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# THE NATURE OF EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAMS AND HEADS OF FACULTY IN NEW ZEALAND HIGH SCHOOLS

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# ABSTRACT

Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties in New Zealand High Schools work together to achieve long and short term educational outcomes for students, school, and community. This study set out to investigate the perceptions of Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty regarding the nature of an effective working relationship with the other. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in five Hamilton – Greater Waikato High Schools. Findings show that effective relationships between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty were complex and challenging. There was a lack of knowledge, understanding, and skill by both Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties with regards to effective communication. Indeed there was an urgent need for clear job descriptions. In this way both groups might know what they are responsible and accountable for and to whom individuals can go to for guidance. The importance of relationships in organisations was endorsed and showed the need for trust, commitment and satisfaction. There appears to be a lack of development programmes for Heads of Faculties. It is therefore essential that a purposeful mentoring programme in high schools be developed to fill this need as multiple challenges confront the establishment of these relationships. It is important that Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties develop an awareness of these challenges early and have the skills to resolve them. Further research into the nature of effective relationships between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties in New Zealand High Schools is required, as this might enlighten those who currently hold Senior Leadership Team or Heads of Faculty positions as to the skills and knowledge required for these relationships to be effective.

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives an outline of the thesis. It explores the nature of effective relationships between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in New Zealand High Schools. The chapter begins with a discussion of the researcher's personal perspective followed by an explanation of the rationale for undertaking this study. An outline of the research aims and questions followed by an outline of the presentation of the thesis is then provided.

## **Background**

This research was prompted from my own experience as a Head of Faculty within a New Zealand High School. I have learnt from experience that an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty is vital because it leads to day to day operational success and the achievement of short and long term goals.

Further study allowed me to advance my knowledge and skills as a Head of Faculty. I was motivated to undertake postgraduate study part time, while I worked full time, because I was convinced that the benefits gained from furthering my own knowledge would provide me with the confidence to be a more effective Head of Faculty. Additionally it would enable me to gain an insight into the nature of effective working relationships between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty. Lastly this study furthers my own experience and professional development in working with, and alongside, Senior Leadership Teams.

Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty understood their relationship differently. During my postgraduate study and work experience with colleagues it was impressed upon me that while there was an understanding of the functional roles of Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in New Zealand High Schools there was a lack of appreciation of the nature of an effective relationships between these groups. Both groups were able to identify some general aspects of the effectiveness of the relationship but were limited in terms of articulating specific details. It would appear that the responsibility for development and sustainability of the relationship rested firmly with the Senior Leadership Team more than the Heads of Faculty. Differences emerged in how each individual and group perceived, understood and participated in the relationship and that blame for failings in the relationship was, fairly or unfairly, directed upon Senior Leadership Teams more than Heads of Faculty.

This study centers on individuals who also happen to be members of two important groups within New Zealand High Schools. The term Senior Leadership Team for this study is defined as those who collectively hold strategic and major decision making responsibilities as well as day to day operational duties within high schools (Cranston & Ehrich, 2005; Hall & Wallace, 1996). Within this team I have included the following – Principals/Head Masters, Deputy Principals and Assistant Principals and excluded Senior Managers, Chief Executive Officers, Business managers, Timetable Managers, and Financial Executives despite their close connection and support of Senior Leadership Teams. Heads of Faculty refers to those who hold formal positions as leaders of one of the *essential learning areas* as identified by the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007). Under this definition I have therefore excluded Heads of Departments and Teachers in Charge of specific subjects, Guidance Counsellors, Deans, Pastoral Leaders, Student/Study Support Coordinators and Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour.

## **Rationale**

Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty occupy the top two tiers of a formal hierarchical structure within New Zealand High Schools. These groups have played a crucial role in New Zealand High Schools (Wallace & Huckman, 1996; Cranston & Ehrich, 2005; Bennett, 1999; Estyn, 2004). The results achieved by an effective relationship between these groups can lead to positive professional and personal outcomes for students, the school, and its wider community (Busher & Harris, 1999; Hall & Wallace, 1996). These outcomes have been achieved by both groups purposefully and actively pursuing and developing an effective relationship. This effort has required both groups to work towards achieving common goals as part of fulfilling a unified purpose and shared vision. For both groups this has also meant having a clear understanding and appreciation of the roles and functions and limitations of the other.

This research highlights specific elements that both Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty have used to develop an effective relationship with the other. It is hoped that this research and its findings will be of practical benefit to current or aspiring Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in high schools both within and outside New Zealand (Cranston & Ehrich, 2005; Wallace, 2002). This study aims to create both awareness and knowledge of how to develop and sustain an effective working relationship. There is hope that the experiences shared by the participants provide examples of how effective relationships can be developed (Hoff, 2008).

## **Research aims and questions**

This thesis focused on the following key questions where participants were participants for their opinions and perceptions on what they saw as contributing to an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties:

1. What is the nature of an effective relationship?
2. Which 'practices' develop an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty and which practices hinder this?

## **Presentation of the thesis**

### **This thesis is organised into six chapters.**

Chapter One provides an outline of the thesis. The nature of effective relationships between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in New Zealand High Schools is explored. A discussion of the researcher's perspective and an explanation of the rationale for undertaking the study is presented. The research aims, research questions and an outline of the thesis are presented.

Chapter Two reviews literature exploring the nature of an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in New Zealand High Schools. The review discusses why relationships are important in an organisation and what it means to be effective. Connections are made between transformational leadership, distributed leadership and the development of effective organisational culture. The framework of Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty is explored looking at their place within a high school's organisational structure. Lastly this chapter discusses the nature of effective educational relationships amidst the changing environment of the New Zealand educational system.

Chapter Three discusses the methodology. It opens with an overview of educational research exploring its nature, paradigms, qualitative research, lived experiences and phenomenology. Case studies are explored outlining what a case study is, its characteristics, various types of case studies, their limitations, validity and reliability. A detail description of the

research study is provided. It highlights steps that were taken as part of the process, how the school and participants were selected, and how and why semi-structured interviews were chosen as the method used to collect and gather data. The chapter shifts to an explanation of how the data was organised and presented. The final part of this chapter discusses ethical considerations. Specifically it looks at how access to participating schools and individuals was achieved, how the ethical issues of informed consent, confidentiality and potential harm to participants was satisfied.

Chapter Four presents the findings of the data from the interviews. The findings are presented by themes from within the data. The emergent themes are Communication, Administration, Relationships, Professional Development and Challenges to the relationship. Direct responses are used and supported by a narrative. Only a sampling of the rich dialogue, representing a selection of participating individuals, is presented as part of the findings.

Chapter Five presents a discussion of the research findings. Connections are made between the data presented in chapter four with the literature presented in chapter two. Two key broad perspectives related to the nature of an effective relationship are isolated; Systems - Structures and Personal Development. Each of the broad perspectives is discussed in turn through the identified emerging theme of communication, administration, relationships, professional development and challenges to their relationship.

Chapter Six provides conclusions to the research study. The chapter opens with a brief review of why the research was conducted, what its aims were and what methodology was used. It presents the conclusions by emergent themes which were identified by the data. The chapter concludes by presenting strengths, limitations, and recommendations based on the research process and findings.

# CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

## Introduction

Relationship within and between groups within organisations are multifaceted and complex (Estyn, 2004; Richter, Rolf & West, 2004). The field of education like other professional areas struggles with the dilemma of defining, creating and sustaining effective relationships (Kezar, 2004). Relationships are important in organisations because they deal with interactions between individuals and, in the case of this study, individuals who are part of a broader group. The relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties is vital because it leads to the day to day operational success of the school and the achievement of a school's short and long term goals (Frandsen, 2009). This literature review explores the nature of the relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty within a New Zealand High School context with the aim of understanding the effectiveness of that relationship.

The review begins by examining external and internal organisational relationships. The importance of relationships and what it means to be effective is discussed. Links are made between two theories of organisational leadership, transformational leadership and distributed leadership, as they relate to effective relationships including the development and sustainability of that relationship. The review explores how effective relationships led to effective organisational culture. The historical background to Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty is discussed with connections made to their place within a high school's organisational structures and how each group operates. Finally, this review explores organisational relationships within a New Zealand education setting identifying specifically, how and why these relationships have changed over time and the impact of these changes.

## **Organisational Relationships**

Organisations are living organisms which are subject to constant change (Wheatley, 2005). The ability of organisations to adapt to changes takes place when it is nurtured and nourished by those who have a vested interest in creating effective organisational relationships that work to ensure its longevity and success (Willcoxson & Millett, 2000).

Relationships between individuals and groups are constantly being forged, developed, reviewed and when necessary, restructured (Hall & Wallace, 1996; Richter et al, 2004; Kezar, 2004). In the context of New Zealand High Schools, the relationship between the school and outside groups as well as individuals and groups within the school is diverse (Thrupp, 2007, 2008).

### **Internal and External Relationships**

Internal influences affect organisational relationships within New Zealand High Schools. Internally, these influences occur between colleagues (Youngs, 2001), groups within the school (Richter, Rolf, & West, 2004), senior leaders and the workers (Halawah, 2005) teachers and students (Storz and Nestor, 2008; Eames and Stewart, 2008) and between students (Sammet, 2010).

External pressures also influence relationships in New Zealand High Schools. These influences include government decisions and policies (Ministry of Education, 1993; Ministry of Education, 1988; New Zealand Treasury, 1987; Ministry of Education, 1999; Ministry of Education, 2007) curriculum and pedagogy changes (Ministry of Education, 2007) national and international trends (Hamel, & Prahalad, 1994; Bottery, 2004; Meng, 2008) and shifts in international economies (Dawson, 2005) and changes in status, influence and prestige (Veikkola, 2004).

