, attributed success to situational factors and failures to deficiencies in ability. Some of the non-aspirants also indicated an external locus of control, and a fixed view of leadership, with little consideration of its development. This is particularly true of the older age group, who tended to have more fixed ideas about their abilities.

Difficulties in leadership positions have also had the effect of convincing these teachers they do not have the skills, attributes or volition to take on leadership. Teachers

recounting discouraging leadership experiences, some in acting positions, voiced their concern at receiving little guidance or support. This is in contrast to many of the younger aspirants who related many examples of support.

The important relationship between social persuasion and transformative events in building self-efficacy was evident in the study, with non-aspirants indicating the difficult experiences in leadership were compounded by the lack of support, leading them to believe they were not capable of leadership. This need suggests that there is an important relationship between social persuasion and experience in developing self-efficacy for leadership.

A further finding is that teachers who recalled difficult experiences of leadership selectively attended to and recalled past leadership positions with mood-based recollections, remembering their time in leadership as stressful, even leading to poor health. The interplay between mood-based recollection of experiences contributed to their low self-efficacy for leadership.

Another important finding of the study is the significance of school culture as a mediating factor of aspirations to positions of middle leadership. Some participants reported the interactions of colleagues and school leaders as a deterrent to taking on a school leadership position. Non-aspirants had heightened awareness of leaders who were not coping. Lack of encouragement from senior leaders and lack of opportunity were reported deterrents in all three schools studied. A culture of denigrating the efforts of leaders can be damaging for all concerned. Teachers who could be nurtured into leadership may choose not to be leaders to avoid facing the criticisms of their colleagues. Aspiring teachers need substantial support and confidence to apply for leadership positions in such a culture. School culture was a significant reason for not aspiring to school leadership by all age groups of teachers.

The study concludes that the main differences lie between teachers who do not aspire to leadership and those who do, rather than generational differences. The study found that mastery experiences, role models and social persuasion, combined with the beliefs and personal characteristics of the teachers, and their cognitive processing of these sources, contributed to the formation or discouragement of leadership aspirations.

A model of leader formation has been proposed which incorporates the findings of the study.

6.2 Limitations

There are a number of limitations that need to be considered from the perspective of these findings.

The research is situated in three comprehensive, coeducational Catholic secondary schools in the one diocese, and concerns the context and motivations of teachers to take on school leadership. Therefore there are diverse types of schools and teachers that have not been examined, where aspirations and sources may be different. These three schools were not a representative sample, and the same data collection methods would need to be undertaken with many more schools to confirm the findings.

The researcher purposefully used qualitative methods as the aim of this case study is to "give voice" to the teachers, representing their perspectives on the influences in their lives, and therefore offering rich descriptions of events, contexts and others' influences (Hughes & Hitchcock, 1995). However, further research would benefit from quantitative assessments of self-efficacy for leadership in order to further enhance understanding of the link between self-efficacy and leadership aspirations.

Another limitation of this research was the avoidance of a critical stance. The study did not set out to judge the aspirants' ability to be leaders but rather to richly describe the sources that encouraged them to believe that they had the ability to be leaders. A further limitation was the decision not to consider a longitudinal study. As a consequence, changes in participants' aspirations over time were not recorded. Despite these limitations, the exploratory nature of the study has contributed findings that are a useful springboard for future research.

6.3 Recommendations

The findings of the study have implications for both practice and research.

6.3.1 Recommendations for practice

The findings of this research have implications for the development of aspiring leaders, and support of those presently in leadership positions. An approach to developing leaders which is based on one source, such as experiential learning, may not adequately meet the needs of the aspiring leader. Gurr and Drysdale (2012) suggest that, "It may be time for Australia to move away from an apprenticeship model of leadership

preparation and development, to one that combines experience, mentoring, coaching, collegial networks and formal learning for all stages of leadership (formation, accession, incumbency and divestiture as described by Gronn (1999))" (p. 414).

On the basis of the findings in the study, the following seven key recommendations are made to enhance the development of aspiring school leaders.