The relationship between New Zealand High Schools and internal and external influences is both rewarding and challenging. While the nature of these relationships focus on differing aspects of the organisation, similarities such as communication and trust are common throughout.

**Why relationships are important in an organisation**

Relationships in an organisation are important because they relate to people and their emotions. Human emotions constantly change depending on circumstances, mood, experiences, environment and desires. Because of these changes, people have a need to make connections with other people (Reina & Reina, 2006). These connections fulfil a multiple of psychological, emotional, physical needs (Maslow, 1943). Failing to meet these needs can leave the individual feeling unfulfilled and unsatisfied (Hedva, 1992; Reina & Reina, 2006).

Organisations break down when relationships between groups stop working. Unattended group needs can lead to inter-group relationship failure and a sense of betrayal and mistrust. Mistrust within an organisation is the culmination of both personal, structural and/or system failures. Rebuilding trust between groups in an organisation is achieved by restoring effective relationships (Reynolds, 1997). The restoring of trust, once lost is a process that takes time, skill and planning (Reynolds, 1997; Reina & Reina, 2006).

Organisations are made up of structures, systems, processes and people. While all of these elements are vital the most important of these is people (Kezar, 2004). The nature of the relationship between people in an organisation is one factor that determines the effectiveness of the organisation. Relationships in organisations are also important because it is much easier to be successful and effective around people with whom an effective relationship is established (Richter, Rolf & West, 2004).

**What does it mean to be effective?**

Access to research studies focussing on effectiveness and relationships is prolific (Lucas, 1994, Harris, 2000; Youngs, 2001; Storz & Nestor, 2008). While international research specifically focussing on effectiveness and Heads of Faculties (Bennett, 1999; Hoff, 2008; Estyn, 2004) and Senior



Leadership Teams (Hall & Wallace, 1996; Wallace, 2002; Ehrich & Cranston, 2004; Cranston & Ehrich, 2005;) are available, very few are within a New Zealand context, those that are within the New Zealand context tend to consider each of the identified groups individually, for example Senior Leadership Teams (Torrey, 2003), Heads of Faculty (Chetty, 2007; Feist, 2007) none, so far have been located that consider both these groups together.

It is therefore prudent and necessary to understand organisational relationships in the context of this thesis by looking at a number of different research disciplines. These research disciplines include areas such as interpersonal and inter-organisational relationships (Reynolds, 1997) psychology (Maslow, 1943), interpersonal communication (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998) and relationship marketing (Ki & Hon, 2007). By piecing together different aspects of these disciplines a clearer picture of the nature of effective relationships can be shown.

Being effective requires the implementation of different elements. Ledingham and Bruning's (1998) study of organisational public relations suggests five elements on which relationships are based: openness; trust; involvement; investment; and commitment. Hon and Grunig (1999) study of measuring and evaluating organisational relationships state that "the organisation's long term relationships with its key points could be evaluated by the following four indicators of relationship quality: control mutuality, satisfaction, trust, and commitment" (p.421). Of these, three of the indicators – satisfaction, trust and commitment – are critical relationship indicators across multiple settings and context and have been termed a global measure for organisational public relationships (Jo, 2006). In determining what it means to be effective it is necessary to look at the three indicators separately keeping in mind that collectively they work together.

Trust underpins all relationships. Researchers provide a plethora of definitions for trust. These definitions are based on the same premise: the

expectancy that one person can expect to rely, with confidence, on another person (Rotter, 1967; Moorman, Dcshpande & Zaitman, 1993; Matzler & Renzl, 2006). Trust is a belief that an organisation, group, or individual is reliable, honest, and stands by it word while meeting its obligations. In both the personal and professional worlds there is a need for trust (Matzler & Renzl, 2006).

Trust is vital in professional occupations. According to Reina and Reina (2006) in the professional world, businesses are “conducted through relationships and trust is the foundation of effective relationships” (p. 5). When trust is present, people are excited to be at work, they work together and side by side with co-workers, lines of communication are open and free flowing, people are not afraid to make mistakes and individuals are more committed to what they are doing (Reina & Reina, 2006). Trusting relationships make the difference between people feeling good about what they do and simply going through the motions. Organisations, like individuals need to live and feel safe about themselves; need to feel safe from external influences; need to be able to connect and form friendships; need to be recognised and rewarded for its accomplishments and; need to fulfill its goals and potential (Reina & Reina, 2006).

Trust leads to rewarding outcomes. The affects of trust in the work place leads to more positive workplace attitudes, positive work attitudes and performance outcomes (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). Matzler and Renzl (2006) state that there are three facets of trust:

“First trust in another person reflects a person’s expectation or belief that the exchange partner will act benevolently; secondly, trust involves the willingness to be vulnerable and risk that the other person may not fulfill the expectations; and thirdly, trust involves a certain level of dependency which means that a person is affected by the actions of others” (p. 1262).

Thus individuals feel more positive about their colleagues when they believe that their peers are trust worthy. Trust strongly affects job satisfaction and the two cannot be separated.

Satisfaction is an important predictor of trust (Matzler & Renzl, 2006; Ki & Hon, 2007). Miles, Patrick, and King (1996) argue that satisfaction occurs when “one party thinks and expects that the other behaves consistent with the expectations for maintaining a positive relationship” (p.278). This contentment is experienced when the benefits of the relationship exceed the expectations that both parties have and where the relationship produces more benefits than costs (Kelly & Thibaut, 1977; Matzler & Renzl, 2006). For Heads of Faculties, job satisfaction includes having trust in his or her Senior Leadership Team because the Senior Leadership Team, as individuals and collectively, are responsible for a number of duties directly affecting the Heads of Faculties.

Work satisfaction between groups, is affected by trust in both senior leaders and peers (Matzler & Renzl, 2006). Satisfaction between Heads of Faculty and Senior Leadership Teams is similar to satisfaction between individuals. Satisfaction in senior leaders is to know and see that actions and decisions by them build trust and therefore satisfaction. This is supported by the literature (Rich, 1997; Pillai, 1999; Flaherty & Pappas, 2000) which states that workers are more satisfied in their job and hence more likely to remain with the organisation if there is trust in their leaders.

Commitment demonstrates loyalty that has been earned through action. Hon and Grunig (1999) define commitment as “the extent to which each party believes and feels that the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain and promote” (p. 3). In organisational behaviour literature, commitment leads to such significant outcomes as decreased staff turnover (Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974; Cohen, 2003) higher motivation (Farrell & Rusbult, 1981; Porter, Bigley, & Steers, 2003) increased organisational citizenship behaviours (Williams & Anderson,

1991; Klein, Becker, & Meyer 2009) and job equity (Williams & Hazer, 1986 Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Satisfied co-workers stay with the same organisation because the trust is high and they leave when satisfaction is no longer being met. Retaining employees is important to organisations. In recent times, the rise of the 'knowledge economy' and attempts to retain those who have the 'knowledge' are critical issues to organisations (Matzler, 2003). Knowledge and skills are mobile and leave when those who have it, depart. Retaining those who have both knowledge and skill is more critical when those same individuals are high performers in the organisation. Studies show that commitment and loyalty to an organisation is strong when satisfaction is high (Mak & Sockel, 2001; Martensen & Gronholdt, 2001). Satisfaction, trust and commitment are key elements of an effective relationship (Jo, 2006). These elements can be seen in effective leadership practices that allow them to be developed.

### **Organisational relationships and leadership style**

Leadership is one of the most studied issues of our time (Tourish, 2008). This insight is justified when one looks at the number of books, articles, magazines and other forms of publications that discuss leadership or some aspect of it. It is therefore not surprising that the dialogue surrounding the theory and practice of leadership will continue as long as the fascination with, and interest in leadership continues.

Organisational relationships are shaped by leadership. The impact of leadership styles employed in New Zealand High Schools varies from school to school with each leader choosing the style that suits their personality as well as the circumstances and environment of their school. In recent years leadership in New Zealand High Schools has been under the pressure of "escalating domestic and international competition, market changes, and advances in information technology" (Boga & Ensari, 2009, p. 235). Amidst these pressures the challenge for high school leaders is to

position their school as best they can to take advantage of opportunities, as they arise, in spite the challenges (Boga & Ensari, 2009).

Changes in national, international movements and leadership practices used in New Zealand High Schools are constantly changing (Torrey, 2003; Timperley, 2005). These changes have resulted in a shift away from the ideas and practices of single autocratic rule towards leadership practices that champion transformational and distributed leadership styles (Alma & Harris, 2008; Boga & Ensari, 2009).

### **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership is an approach to leadership theory and practice. Transformational leadership is based on Burns (1978) and later Bass's (1985, 1990, 1997) and Bass & Avolio (1994) writings on leadership theory. Their aim is to understand and conceptualise the nature of leadership and to understand how behaviours of leaders influence those they lead and the institution they are part of.

Definitions of transformational leadership centres around the core idea of how the behaviour of leaders influences those they lead (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Boga & Ensari, 2009). This broad definition is seminal for understanding the development of relationships between leaders and those they lead but it has also been extended to include an understanding and development of organisational culture. Burns (1978) argued that transformational leadership ultimately "lifted people into their better selves" (p.4) because leaders were able to "attract their followers by instilling confidence, institutionalising long term solutions, and creating enthusiasm in sharing common goals and vision" (Boga & Ensari, 2009 p.237).

A key role for leaders is to build and develop leaders. Burns (1978) writings argues that leaders build a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation thereby converting followers into leaders and leaders into moral agents. Bass (1990) added that the

“transformational leader asks followers to transcend their own interests for the good of the group, organisation, or society; to consider their longer-term needs to develop themselves, rather than their needs of the moment; and to become more aware of what is really important, hence, followers are converted into leaders” (p.53).

New leadership brings changes to organisations. Transformational leadership principles are radical to an educational system entrenched in practising a hierarchical business and leadership model. In attempting to shift mindsets there needs to be a change in philosophy (Larson, 2009). This change recognises that the fundamental element of any organisation is the individual person not the organisation, and that the successful development of the individual leads to the successful development and growth of the organisation (Levacic & Bennett, 1996; Harris, 2000; Kezar, 2004; Glover). This understanding leads to the realisation that the success of the leader is dependent on the success of those they lead and the success of the followers is dependant on the success of those who lead them (Frandsen, 2009; Boga & Ensari, 2009). They are intrinsically connected and neither can succeed without the other.

Workplace relationships can be advanced by Transformational Leadership principles and practices. According to Sias (2005) relationships formed by employees at their workplace with their supervisors represents a social – exchange relationship. Tse, Dasborough and Ashkanasy (2008) note that the relationships between leaders and workers constitute an interconnecting social system that operates in organisations. High quality relationships between leaders and workers is characterised by high levels of mutual trust, respect, loyalty and obligations (Sias, 2005; Reina & Reina 2006). Through transformation leadership Li and Hung (2009) postulate that workers:

“interact more with their leaders and have their leaders’ support confidence, encouragement, and consideration, and hence are

more satisfied with their leader, can identify with the leader, trust the leader, and by extension, are more willing to form and maintain a high quality relationship with their leader” (p. 1131).

Under the umbrella of these characteristics transformation leaders develop closer relationships between leaders and workers (Zohar & Tenne-Gazit, 2008).

Transformational leadership is based on four fundamental elements. These elements are charisma, intellectual stimulation, individualised consideration and inspiration/motivation (Bass, 1985; Avolio & Bass, 1999; Gardiner, 2006; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Boga & Ensari 2009; Larson, 2009; Ruggieri, 2009). Collectively individuals or an organisation demonstrating these four key components together is more likely to establish a foundation upon which the rewards of transformational leadership can be seen.

At first glance the links between transformational leadership and charismatic leadership do not seem compatible. Charismatic leadership describes one extraordinary individual who becomes completely indispensable, presenting themselves occasionally and only when the right conditions allow for their abilities to be demonstrated in the best light (Bass, 1985; Yulk, 2002). According to Conger and Kanungo’s (1998), description of a charismatic leader, they engage in changing the status quo, are likeable and create new organisations. A charismatic transformational leader however, does not go out to create a new organisation but makes changes within the existing organisation (Trice & Beyer, 1991).

Despite these differences there are similarities connecting charismatic leaders and charismatic transformational leaders. Charisma is described as the manner to which leaders behave that followers can identify with and relate to (Li & Hung, 2009). Both are able to activate motivational mechanisms that affect followers’ self esteem, organisational commitment,

and performance (House & Shamir, 1993). Both these types of leaders are able to articulate visions, which excite followers and stimulate significant loyalty and trust (Tichy & Devanna, 1986).

A transformational leader who develops intellectual stimulation challenges the status quo. They confront assumptions, take risks, and solicit followers' ideas (Li & Hung, 2009). In challenging assumptions transformational leaders are up-to-date with the latest research, aware of the latest schools of academic thought and actively pursue the latest proven methods of development that will enable them to make decisions in order to improve outcomes (Wang & Huang, 2009). Transformational Leaders are constantly thinking and looking outside traditional methods for opportunities to actively involve followers in order to challenge the thinking, practice and mind sets of those they lead (Larson, 2009). They resolve to open dialogue between themselves and their followers so that thoughts and ideas are encouraged, heard and understood. The opening of dialogue is not just a lip service option so that the leader is seen to be acting 'transformational', it is instead an honest attempt by the leader to actively engage in the exchange of ideas and encourage free expression (Lowe, Kroeck & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Bass, 1997).

Transformational Leaders who practice individualised consideration attend to followers' needs and listens to followers' concerns (Li & Hung, 2009). This element of Transformational Leadership is intimate and personal and defines the genuine nature of the leader because it deals with the needs of the individual (Nielson, Randall, Yarker, & Brenner, 2008). It is through individualised consideration that a leader develops their own humanity acting as a mentor and coach. Based on this relationship concerns are freely aired and then skilfully and sensitively resolved.

Inspiration and motivational Transformational Leaders are able to inspire, motivate and articulate visions for the future that appeal to others (Li & Hung, 2009; Callow, Smith, Hardy, Arthur & Hardy, 2009).



The theory of transformational Leadership has strong advocates. During times of change transformational leaders are more effective in handling a crisis and more active when there is ambiguity about what must be done to ensure survival (Yulk, 2002). When strong direction is needed or when panic, unrest or uncertainty within an organisation sets in, the transformational leader is able to interpret the crisis and able to offer strategies for dealing with the issue (Yulk, 2002; Sarros, Cooper & Santora (2008). This is echoed by Boga and Ensari (2009) who conclude that an organisation under-going many organisational changes is perceived as more successful when managed by a transformational leader.

Transformational Leadership has its critiques. One criticism highlights the extent to which the theory is unable to cover leadership in different contexts. Wang and Huang (2009) argue against the narrowness of previous studies whose focus has primarily been on “individual level outcomes while very little attention has been given to groups or the organisation” (p.380). Wang and Huang (2009) go on stating that the changing nature of work has “resulted in calls for more organisations to work in teams and that leadership, including transformational leadership, will need to adapt to changing global working conditions” (p.380).

A further critique is offered by Ayman, Korabik and Morris (2009) who suggest that an unanticipated danger is the separation of key components of transformational leadership into male or female spheres. For example while ‘intellectual stimulation’ is categorised to be more masculine, ‘individualised consideration’ is categorised to be more feminine in nature because it deals with the notion of caring (Ayman et al., 2009). For female transformational leaders the danger of separating the key components into masculine and feminine stereotyped roles devalues the role of women in leadership to the point where women who act within the ‘male sphere’ are viewed as acting outside their gender (Ayman et al., 2009; Debebe, 2009).

Another danger of transformational leadership focuses around the appointment of school ‘superheads’. These are principals whose sole

purpose is to fix failing schools (Currie & Lockett, 2007). An individual 'superhead' Heifetz (1994) argues is "...the myth of the lone warrior; the solitary individual whose heroism and brilliance enable them to lead the way" (p.251). Heifetz's (1994) is critical of this type of transformational leadership because it "...perpetuated an arrogance and grandiosity that allows leaders to flee from the harsh realities and the dailyness of leadership..." (p.251). The complexity of fixing these failing schools was too much for some 'superheads' who quickly resigned once faced with the harsh realities in front of them.

Criticisms of transformational leadership are minimised by its popularity and use in schools. While transformational leadership aims to lift individuals to their 'better selves' distributed leadership, aims to develop leadership through the delegation of activities and tasks.

### **Distributed Leadership**

There are many definitions of distributed leadership. While definitions vary, the underlying principles of distributed leadership advocate the practice of developing multiple leaders across multiple levels of an organisation (Gronn, 2000; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002; Bennet, Harvey, Wise, & Woods, 2003; Frost, 2005; Macbeth, 2006; Spillane, 2006; Spillane & Diamond, 2007; Harris & Spillane, 2008). Also known as shared leadership, team leadership, democratic leadership, collaborative leadership, and devolved leadership the popularity of this style of leadership means that it is currently positioned 'front and centre' in the writings of leadership, organisational culture and change (Spillane & Diamond, 2007; Harris, 2008).

Distributed leadership develops individual leadership. With changes, the educational field is multifaceted and the issues more complex requiring the development of new skills to face them (Gold, Evans, Early, Halpin, & Collabone, 2003). New skills require leaders to "cross multiple types of boundaries [in order] to share ideas and insights" (Wenger et al., 2002, p.123). Changes in the education field provide leaders with experiences to

which skills are practiced and refined. These experiences offer individuals with knowledge and opportunities to grow (Spillane, 2005; Spillane & Diamond, 2007; Harris & Spillane, 2008).

Distributed leadership is a key contributor to personal, professional and school wide growth. Research evidence found in organisational development and improvement literature suggests that distributed leadership positively influences organisational change (Landoli & Zollo, 2008). Other benefits include the successful development and execution of day to day school management practices, (Gronn, 2002; Burke & Fiore, 2003; Spillane & Diamond, 2007; Harris, 2009) school improvement, (Little, 1990) teacher collegiality, (Rosenholtz, 1989) and professional learning communities (Stoll & Lewis, 2007). Graetz (2000) argues that “organisations most successful in managing the dynamics of loose – tight working relationships meld strong personalised leadership at the top with distributed leadership” (p.7)

Distributed leadership remains popular but the model has its criticism and limitations. One limitation facing researchers has been the number of different terms and definitions used to refer to distributed leadership thereby causing conceptual confusion and conceptual overlap (Timperley, 2005; Harris & Spillane, 2008). As noted above the conceptual confusion occurs because of the use of similar terms like shared leadership, team leadership, and democratic leadership to re-classify ‘distributed leadership’ as a concept. Conceptual overlap is found between distributed leadership, shared collaborative and participative leadership concepts (Harris & Spillane, 2008), democratic leadership (Woods, 2004), and teacher leadership (Harris & Muijs, 2004). The use of multiple concepts describing the same phenomenon creates confusion thereby obscuring meaning.