1. Identification of aspirants to school leadership

Early identification and nurturing of these teachers, including outlining of career pathways, will promote the development of the aspirants. It is critical that organisations and systems identify the teachers of all ages who aspire to take on positions of middle leadership. Such identification may lead to a revision of the current model of appointment which values experience over performance. Sponsorship by senior leaders of these aspirants, identifying potential and offering them opportunities, may be effective if all aspirants are given equal access to sponsors. Senior leaders need leadership development in how to support and develop middle leaders.

2. Recognition of the importance of learning through professional experiences

Early leadership opportunities with support and nurturing by senior leaders will increase the confidence of aspirants and help them develop their identities as leaders. Experiences such as looking after grade sport, being part of or running senior retreats, monitoring, programming and creating assessments for a year group or middle school, running peer support and being considered to have expertise in a particular area, experiences in acting positions, supporting a leader, or leading initiatives in school were recounted as significant informal leadership opportunities by the aspirants. Such professional experiences, coupled with professional support, build self-efficacy for leadership and develop a leadership identity. Aspirants in acting positions need to be supported with appropriate guidelines and role descriptions. The recently developed Professional Standards for Lead Teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, n.d.) may be a means of addressing this need.

3. Development and support peer mentoring programmes

Schools and systems need to recognise that a teacher learns to be a leader through experiential learning. Further recognition and support needs to be given to the aspiring leader in the schools. Learning role socialisation through others is a particularly

effective form of learning. A mentorship model in schools that nurtures aspirants to school leadership positions and supports leaders early in their leadership career may effectively develop leadership identity and self-efficacy. Mentoring may involve guidance of career pathways, psychosocial support, support in cognitive processing of experiences, the affirmation of the aspirants' ability to lead, constructive and positive feedback and offering opportunities.

4. Opportunities for professional development

Schools and systems need to offer access to all aspirants to professional development which is relevant to the individual's developmental needs as a leader. This should involve recognition of previous experiences, models and mentors in both the personal and professional environment. Such professional development should take into account self-reflection on the aspirant's self-efficacy for leadership, personal agency, values and purpose, relational and ethical leadership, leading of a Catholic school as a community of faith and the positive impact of mentoring and models of leadership.

5. Create a school culture of collaboration and support for leaders

It is critical for school leaders and systems to promote and foster a supportive culture of risk taking and recognise that leadership is developed over time. This conclusion implies that both leaders and staff need to cultivate an environment that allows for risk taking and learning in leadership positions. In fostering a supportive climate of learning in leadership, schools need to be aware of negativity towards leaders, and work towards a collaborative environment where all teachers feel empowered and are prepared to support those in leadership.

6. Support leaders presently not coping

Schools need to be aware of leaders who are not coping, and offer them support and mentoring which these leaders may need. This support may be necessary not only for the leader, but because of the impact a model who is not coping may have on the school culture.

7. Offer numerous leadership experiences to students

Students in secondary schools who are offered leadership opportunities develop awareness of what a leader does, as well as leadership skills and self-efficacy for leadership. Schools should be encouraged to expand opportunities for student

leadership, particularly in the sensitive period of adolescence, between the ages of 16 to 18, identified in the study.

6.3.2 Recommendations for further research

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations for further research are made to enhance further study in aspirations to leadership.

1. It is recommended to replicate the study in other schools and in other professional groups. The finding of a high proportion of female teachers interested in being middle leaders offers opportunities for further research into female aspirations to middle leadership in other schools and systems. Many other professions are at risk of losing a wealth of expertise of leadership, and early identification and nurturing of aspirants may be necessary. Value may be gained in considering the transferability of the study to other professions.

2. Further research into the relative impact of the sources of self-efficacy for leadership in education may support an understanding of how leaders are formed. Research on the interactions between these sources may produce further insights into sources of self-efficacy or confirm the study's finding on the enhanced effect of social persuasion during transformative experiences.

3. Another area of future research is to further investigate the sources that discourage leadership aspirations, particularly in the professional context, in order to overcome non-aspirants' hesitation to consider becoming leaders.