Criticism exists concerning the conflict between the theoretical and practical aspects of its practice (Harris & Spillane, (2008). These concerns ask the questions “how does distributed leadership contribute to school improvement?” and “is there sufficient evidence or enough evidence to

show that less hierarchical school structures result in notable gains...?” (Harris & Spillane, 2008, p.32). Theoretically, distributed leadership “incorporates the activities of multiple groups of individuals in a school who work at guiding and mobilising staff...” (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001, p. 20). Practically, the concern is how leadership is distributed and by whom (Harris & Spillane, 2008). In regards to those who distribute leadership Gronn (2003) argues against the practice of some organisations to keep the ‘glory’ tasks restricted to a few individuals as ‘greedy work’. As a result these individuals continue to dominate the organisation hereby entrenching themselves as being ‘irreplaceable’ and in so doing rob others of the experience required to satisfy personal growth and job satisfaction.

Another criticism of distributed leadership is aimed at team performance. Early research evidence suggests that distributed leadership contributes to ‘inefficiencies’ within a team and has been identified as one of the six ‘obstacles’ to effective team performance (Melnick, 1982). More recent research shows that distributed leadership results in conflicting managerial decisions on school priorities and performance targets to the point where management issues and competing leadership styles can emerge (Storey, 2004). Gronn (2003) argues that teams have a short life span. The life of an effective working team lasts only as long and as the membership of that team is maintained. Any additions or subtraction of individuals into and out of the team changes the dynamics and composition of the team.

## **Organisational Relationships and Organisational Culture**

### **Organisational Culture**

There are a number of definitions for organisational culture. A common thread that runs through many of these definitions is that organisational culture is a system of shared assumptions, beliefs, values, and behaviours in an organisation (Pettigrew 1979; Schwartz & Davis 1981; Schein, 1985; 1990; Yin-Cheong, 1989). Organisations such as schools differ in terms of

personnel, location, history, direction and context (Thrupp, 2006). These differences however are offset by a common desire in all organisations to achieve an affirmative culture.

Organisational relationships and organisational culture develops when people come together for a common purpose (Sergiovanni & Corbally, 1984). The development of culture through relationships gives people a sense of belonging through a collective identity. Collective identity removes the individual and replaces them with a group (Wilcoxson & Millet, 2000). The group comes together through discussions and agreeing on those matters which are vital to the group.

The culture that is written or professed to satisfy administrative paperwork may differ from the culture that exists within the group (Hawk, 2000). Experiencing the 'real' culture of an organisation requires participation and observation of the actions of its members. Observations show how they act toward each other and to those outside the group. It demonstrates what the organisation values or considers important, what norms it enforces what rules it adheres to and what really shapes the action of its members (Hawk, 2000).

How culture within an organisation is managed is vital to the development of the organisation. Schien (1990) argued that the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture. Organisational culture focuses on people and how people relate to people. It is about people having effective relationships with other people (Hoer, 2005). Effective relationships stem from effective practices used to purposefully develop that relationship. Using this as a basis, effective organisations shift their focus from creating great structures within organisations to creating great people within the organisation (Kezar, 2004).

The link between organisational culture and organisational relationships is inseparable (Richter, van Dick & West, 2004). Supported by Social Identity

Theory (Hogg & Terry, 2000) it proposes that “a positively valued component of people’s identities can be derived from their group membership and that these social identities are maintained primarily by means of a social comparison processes of in group members with relevant out groups” (Richter, van Dick & West, 2004, p.1). As with all organisations, the relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and workers is vital because their relationship determines the strength of the organisational culture (Willcoxson & Millet, 2000)

Senior leaders have the most important role to play in the development of culture. It is through the Senior Leadership Team that the culture they wish to establish is the culture that they will model. Aitkin (2007) articulates the role those on Senior Leadership Teams play in the development of culture by stating that the:

“Creation and management of meaning through leadership culture becomes a continuous process whereby leaders, through words and deeds, communicate integrated ethos in order to focus energy towards collective identity and joint purpose” (p.19)

Critical to the development of an effective school culture is effective communication (Fielding, 1993; Reina & Reina, 2006; Sai & Sai 2009). There is a significant amount of research on effective communication. Effective communication is central to all organisations. Without communication an organisation will not survive (Fielding, 1993). It is only through effective communication that effective relationships develop. Communication is a transaction between two or more people who, through communication, develop meaning and understanding. Effective communication requires skill and effort because different people and different groups can interpret the same words, symbols and expressions differently. This is crucial for high school groups like Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty who are constantly working together. It is vital therefore to ensure that communication between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty is based on a shared understanding of the

words or symbols that are used in communicating messages. Failure to ensure this takes place causes misunderstanding and misinterpretation in the messages and the relationship.

A key element with effective communication as part of organisation culture is trust. Reina and Reina (2006) argue that “trust influences communication and communication influences trust” (p.34). Reina and Reina (2006) identify six behaviours that contribute to building effective communications and workplace relationships: sharing information, telling the truth, admit mistakes, give and receive constructive feedback, maintain confidentiality, and speak with good purpose. These behaviours serve to direct efforts to developing communicatory links between individuals with whom relationships within organisational culture is crucial. The importance of effective communication between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty as part of developing an effective organisational culture and therefore an effective relationship cannot be over emphasised.

### **Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty**

Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty are separated by their positions, roles, responsibilities, status and authority. Upon the former rests the well-being of an essential learning area (Ministry of Education, 1988; Fiest, 2007; Chetty, 2007) while upon the latter rests the strategic direction and major decision making processes of the institution (Kemp and Nathan, 1991; Busher & Harris, 1999; Enrich and Cranston, 2004; Cranston, 2005). The elements that connect the individuals within these groups are mission, purpose, vision, location, and context. Both groups must actively participate in this union in order to establish an effective relationship and thus pursue and achieve common goals. A common thread found throughout the literature (Youngs, 2001; Richter, van Dick & West, 2004; Kezar, 2004; Hoff, 2008; Frandsen, 2009) is the importance of the development and sustainability of effective relationships (Kezar, 2004).

The effectiveness of these relationships must have an outcome and the outcome in all learning institutions remains the same - the academic achievement of students. Although critical in terms of justifying a high schools existence, student achievement is not the only indicator of an effective relationship. Other indicators of effective relationships include organisational culture (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Richter, van Dick & West, 2004) employee perceptions of working relationships (Hoff, 2008), development and growth through professional development (Gold, Evans, Early, Halpin, & Collabone, 2003; Spillane, 2005; Spillane & Diamond, 2007; Harris & Spillane, 2008).

### **Heads of Faculty**

Heads of Faculties in New Zealand High Schools occupy the second tier in a hierarchical structural model below Senior Leadership Teams. The creation of the Head of Faculty position is a result of educational reforms inspired by similar changes in the United Kingdom (Feist, 2007; Rata & Sullivan, 2009). Heads of Faculty are responsible for one of the essential learning areas outlined in the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework, 2007*. As a Head of Faculty they are accountable for the operational work of other teachers within their faculty (Busher & Harris, 1999).

Changes in New Zealand education have altered the face of the high school systems. The introduction of *Tomorrow's Schools* (Government of New Zealand, 1988) saw the creation of new positions and new roles for teaching staff. Shaped by outside business and economic influences schools became small businesses with principals acting like Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of business corporations under whose leadership the school was to develop. Under '*Tomorrows School's, 1988*' they were expected to meet "accountability and auditing demands" (Feist, 2007. pp.9-10). These demands found its underlying philosophy not within educational fields but in financial and economic outcomes (New Zealand Treasury, 1988). The aims of these reforms were to move the current educational theory and practice of the day towards an educational stage designed to prepare learning institutions and students for the future. It was



a future that could not be envisioned by an educational system which had remained virtually unchanged since the end of World War Two.

The Ministry of Education released the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework (2007)*. This document identified seven 'essential learning areas' of Language and Languages, Mathematics, Science, Technology, Social Sciences, The Arts, and Physical and Well Being. Subject areas were previously self governing and worked in relative isolation. With a few exceptions most subject areas were small and led by a Head of Department. The identification of these essential learning areas allowed the grouping of multiple subject areas into faculty areas which required the appointment of a Head who had responsibility for a number of subjects within the faculty. Supported by the Curriculum Framework, these essential learning areas became entrenched within New Zealand school management structures (Feist, 2007).

While each subject within the faculty was still led by a Head of Department, who was seen as an expert on that subject area, Heads of Faculty were not expected to be experts on all the subjects within the faculty but to manage the Heads of Department. This gave them positional authority above Heads of Department but still below Senior Leadership Teams who held authority of the direction of the entire school (Earley & Fletcher-Campbell, 1989). Having a dual role of both curriculum and managerial responsibilities Heads of Faculty held the mandate to implement further educational changes in the light of Senior Management decisions and changing national educational directions.

As educational reforms increased the demands on Principals intensified. With principals being overloaded with the expectations of the multiple managerial and performative tasks, many of these tasks were quickly delegated to Heads of Faculties at middle management level (Glover, Gleeson, Gough & Johnson, 1998; Brown & Rutherford, 1999). External auditing of performance targets mirrored business models rather educational developments (Codd, 2005).

Managing efficient systems and processors overshadowed social connections and relationship development in New Zealand High Schools (Ball, 2004). The tasks of Heads of Faculty increased to appraisals, staff development and the development of school policy (Busher & Harris, 1999; Brown & Rutherford, 1999; Fitzgerald, 2000). 'Speed and busyness' became synonymous in the day to day running of faculties. Administrative tasks inundated priority 'to do lists' as a way of getting through the day. Time itself was being forced to be scheduled onto daily lists. Allowances of time for other teachers, other students, and development of pedagogy became part of the list as a way of ensuring that they were allocated space during the day (Blandford, 1997; Kemp & Nathan, 1989; Ingvarson, Klienhenz, Beavis, Barwick, Carthy & Wilkinson, 2005). Noticing the increased demands Mintberg (1989) noted that the roles of Heads of Faculties were occurring at an unrelenting pace.

In 2002, the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) was introduced into New Zealand High Schools. While Heads of Faculty could shelter their faculty from the political arena of middle and senior leadership team issues they could not protect them from the impact of NCEA. Increased stress loads brought on by NCEA were being felt right across the school right down to the classroom teacher (Kane & Mallon, 2006). For Heads of Faculty the care and welfare of those within their faculty became a priority. Heads of Faculty had to be more aware and skilled at balancing what those within their faculty were expected to do while acting as a gate keeper and limiting the impact policy changes had on the staff in their faculty.

### **Senior Leadership Teams**

Senior Leadership Teams in New Zealand High Schools occupy the top tier in a hierarchical structural model. Collectively these teams are responsible for, but not limited to, the strategic direction and decision process of the school. Additionally they are responsible for the school's teaching practice and the overall running of the day to day business of

schools (Kemp & Nathan, 1991; Enrich & Cranston, 2004; Cranston, 2005). While the composition of the team varies from school to school they are generally made up of the Principal, Deputy Principals (DP), and Assistant to the Principal (AP) with the occasional inclusion of additional members from senior teaching staff who were brought in depending on the circumstances (Cranston, 2005).

There is an increase in the literature focussing on Senior Leadership Teams. This literature examines the distribution of leadership (Wallace, 2002) teamwork, (Hall & Wallace, 1996) development of and micropolitics within these teams (Ehrich & Cranston, 2004) the effectiveness of these teams (Cranston, 2005) and the changing roles of those that make up the team (Torrey, 2003). Despite the increase of literature, the examination of this group of individuals, whose role and position is so vital to the success of the students and school, remains limited. Focus instead has centred on individuals like Principals (Dufour, 2004; Gibson, 2005), Deputy Principals (Torrey, 2003) and Assistant Principals (Glanz, 1994; Torrey, 2003) as separate individuals within the group rather than the group as a collective body.

Senior Leadership Teams are subcultures within a culture. Senior Leadership Teams are not static. There is no fixed rule regarding how Senior Leadership Teams can or should work (Hall & Wallace, 1996). What works well for one Senior Leadership Team will not necessarily work well for another. Regardless of the differences amongst Senior Leadership Teams, they are constantly evolving in response to the immediate and long term environmental, local, national and international issues (Ehrich & Cranston, 2004; Cranston, 2005). These issues come from multiple directions impacting directly and indirectly on the team. Directly they can bring to surface such issues as competing values, differing personalities, past histories, and the ongoing dynamics and interactions amongst members of the teams. All of these contribute to making such groups “complex and unique” (Ehrich & Cranston, 2004. p.82).

Senior Leadership Teams need to be prepared to give and take. They must be prepared to put the team's interest, and that of the school, ahead of their own when required (Wallace and Hall, 1994). The development of Senior Leadership Teams, Gronn (2003) argues, results from a range of influences, including greater "managerial complexity in school management and administration through a desire for collaboration" (p.111).

The desire to collaborate spreads the multitude of burdens of the many tasks. In managing and fulfilling these tasks they are aware that what they do, how they do it will be monitored and reviewed by all those who have a vested interest. A desire for collaboration requires the Senior Leadership Team to understand the concept of a team within its own sphere (Ehrich & Cranston, 2004; Cranston & Ehrich, 2005). In understanding the concept of teamwork within the Senior Leadership Team it has become evident that while leadership styles and practices of solo dominant leaders are still occasionally being encountered, there is a shift away from this framework to a more 'teamwork' model (Hall & Wallace, 1996).

The evolution of managing high schools recognises the multiple complexities and busy times of the task. It acknowledges the growth of both institutional size and workloads where principals find themselves sharing their leadership role in some measure with other senior managers (Wallace & Huckman, 1996). There is recognition and awareness of the legitimacy and desire of others to not only see the school and students be successful but also to fulfil their own professional and personal needs (Hall & Wallace, 1996).

The importance of the team is driven by a number of factors. Foremost of these has been the desire to develop what Gronn (1998) called "collaborative modes of work performance" (p.3). This idea is further based on the notion that outcomes are likely to be achieved more readily by working as a team opposed to individuals working in isolation, (Hall &

Wallace, 1996; Cardno, 1998; Ehrich & Cranston, 2004). Cardno (1998) in referring to teamwork pointed out that:

“Teamwork is important because it has both idealistic and practical dimensions. Ideally, it is connected to values of cooperation, while on the practical level it provides the means for functional groups to carry out tasks itself-managed school structures”. (p.47)

Principals do not work alone. Instead they work within multiple partnerships (Cardno, 1998; Ehrich & Cranston, 2004). They provide a conduit between partnerships. Principals work with teachers who desire to have more of a say, placing strong values on a transparent consultation process when it deals, specifically with issues teachers are expected to implement within their respective classrooms (Hall & Wallace, 1996).

Senior Leadership Teams require a culture of teamwork. This teamwork develops when there is an agreed understanding of shared beliefs and values about working together to manage the school (Wallace and Huckman, 1996). Wallace and Hall (1996) go on to suggest that the success of a team is realised when “synergy is created’ (p.299). Synergy is the active participation of each individual within the team who willingly cooperates towards being part of a working consensus (Wallace & Hall, 1994; Hall & Wallace, 1996; Wallace, 2002). The working consensus allows the group to do its job on the understanding that the individuals within the group will work towards fulfilling the objectives of the group despite issues which are always prevalent within any group.

Eventually the team becomes self motivating (Wallace & Hall, 1994). Those within the group fulfil their respective roles by being realistic about what they are able to achieve (Hall & Wallace, 1996; Wallace, 2002). They work towards meeting their goals not only as individuals but also as a working consensus as part of the group. It is the collectivisation of the group which makes the group a renewable source able to function under its own steam.

It is this idea of the team that is attractive. It provides opportunities to share tasks and be part of the decision making process. It is the recognition of a shared approach towards meeting goals and fulfilling individual desires to further their experience and develop their skills. But all this talk of team work comes to nothing if the Principal does not support the idea or the direction (Wallace & Hall, 1994).

Leadership within the Senior Leadership Team develops by alternating from person to person depending on the needs of the group (Hall & Wallace, 1996). Its performance results are greater than what the same individuals would produce in a non-team mode of behaviour because it is able to deliver both individual and collective work products. It is the collective work products, mutual accountability, and ability to shift the leadership role that creates both higher performance capability and greater leadership capacity.

Micro politics is found in Senior Leadership Teams (Blasé, 1991; Enrich & Blasé & Anderson, 1995; Lindle, 1999; West, 1999; Cranston, 2004).

Blasé (1991) describes micro politics as:

“power and how people use it to influence others and to protect themselves. It is about conflict and how people compete with each other to get what they want. It is about cooperation and how people build support for themselves to achieve their ends. It is about what people in all social settings think about and have strong feelings about, but what is so often unspoken and not easily observed” (p.1)

Micro-politics promotes power plays in Senior Leadership Teams. Hoyle (1986) defines micro politics as “strategies by which individuals and groups in organisational contexts seek to use their resources of authority and influence to further their interests” (p.126). The description by Blasé (1991) and definition by Hoyles (1986) highlights some keys points in relation to micro politics and its direct link to Senior Leadership Teams.

Specifically they point out the key notions of power, authority, openness, honesty, trust, relationships and working together towards the same aims. Recent research into micro politics includes studies of relationships between principals and teachers (Blase, 1990; Greenfield, 1991), assistant principals and teachers (Marshall, 1991) and teachers and students (Blase, 1991).

Principals hold the most influence in Senior Leadership Teams. Taking a view of Senior Leadership Teams through micro politics in high schools is to view both the individuals and group's ability to power play, influence, dominate and manipulate within a team structure (Enrich & Cranston, 2004). The ability to allow this ultimately however rests with the principal. The principal holds both the position and the authority to create the conditions to allow or not to allow others to participate with the Senior Leadership Teams (Cranston & Ehrich, 2005). Micro politics therefore is conditional on the rules and boundaries allowed by the principal.

As mentioned earlier however, principals do not work in isolation and in the Senior Leadership Teams this is no different. Principals are not only the leader of the team but also a member of it (Ehrich & Cranston, 2004). To undermine the working function of a team is to undercut the creditability and synergy of the team which happens when working with others and a few principals, into today's world of understanding of leadership, would be prepared to pursue such a course of action (Wallace & Hall, 1994).

An effective Senior Leadership Team is a utopia which Hall and Wallace (1996) argue is "unattainable within the messy reality of everyday life in education" (p.297). The unassailability of such a utopian dream does not however, limit Senior Leadership Teams to attempt to achieve that which is seen as unachievable. Achieving a sense of teamwork is characterised by a combination of conflict and consensus (Hall and Wallace, 1996). Senior Leadership Teams often find themselves moving alternatively between conflict and consensus. This movement is a reflection of the

highs and lows encountered regularly by Senior Leadership Teams and in turn Heads of Faculties and other internal and external groups.