This research has identified several important sources of leadership aspirations and raises challenges for educational systems to respond effectively to develop leaders. This research confirms the results of similar research in this area and identifies additional findings for consideration on this topic.

6.4 Summary of the study

The purpose of the study was to identify teachers' leadership aspirations and to examine the sources that form or discourage teachers to aspire to school leadership, in order to assist those responsible for the supply of school leaders to identify, nurture and support these future leaders. In particular, this research explored the leadership aspirations and

their sources of aspirations of teachers in three secondary schools in the Diocese of Wollongong from the perspectives of these teachers.

The study adds value to the discussion on the identification and nurturing of teachers who aspire to leadership. The findings have provided insights into the leadership aspirations of teachers aged between 20 and 45 years and the sources of these aspirations. It has revealed the importance of experiences, vicarious experience and social persuasion in the development of aspiring school leaders. The study has also led to a greater understanding of the sources that discourage teachers from aspiring to school leadership positions. The study has also presented a model of leader formation. Furthermore, the study has provided suggestions about the types of professional development opportunities that teachers need in order to aspire to leadership.

While there needs to be significantly more research on how teachers develop aspirations to take on a middle leadership position and the sources of leadership aspirations using larger samples of teachers in a variety of schools and systems, the study has contributed to an understanding of the sources of aspirations. The contributions that this study has made may foster and support potential leaders who might otherwise be discouraged from becoming leaders and enhance the identification and nurturing of aspiring leaders in schools.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Survey questions

Part A: Background

    i.   What gender are you?   ☐ Male   ☐ Female

    ii.   How many years have you been teaching?   ☐ 1 to 5 years

                                                        ☐ 6 to 10 years

                                                        ☐ 11 to 15 years

                                                        ☐ 16 – 20 years

                                                        ☐ Over 20 years

   iii.   What age group are you?   ☐ 20 – 32

                                                        ☐ 33 to 45

                                                        ☐ Over 46

   iv.   Are you currently in a position of leadership (Middle or senior management) in a school?

                                        ☐ No   ☐ Yes

    v.   Have you previously taken on a position of responsibility in a school?

                                        ☐ No   ☐ Yes

Part B: Leadership aspirations

1. To what extent would you rate your leadership aspirations

   a) To the role of Principal?

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
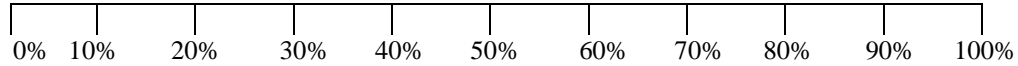
   b) To a role in middle management?

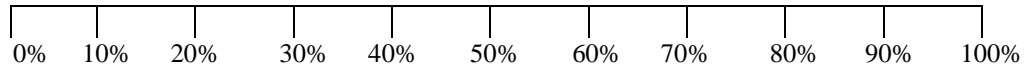 | | | | | | | | | | |
   |---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
   | 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

2. To what extent do you consider that personal experiences influence people wanting to become school leaders? (In this context personal experiences are considered to be ones that occur during someone's lifetime, beyond the professional teaching experiences).

   Significant influence ☐   Some influence ☐   Little influence ☐

   What type of personal experiences may contribute to people wanting to be school leaders?

   What type of personal experiences may deter people from wanting to become school leaders?

3. To what extent do you consider that experiences as a teacher may influence people wanting to become school leaders?

   Significant influence ☐   Some influence ☐   Little influence ☐

   What type of professional experiences may contribute to people wanting to be school leaders?

   What type of professional experiences may deter people from wanting to become school leaders?

4. To what extent do you consider that other people may influence teachers wanting to become school leaders?

   Significant influence ☐   Some influence ☐   Little influence ☐

   In what ways may role models contribute to teachers wanting to be school leaders?

   In what ways may other people support teachers wanting to be school leaders?