Adopting a team approach comes with its own set of risks. Its success is conditional on a number of components. These components include the individual willingness of those within the group to work together for its success. A willingness to work together however, on its own, is not enough to ensure success. Thus calling a group a team does not necessarily mean that the group either functions as a team or that they possess the ability to articulate the workings of a team.

Senior Leadership Teams face difficulties. Having acquired the public perception of an effective Senior Leadership Team is one thing. What happens behind Senior Leadership Team's closed doors can be quite different (Torrington & Weightman, 1989). Wallace and Hall (1996) note that effective teams work only when all members of the team are committed to teamwork and that members of a team can, should they wish, undermine the team by refusing to abide by the game plan or act in such a way that is in clear conflict with the team's direction.

Some Senior Leadership Teams are ineffective. According to the Secondary Heads Association (1983) one third of Senior Leadership Teams are ineffective. In their findings some team members were uncommitted to their role and the principal continued to dominate the group rendering the team ineffective and redundant. More recent research by Wallace and Hall (1994) suggests that such problems are enduring because they are underpinned by fundamental differences in beliefs with the team having neither the knowledge, ability, or desire to work through such problems. Equally destructive is an inability by all team members to make an unequal contribution to the work of the Senior Leadership Team (Wallace & Huckman, 1996).

Conflict can exist within Senior Leadership Teams. Differences include demanding roles where the responsibilities are beyond the individuals'



ability and capacity to fulfill the job; conflict between the roles of two people where job boundaries lack clarity and are poorly defined; restrictive roles where they are locked into routine with little or no room to manoeuvre forcing them to conform or rebel; role encroachment where some in the team perceive their territory is being crossed into, and a lack of colleague support where an individual's keenness to implement new ideas, inspired by their training or a course, is diluted and shelved when colleagues are not exposed to the same motivation (Hall & Wallace, 1996). Conflict also exists when there is a different understanding between Principals, teachers, parents and students of the roles and responsibilities of Senior Leadership Teams (Torrey, 2003).

Nowhere is there more evidence of conflict and consensus than when it comes to decision making (Hall & Wallace, 1996). The extent to which teamwork can be seen to be successful is in the level of contribution provided by individuals of the team and the strength of their decision (Hall & Wallace, 1996). Decision making as a team, within a team is at the discretion of the principal. It is the principal alone, who creates the opportunities and conditions in which a framework for decisions are made. Within this framework the other members of the Senior Leadership Team must be willing to participate in the conditions and opportunities created by the principal.

Major decisions are made by consensus after the rules are agreed upon. Consensus is not the same as a democracy. Consensus allows members to contribute their points of view and ideas equally, but they are also expected to be prepared to compromise their position in order to allow a working consensus which is acceptable to everyone. A working consensus generates power which according to Wallace and Huckman (1996) "implies making things happen" (p. 311) where resources and the combined efforts of staff are used to achieve desired ends.

Difficulties arise when decisions are made by Senior Leadership Teams behind closed doors in the absence of other staff (Wallace and Huckman,

1996). To a certain degree the Senior Leadership Team decides just how much influence those outside the Senior Leadership Team are permitted to apply on the functions of the team. A very fine line exists between being transparent while at the same time not allowing the integrity of the team to be undermined. At the best of times this line is difficult to balance but a Senior Leadership Team's ability to be transparent while maintaining their creditability is strengthened through its consultation process.

While consultation and teamwork go hand in hand it can be at odds when different parties have differing ideas of how consultation works within the decision making process. Consultation is not decision making but the opening of the lines of communication in order to allow the exchange of ideas and views of issues up for discussion (Hall & Wallace, 1996). Senior Leadership Teams work hard to convince others of their genuine desire to consult. That is not to say that there will always be those who remain suspicious of such genuineness and will argue that the Senior Leadership Teams are simply going through the motions in order to show that they can tick off the consultation box, but who have, in reality, already made up their minds what they want to do. Hall and Wallace (1996) challenged this by saying that the Senior Leadership Teams they studied did not show this level of elitism but use "strenuous efforts to create glass rather than brick walls with a door slightly open" (p.305).

Contributions through consultation are purposefully managed. Heads of Faculties are entitled, as are others, to be equally heard but their influence does not move into the realms of whole school decision making. Their influence rests with representing those within their faculty area. Heads of Faculties show leadership within their faculty but at the same time demonstrate followership by implementing Senior Leadership Team decisions.

Consultation is an active two way living process. Senior Leadership Teams must be open and available to accept what comes (Wallace & Huckman, 1996). By the same token others must be willing to engage in the process

without expecting to make the decision themselves. This exchange can be more profound and sincere when a two way channel is created allowing a flow of information to pass through (Hall & Wallace, 1996).

Communication exists for the purpose of exchange of information. This exchange between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties is vital if for nothing else but to avoid alienating colleagues. Communication is divided into two simple parts – receiving information and giving information. On one hand receiving information takes the form of monitoring, consultation or placing items on the agenda for meetings and maintaining an overview of the school through the eyes and ears of other colleagues. Giving information on the other hand can be distributed through minutes of meetings, presentations and newsletters. Developing effective structures and procedures for communication with staff outside the Senior Leadership Team is a high priority (Wallace & Huckman, 1996)

The communication role of the Senior Leadership Team offers a means for working on the staff culture, both within and beyond the team. Senior Leadership Teams have the potential in providing the Principal with a form of influence over the rest of the staff through what may be termed 'cultural leadership', where the Senior Leadership Team symbolises good practice that other staff can emulate (Wallace and Huckman, 1996, p. 314).

Leadership within the school should provide consistent and frequent communication about the vision of where the organisation is headed and what the culture of the school must become in order to get there. Successful agents of organisational change never miss an opportunity to remind employees of where the organisation is going. Senior Leaders can always find a way to talk about the vision when answering questions and issuing new policies. The vision can be communicated to new and prospective employees during recruitment and orientation.

Creating an effective Senior Leadership Team takes time and commitment. The length of time that it takes is dependent on a multiple of

factors including the commitment of each individual within the team to work towards making the process work. It may mean that attitudes and personalities may have to adapt. It may mean that responsibilities within the team may have to be reassigned. It may mean that some may be required to be replaced before progress can be made and steps towards an alternative future is realised. If the desire of a Senior Leadership Team is to move towards being more effective as a team it will ensure that the best practices are being utilised. Best practice is used to identify what has a higher chance of being successful. For Senior Leadership Teams there are six approaches which Wallace and Huckman (1996) argue will help Senior Leadership Teams become more effective.

First is to have clearly defined roles of the Senior Leadership Team. Simply put, this means job descriptions and job clarification. Ensure team members are absolutely clear of their contribution and how it adds to the overall progress of the team. Make certain that they are aware of what their individual targets are and how they will be measured, evaluated and how their targets contribute to the targets of the group.

Second is to establish a shared Senior Leadership Team culture. As discussed earlier this means a culture of teamwork. It means creating opportunities for different perspectives among team members to be heard while being managed within an agreed framework of a working consensus. Shared beliefs and values are focused towards fulfilling a common vision for the school. To this end team members will also need to put aside individual interests for the sake of achieving whole-school outcomes.

Third is creating positive attitudes among other staff towards the Senior Leadership Team. It is crucial that the Senior Leadership Team is accepted by those outside the team not because of the position they have collectively and individually hold but, as a result of the effectiveness they collectively demonstrate.

Fourth is to ensure that the Senior Leadership Team is an efficient body. Efficiency means that meetings are scheduled, have agendas, are well planned, purposeful, focussed, minutes are kept and that outcomes from meetings or decisions made are circulated as widely as possible using multiple mediums of communication available to all.

Fifth is making sure that the Senior Leadership Team remains flexible in regards to who can have access to them. This is an acknowledgement that the team will not always have the answers or the ideas but instead taps into its human resources and staff expertise. Bringing people in recognises the experience that others may have and shows that the team as a body is not shut off behind closed doors.

Last is establishing effective communication with other staff. Strong communication links are crucial for the flow of dialogue on multiple topics. It is vital for raising concerns staff feel unhappy about while at the same time distributing decisions, creating and maintaining discussions, or monitoring what goes on within the school thereby enabling the Senior Leadership Team to keep a grasp on the pulse of the school.

These approaches highlight a reoccurring emergent theme that in New Zealand High Schools - relationships matter. The experiences in New Zealand are supported by those from other parts of the world such as Stortz and Nestor (2008) which centred on relationships with urban students in the US or Sammet (2010) whose research focused on adolescent school girls. Relationships in education are constantly being made, remade, strengthened or even dissolved based on experiences that take place between individuals (Eames & Stewart, 2008). Whether these relationships focus on the efficiencies of systems and structures or on the development of individuals is debatable, what is certain is that within any organisation including high school settings, people will connect with people (Kezar, 2004; Reina & Reina, 2006; Eames & Stewart, 2008).

Leadership styles affect organisation relationships. Transformational and Distributed Leadership develops relationships by bringing working relationship closer together (Zohar & Tenne-Gazit, 2008). These connections are made through social exchange (Sias, 2005) and developed through high levels of trust, loyalty and respect (Reina & Reina 2006; Tse, Dasborough & Ashkanasy, 2008; Li & Hung, 2009). Relationships are strengthened by developing individuals and providing opportunities for growth (Gronn, 2000; Bennet, Harvey, Wise, & Woods, 2003; Frost, 2005).

### **Organisational Relationships in Education**

Effective organisation relationships are crucial to the achievement of educational objectives. Kezar (2004) clarifies organisational relationships by distinguishing between 'conventional wisdom' and 'recent wisdom'. Conventional wisdom is about structures, systems and procedures. Its aim is to improve organisations by improving structures, systems and procedures. Studies show that while changes to these areas can improve efficiency it does little to improve effectiveness Morgan (1997). Recent wisdom on the other hand challenges bureaucratic and scientific notions of organisations by focussing on the humanity of organisations. Kezar (2004) credits this shift from conventional to recent wisdom to the development of cultural/political theories of organisation and to the development of human relationships.

Underpinning this shift is the idea that relationships are more important than structures "because organisations must be able to alter structures and processes to adapt to circumstances" (Kezar, 2004, p. 39) or as Wheatley (1996) pointed out, structures and processes are not the heart of organisations – people and relationships are. Reynolds (1997) further argues "It is the relationship between people and not the people themselves which distinguish a great organisation" (p.5). Relationships in education are so fundamental that its presence is hardly noticed in the

daily routine of the profession. Relationships in education are complex because they are vertical, lateral, diagonal, frontward and backwards all at the same time.

In the field of education Barth (1991) argues that “what needs to be improved in schools is the quality of the interpersonal relationships that are at the core of the educational process” (p.82). Studies have shown that the relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty are related to past experiences (Hoff, 2008). Past experiences with Senior Leadership determines the level of trust, belief and involvement Heads of Faculty will have with Senior Leaders.

Hoff's (2008) examination of relationships in schools looks at perceptions of fairness as demonstrated by Senior Leadership Team towards workers. Referred to as 'organisational justice' fairness is a theoretical concept describing fair place work practices (Muchinsky, 2003; Moorman, Blakely & Niehoff, 1999). Moorman, (1991) notes that workplace justice is experienced when employees receive recognition for their efforts, when the organisational environment is such that workers are able to contribute to the decision making process and when workers feel that their contribution is genuinely appreciated by Senior Leadership Team. Organ (1998) reveals that as employees become convinced that the organisation cares for them and has their best interests in mind, the employees are more likely to return the support given to them back to the organisation.

The idea of employees 'giving back' to the organisation echoes other studies such as Blau's (1964) social exchange theory, Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades (2002) theory of organisational support and Gouldner's (1960) norm of reciprocity. According to these studies humans will act and behave in such a way as to mirror personal experiences. Thus, in terms of developing organisational relationships, high schools that provide employees with fairness, equity and justice are investing in the future of their own school.

The 'pay off' from the investment for Senior Leaders is employees who return supportive actions and behaviour back to the school.

Relationship development theories are just theories. Hoff's (2008) conclusions demonstrate the reality as opposed to hopeful imagination. His findings suggest that some members on Senior Leadership Teams are "apathetic to employees, inequitable by adhering to one-sided opinions and disingenuous with decisions" (p. 85). Criticisms aimed at Senior Leaders also highlight a lack of Senior Leadership knowledge regarding educational matters and their "nonchalant attitude at becoming better informed within pivotal issues within the school's organisation" (p. 85).

### **Changes in Organisational Relationships in New Zealand Education**

The relationship between educators and Government in New Zealand has been in a constant state of flux over the last twenty five years. The flux is a reaction to national and international changes which aims to realign education to meet changing needs. As changes in New Zealand education took place so did the relationship between those who championed the changes and those who were expected to carry them out.

Boards of Trustees and Senior Leadership Teams face increased workloads. The relationship between successive New Zealand Governments and the secondary school sector can be described as co-operative at the best of times and tense at its worst. While no single event can be attributed to the changing nature of this relationship it is fair to say that the educational changes made in the last 25 years have proven more frustrating than the previous 144 years to the development of an effective relationship. By exploring these historical changes to the New Zealand education system it is possible to appreciate the relationship that currently exists in the New Zealand education system and thereby the tensions between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty. It is also possible to identify a common theme emerging from these changes which run throughout New Zealand's short educational history.



The early education system in New Zealand was fragmented, provincial, unorganised, and controlled by the provinces. Control of education in New Zealand remained with the provinces until 1875, with central government taking full control with the passing of the Education Act in 1877. With the provinces gone the Education Act of 1877, legislated for the first time a national educational programme. The purpose of the education programme was, according to Charles Bowen, Minister of Justice, to stop “children growing in absolute ignorance” (New Zealand Parliamentary debate, 1877, vol.24, p.31-32). This would be accomplished by making education “free, secular, and compulsory for children across the country” (Rata & Sullivan, 2009. p.7). Additionally the Education Act of 1877 provided a national administrative structure made of three tiers: Department of Education, District Education Boards and Local School Committees.

The primary role of education was to educate children in values and morals. This reaction was in response to out of control young people and it was Charles Bowen who again declared that education “teaches the self-control that is absolutely necessary for a civilised state or society (New Zealand Parliamentary Debate, 1877, Vol. 24, p.32). Education was also responsible for developing worker skills and to prepare children to take their place in a prosperous democracy (Rata & Sullivan, 2009). The educational system changed little in the intervening years up to 1935 even though education for boys and girls differed greatly in both content and purpose.

The 1930's saw huge changes for New Zealand. The experiences of the Great Depression and the election of New Zealand's first Labour Government brought social, political and economic changes. Changes in education were also taking place with shifts in international pedagogy; education for 'natives' and a move away from the ridged structures of passive conformity to placing the child at the centre of their education (Rata & Sullivan, 2009).

In the 1940s the New Zealand Government audited the education system. Their aim was to see if the education system still met the needs of New Zealanders. The outcome of that audit was the *Thomas Report 1943*. The Thomas Report introduced a common national curriculum with students receiving the same basic education. The new curriculum was to provide “basic personal and social development...and create an awareness of Western democratic values and a sense of belonging” (Rata & Sullivan, 2009. p.18).

The boom of the immediate post World War Two period was followed by the economic decline of the late 1950s and early 1960s. With the country again facing tough times the education system was again audited and the results were released in the *Currie Report, 1962*. This report largely supported the system of the day and concluded that the aim of ‘equality of opportunity’ was appropriate and the state was working towards fulfilling its aim. By 1974, however ideas began to surface that ‘equality of opportunity’ in education did not exist because of differences in social and economic circumstances. Difficulties in the education system were being paralleled by a failing national economy, protests at home towards New Zealand’s involvement in the Vietnam War and protests over Maori land issues.

Facing an economic collapse the 1984 the Labour Government introduced sweeping reforms underpinned by a free-market economic policy. As part of their reforms the Government requested another education review, this time written by economists from the Treasury Department whose task was to find away out of the countries economic ills. The resulting report, released in 1987, argued that “education is not in fact, a public good”, but in fact “shared the main characteristics of other commodities traded in the market-place” (NZ Treasury, 1987, pp.32-33).

Neo-liberalist policies take hold in New Zealand. Each successive New Zealand government since 1984 has actively encouraged neo-liberalism in education with the current National government embracing the same idea

that neo-liberalism is the solution to an educational system under stress (Codd, 2005). Influenced initially by the changes in British education policy (Thrupp, 2008) this push has shifted schools from being seen as a public good, to seeing schools as a business entity prone to the forces of business markets and primarily directed to the acquisition of wealth and the promotion of individual selfishness (Codd, 2005)

New neo-liberalist thinking and policies bring new changes to education. The introduction of neo-liberalism in education brought with it new terms like marketing, market choice, competition, profit, school self-management, efficiency, and accountability. These terms were being used to redefine an education system that was being criticised by government reformers as being out of date and long overdue for a reform (Codd, 2005). Treasury's *Picot Report, 1988* informed the Government that formal education was an unavoidable part of the market economy and that the Government could no longer ignore its 'profitability' of its expenditure on education (New Zealand Treasury, 1987).

Education becomes a financial commodity. New Zealand Treasury was to pursue an agenda based on human capital and achieving set economic objectives. Their role was to reduce the size of the central bureaucracy, abolish regional education boards and convert schools into self-managing units competing with each other for students and resources (Codd, 2005). This agenda viewed education not as a private good but vital to meeting economic objectives. (Codd, 2005) Economic objectives promoted competition and choice which, it was argued, would lead to better school performances (Lauder and Hughes, 1990). Schools found themselves in a market – a schooling market where they were subject to market forces of free choice within that market (Government of New Zealand, 1988). Free choice provided schools and parents the option to determine which school their children would attend and who would attend those schools with them (Codd, 2005; Thrupp, 2007).

New changes instigated major philosophical and fundamental shifts in education and how it was to be perceived and used in the future. The relationships fostered within the education profession over time had become strained. Trust between educationalists and government had been lost and satisfaction had been eroded with the benefits of the relationships between education and government being out of balance heavily in favour of government. Commitment had been lost with some feeling that the relationship was no longer worth spending energy on to maintain and promote but knowing that a day to day working relationship would still continue.

Change strains the relationships. This is demonstrated no more clearly than in the New Zealand education sector since the mid 1980s. Since then the relationship between the Education sector and Government has been tense, anxious and frustrating in light of sweeping reforms. These reforms brought with them the restructuring of the education system in order to realign it to meet national economic needs. Expectations and workloads for Principals and Senior Leadership Teams intensified requiring school restructuring to meet these demands. Heads of Faculty assumed burdens once carried collectively by Senior Leadership Teams. Practices that develop an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty are critical as it faces current and future change, and vital for the collegial support it offers.

# **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

## **Introduction**

The primary objective of this research is to gain an understanding of the nature of an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in New Zealand High Schools. In order to best achieve this, a qualitative method of research is used. As stated in the previous chapter, an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty is vital in order to achieve common goals. This study seeks to understand the nature of this relationship.