5. Do you wish to make any further comments about the formation of leadership aspirations?

Appendix 2 Interview questions for aspirants

1. Can you tell me about your leadership aspirations: when you would like to take on a middle position of leadership, are you presently in a leadership position, what do you think of this, what sort of middle leadership positions are you interested in?

2. Why do you want to become a school leader?

3. What personal characteristics do you think/ or have you been told that you have which you would bring to school leadership?

4. What personal experiences during your life contributed to your decision to aspire to school leadership? Some examples may be leadership at school, uni or sport or other activities, a significant event in your life, experiences within your family or friends. How did they affect your desire to become a leader?

5. What professional experiences during your career contributed to your decision to aspire to school leadership? (e.g. professional development courses on leadership, experience in leadership positions). How did they affect your desire to become a leader?

6. Describe the leadership style of a leader who you admire.

7. Have role models (Family/ teachers/ peers/ colleagues, others) had an influence on your decision to aspire to school leadership? How?

8. Have people encouraged you to pursue school leadership? (Family/ teachers/ peers/ colleagues, others)? How? Can you give an example?

9. How have these experiences and/or people contributed to your confidence in your ability to take on a leadership role in schools?

10. What types of experiences or interactions with people have discouraged you in taking on leadership roles? Has this deterred you? Why or why not?

11. What experiences, support or role models would you like to have had?

12. What do you think is important in leadership? What type of leader do you want to be?

13. Tell me one memorable story related to a person or experience that would help me understand why you want to be a leader.

Appendix 3 Guided questions for the written reflection

Questions to guide the participant in the writing of the written reflection:

- Describe one or more significant experiences that you have encouraged you to aspire to leadership.

Some possible suggestions that you could include in this reflection are:

  - What type of experience and in what context did it occur: personal, school leadership, university experience, professional course, working as a leader or supporting a leader?
  - Why did you engage in this experience?
  - What have you learnt from the experience?
  - How have you formed as a leader from this experience?
  - What have you have learnt about leadership from this experience?
  - How has this experience contributed to your confidence in your ability to take on a leadership role in schools?

- Describe the influence of a person in encouraging you to aspire to leadership.

Some possible suggestions that you could include in this reflection are:

  - What context do you know this person: personal, professional, other
  - Would you describe this person as significant in developing your leadership aspirations?
  - How would you describe their leadership style?
  - How have they encouraged you to take on leadership?
  - How has this person contributed to your confidence in your ability to take on a leadership role in schools?
  - How have you formed as a leader from this relationship?
  - What have you learnt about leadership from knowing this person?

Appendix 4 Interview questions for non-aspirants

1. Can you tell me about your experiences of leadership: have you ever taken on a position of leadership, or are you presently in a leadership position, what do you think of this?

2. What is it about school leadership that doesn't appeal to you?

3. What do you think has discouraged you from taking a leadership position?

   a. Have you had professional experiences during your career that contributed to your decision to not pursue to school leadership? (egg. experience in leadership positions).

   b. Have you had personal experiences during your life that contributed to your decision to not pursue school leadership? Some examples may be leadership at school, uni or sport or other activities, a significant event in your life, experiences within your family or friends.

   c. Have people (Family/ teachers/ peers/ colleagues/ school leaders, others) had an influence on your decision to not pursue school leadership? How? Can you give an example?

   d. Do you have any personal characteristics that you think/ or have you been told that you have which you consider would discourage you from school leadership?

4. How have these experiences and/or people affected your confidence in your ability to take on a leadership role in schools?

5. What do you think is important in leadership? What type of leader do you want to work for? What do you consider is a leadership style you admire?

6. Tell me one memorable story related to a person or experience that would help me understand why you don't want to be a leader.

Appendix 5 Letter to the principals

TITLE OF PROJECT: <u>VOICES OF THE FUTURE</u>

PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: Rd. Elizabeth Labone

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Mgrs. Therese Barrington

PROGRAMME IN WHICH ENROLLED: Doctor of Education

Dear Principal,

I am writing to seek approval to recruit teachers from your school for a research project that explores the influences on leadership aspirations. This research will involve teachers in a number of Catholic secondary schools in the south western area of Sydney and I wish to invite teachers in your school to participate in this research. The data I will be collecting will be used in my thesis for a Doctor of Education. The study is endeavouring to gain a better understanding of the formation of leadership aspirations of teachers.

In taking part in this research, your staff can expect to gain clarification of the influences of both people and experiences in developing teachers as leaders. They will also be contributing to the body of literature and knowledge about the formative influences on leaders which will assist school leaders and planners to provide more targeted support in this area.

The research will consist of the following processes:

Survey. A visit to your staff to speak about the research and invite staff to complete the survey. It is anticipated that the survey will take no more than 20 minutes to complete and the submission of the completed survey will be voluntary.

Interviews. It is my intention to interview at least two teachers from your school who are under the age of 33 and have some leadership aspirations. These teachers will self to nominate to be participants at the time of the survey. Each participant will be involved in two interviews, the first approximately 60 minutes and the second approximately 30 minutes. The interviews will take place at the school at a time that is negotiated between the participant and the researcher.

As well as the interviews these participants will be asked to complete a piece of writing, outlining one formative influence in greater detail. It is my intention to audiotape the interviews, and take notes, which will be coded and not identifiable by anyone other than the researcher. There are no anticipated ethical risks to participants.

If you agree to allow me to recruit teachers for this study at your school, I assure you confidentiality will be maintained both during the study and in any report of the study.

Participation is voluntary. As a participant you are free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in the study without giving a reason at any time up until the data is analysed after which time data will be unable to be retrieved. All participants will be given a code and names will not be retained with the data. At any time during the study you would be welcome to seek clarification in any area.

If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact the Principal Supervisor, Dr Elizabeth Labone, or the Student Researcher, Mrs Therese Barrington. Before commencing, you will have the opportunity to ask any questions about the project. You will also have the opportunity to discuss your participation and the project in general after completion.

Dr Elizabeth Labone   Therese Barrington,
School of Education,   email tbarrington@dow.catholic.edu.au.
Mount Saint Mary Campus,
Locked Bag 2002, Strathfield, 2135

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.

In the event that participants have any complaint or concern about the way they have been treated during the study, or if they have any query that the Investigator or Supervisor and Student Researcher has (have) not been able to satisfy, they may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Office.

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, you should sign both copies of the Consent Form, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the Principal Investigator (or Supervisor) or Student Researcher.

Principal Investigator (or Supervisor)   Student Researcher

Dr Elizabeth Labone   Mrs Therese Barrington

Appendix 6 Letter to participants of survey and consent form

TITLE OF PROJECT: <u>VOICES OF THE FUTURE</u>
PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: Dr Elizabeth Labone
STUDENT RESEARCHER: Mgrs. Therese Barrington
PROGRAMME IN WHICH ENROLLED: Doctor of Education

Dear Participant,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project that explores the influences on teachers' leadership aspirations. This research will involve teachers in a number of Catholic secondary schools in the south western area of Sydney. It is my intention to survey the teaching staffs of three Catholic high schools about the influence of people and experiences in forming leadership aspirations. I am a student researcher completing a Doctor of Education and the data I will be collecting will be used in my doctoral thesis. The purpose of this study is to identify teachers' leadership aspirations and to examine the sources that form or discourage teachers under the age of 46 to aspire to school leadership. The information is being gathered in four ways 1) through a survey of all teaching staff in the three secondary schools 2) through two interviews with teachers under 33 years of age 3) written reflections from the same teachers that participate in the interviews and 4) researcher's journal.

The purpose of the survey is to collect information about the formative influences on leadership aspirations of teachers in general. The survey will be left at the school for teachers wishing to participate to complete. The survey will be completely anonymous and at no time will the identity of the participant be revealed.

Following the survey, it is my intention to interview a number of teachers from each school. Teachers under the age of thirty to three and interested in taking on a leadership role in schools at some stage in their career are invited to participate in this section of the research. Each participant will be involved in two interviews, the first approximately 60 minutes and the second approximately 30 minutes. The interviews will take place at the school at a time that is negotiated between the participant and the researcher. As well as the interviews, which allow free speaking in an informal way, you will be asked to complete a one to two page piece of writing, outlining one formative influence in greater detail. You will be asked to talk and write about the experiences and factors which have led you to aspire to leadership positions. It is my intention to audiotape the interviews, and take notes, which will be coded and not identifiable by anyone other than the researcher. There are no anticipated ethical risks to participants.

If you are interested in participating further in this research, and meet the requirements, please . Email the student researcher, Therese Barrington, at the email address below.

In taking part in this research, you can expect to gain a clarification of the influences of both people and experiences in developing teachers as leaders. As a participant in this paper you will be given a full copy of the paper when it is completed. You will be able to locate your experience and learning against others in similar stages in their career. You will also be contributing significantly – in a new way that allows the voices of young school leaders to be heard - to the body of literature and knowledge about the formative influences on leaders which will assist school leaders and planners to provide more targeted support in this area.

Participation is voluntary. As a participant you are free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in the study without giving a reason at any time up until the data is analysed and unable to be retrieved.
All results will be kept confidential. In reporting and recording data pseudonyms will be used and places will be disguised.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed to the Principal Supervisor, Dr Elizabeth Labone, or the Student Researcher, Mrs Therese Barrington.

    Dr Elizabeth Labone

    School of Education,

    Mount Saint Mary Campus,

    Locked Bag 2002, Strathfield, 2135

    Therese Barrington,

    email therese.barrington@dow.catholic.edu.au.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University. In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have any query that the Investigator or Supervisor and Student Researcher has (have) not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Office.

CONSENT FORM

Participant's copy

TITLE OF PROJECT: **VOICES OF THE FUTURE**

PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: Dr Elizabeth Labone

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Therese Barrington

I …………………………………………… *(the participant)* have read (*or have had read to me*) and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this survey realising that I can withdraw my consent without comment until the data is analysed, after which time the data will not be able to be retrieved. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: …………………………………………………..

SIGNATURE……………………………………………DATE ……………………………

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (or SUPERVISOR): ……………………….
DATE:……………………….
SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: …………………………….
DATE:……………………………

Appendix 7 Consent form for participants of interviews

Please complete the following consent form only if you are willing to participate in the interviews and reflection

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN INTERVIEWS AND REFLECTION

I …………………………………………… *(the participant)* have read (*or have had read to me)* and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to further participate in the two interviews, the first one of approximately 60 minutes duration, and the second one approximately thirty minutes, taking place at school at a time negotiated between myself and the researcher. I understand these interviews will be audiotaped. I further agree to participate in this research by writing a one to two page piece of writing. I am aware that I can withdraw my consent without comment up until the data is analysed, after which time the data will not be able to be retrieved. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: ………………………………………………..

SIGNATURE ……………………………………   DATE ……………………………

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (or SUPERVISOR):

……………………………………….…

DATE:………………………..

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER:…………………………………………

DATE:……………….….……….

Appendix 8 Ethics approval form

ACU
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

Human Research Ethics Committee
Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Dr Elizabeth Labone Sydney Campus

Co-Investigators: Professor Michael Gaffney Sydney Campus

Student Researcher: Mrs Therese Barrington Sydney Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:
VOICES OF THE FUTURE. (FORMATIVE INFLUENCES OF EDUCATIONAL 'NEW GENERATION' LEADERS)

for the period: 25 March 2011 to 31 October 2013

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: N2011 08

Special Condition/s of Approval

Prior to commencement of your research, the following permissions are required to be submitted to the ACU HREC:

Catholic Education Office - Wollongong Diocese

The following standard conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (2007) apply:

(i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
- security of records
- compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
- compliance with special conditions, and

(ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
- proposed changes to the protocol
- unforeseen circumstances or events
- adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than low risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of negligible risk and low risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a *Final Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an *Annual Progress Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.

K Pashley.

Signed: ....Date: .... 25.03.2011.....
(Research Services Officer, McAuley Campus)

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