This chapter outlines research methodologies. It provides an overview of educational research and then identifies a range of reasons for using a case study design which sits within a qualitative research paradigm. The processes for selecting the five case studies schools for the study is outlined and the limitations of the case study design are examined. The data gathering methods adopted for the research are explained and justified and consideration is given to issues of validity, reliability and research ethics within the research process.

## **Overview of Educational Research**

### **What is Educational Research?**

Research is a process of steps used to collect and analyse information for the purpose of increasing our understanding of a topic or issue (Cresswell, 2008). Educational research is the process undertaken with the intent to understand the changing nature of education. The purpose of educational research is to “to provide a basis for action” (Husen, 1997, p.20). To this

end the aim of this study is to identify elements of what Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in New Zealand High Schools do to establish and nurture an effective relationship. This study seeks to provide a basis for action. Advocates of educational research hold that it is a powerful basis upon which policy, decision making and practice can be developed (Wellington, 2000). Opponents however argue that educational research is never stable and constantly changing thereby making the field of educational research unsettled (de Landsheere, 1997).

### **Nature of Educational Research**

Educational research has and is dominated by quantitative approaches (Cresswell, 2008; Levy-Malmberg, 2010). This scientific approach provides “the clearest possible ideal of knowledge” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007. p.11) and is seen as “hard, objective and tangible demanding from researchers an observer’s role together with an allegiance to the methods of natural science” (Cohen et al, 2007. p.7). Since the beginning of the twentieth century the most important research movement has been the emergence and acceptance of qualitative research.

Levy-Malmberg (2010) refers to qualitative research as being “equal in its contribution, value and benefit to quantitative research” (p.108) with the scientific model in education facing criticism for its narrow and restricted methodology (Lather, 2006). Educational research does not fall into the domain of science but into the arena of humanities and as such is value laden and largely behaviourist (Lather, 2006). The focus for qualitative research is the exploration of human experiences. Qualitative research is characterised by listening to the views of participants while gathering data in places where people work and live with the aim of improving people’s lives (Cresswell, 2008).

The nature of effective relationships between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties reflects educational research by focusing on the experiences in the work place. Their experiences were gathered to explore

the relationship between these individuals. The experiences are emotional and real. They describe the characteristics of qualitative research through lived experiences. They abandon scientific research approaches reflecting instead a social exchange.

### **Educational Research Paradigms**

A paradigm is a theoretical perspective - a school of thought or position that an individual or group takes as they look at the world in order to understand it. New paradigms emerge as researchers look to understand the world from outside traditional models (Fonow & Cook, 2005). Up until the late nineteenth century the positivist paradigm dictated research methods (Levy-Malmbery, 2010). Its position is based on certainty and is a favourite for the researchers of natural science (Lather, 2006; Cohen et al, 2007). The emergence of the anti-positivist movement promotes, amongst others, two other paradigms - interpretive and critical paradigms (Cohen et al, 2007).

The positivist paradigm is predominantly quantitative. By using observation and reason as means of understanding behaviour, this paradigm is hard, real, external, and is concerned with identifying and defining elements (Lather, 2006). Connections are made with absolutist external reality and advocate the ideals of measurability, predictability and the construction of laws and rules of behaviour (Cohen et al, 2007). Positivism is static and unemotional thereby making a conscientious decision to rely not on understanding but certainty thereby rejecting the human side of research.

Interpretive paradigm rejects the position of natural science. This study is based on the interpretive paradigm for the purpose of understanding the world of human experience. The interactions between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty are viewed with the hope of understanding behaviour and the environment they operate in. This paradigm, like the study is subjective and unique, requiring researchers to be involved with their subjects. It is softer, personal, and humanly kind and is concerned

with the ways in which the individual creates and interprets the world in which they live (Cohen, et al, 2007). This paradigm promotes understanding of individuals' interpretation of the world and is dedicated to studying the individual and its concern for the individual. Meanings and interpretation are paramount in this paradigm. While this paradigm is seen as more humanly respective critics declare it has abandoned scientific procedures of verification and that methods used here are inaccurate and less controlled thereby carrying greater risks for misinterpretation (Cohen et al, 2007).

The critical paradigm advocates a society that is based on equality and whose purpose is to make change. This paradigm seeks to put right injustices and promotes individual and group freedoms within a democratic society. (Cohen et al, 2007). Issues of repression are challenged, while at the same time promoting voice, ideology, power, participation, representation, and inclusion. It challenges illegitimate power and questions restrictive practices seeking to transform and question (Cohen et al, 2007). The critical paradigm values uncertainty. The aim here is the deconstruction of the world and what it values while its purpose is to change and emancipate. These groups include feminists (Reinharz, 1992; Dalgado, 1998; Lather, 1988, 2002; Fonow & Cook, 2005) minority cultural and racial groups (Smith, 1999) and members of the gay and lesbian community (Britzman, 1995). Their voices have opened new fields of educational research.

### **Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research is powerful because it is personal. Because of the nature of the study the responses provided are personal. They deal with experiences of both Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in New Zealand High Schools. Qualitative research evokes memories and images of events that have imprinted themselves upon the mind of the participant. They are stories which stir a multiple of emotions from jubilation to anger in a short amount of time. It is the lived experience of the individual and their interaction with the environment and people around



them. Because they are lived experiences they provide a claim to knowledge (Eisenhart, 2006) thereby allowing them to make some sense of their world in which they live. In this realm of study the researcher relies on, but is not limited to, descriptions of firsthand experience. For the researcher there are constant reminders of the seriousness of their task and the responsibilities of what they do and to whom they are accountable. Upon them rests the role of representing the data in such a way so that it adequately captures what is going on as well as representing what is being studied.

For qualitative research Eisenhart (2006) argues that “The most important function of qualitative data is to depict for the reader the experience of the researcher in the field” (p.598). In so doing researchers try hard to not only convey what happen but to provide a scene on what it is like to be part of the experience. The experience is recorded in terms of,

“...what is looks like; feels like; and perhaps sounds like, tastes, or smells like to be in the setting. They [researchers] write descriptions of what people spend their time doing, and what they talk about and say they think and feel, as they engage in the activities of their lives” (Eisenhart, 2006, p.568).

Unlike quantitative research where the researcher is detached from the research, qualitative researchers are much more personally involved in the research (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Tomal, 2003).

### **The ‘lived experience’ and Phenomenology**

In its most basic form, ‘lived experience’ involves our immediate, pre-reflective consciousness of life, a state where a person becomes aware of an experience while experiencing it (van Manen, 1997). Van Manen (1997) provides the illustration of a teacher who, at the start of the year or in their very first teaching experience, becomes very aware that they are being “looked at” by the class. The result is awkwardness and it is at that

exact point that the teacher becomes aware of his/her experience while living it. Later, when reflecting back on the experience, do they try to understand the experience they had. Lived experience is not understood immediately as it happens, but appreciating the experience in retrospect. Thus researching lived experience is not simply a recall of events as they are remembered but the recollection of the moments of the experience as they have lived through it.

Phenomenology is the study of the life world – it is the world as we immediately experience it pre-reflectively and not a world which we attempt to understand, label or think about after the event (Shutz & Luckmann, 1973). In the context of this study, the ideas of phenomenology are captured through the ‘essence’ of human experiences (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2010). The experiences of the Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty demonstrate the nature and meaning of their everyday experiences of relationships pre-reflectively (van Manen, 1997). There is a desire to understand the social and psychological perspectives of the Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in this study while attempting to capture the view of the reality described in the words of the participants.

## **Case Studies**

A comparative research design using a multiple case study approach is appropriate to my research question because it is able to cover a range of complexities and dynamics. The use of a case study allows both social and organisational elements within a high school context to be examined.

Choosing a case study method permits a close examination of the nature of effective relationships Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty within historical and social contexts. The use of more than one school in case study research is more prevalent, and in the study of organisations, has emerged as a separate research design in its own right (Bryman,

2004). The main argument Bryman (2004) suggests, for using this design, is that the comparisons which are formed from researching more than one case, can be helpful in building concepts associated with emerging theory. Features of commonality and differentiation are observed and, in multi-site case studies, the validity of the findings is strengthened (Keeves, 1997).

### **What is a case?**

Merriam (1988) describes case studies as a “bounded system” (p.9) which examines a specific phenomenon like small groups, an event, a person or an organisation. The aim of the ‘bounded system’ or ‘case’ is to answer a concern, understand an issue, improve practice, inform readers or explore a hypothesis. Merriam (1988) adds that by “focusing on a specific phenomenon or entity (“the case”), this approach aims to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon” (p.10). In defining what a case is Becker (1968) argues that the purposes of a case study are two-fold: “to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the group under study” and “to develop general theoretical statements about regularities in social structure and process” (p.11).

While case studies can be used for both qualitative and quantitative research it is generally accepted that case studies are more aligned with qualitative research. Being qualitative in nature case study researchers ask themselves a number of searching questions such as “What do I want to know at the end of the study?” Will the study change, help or improve practice, something or someone?

### **Characteristics of Case Studies**

The characteristics of a case study have been described as being particularistic, descriptive, heuristic and inductive (Merriam, 1988; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Particularistic refers to case studies that focus on a particular situation, event, programme or phenomenon. This is important for what the phenomenon reveals or represents. Descriptive elements signify that a case study is a rich, complete, literal description of the incident or entity being studied. Heuristic indicates that the reader’s

understanding of the phenomena is extended or as Merriam (1988) writes it “can bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader’s experience or confirm what is known” (p.13). Inductive denotes that case studies rely on inductive reasoning. Generalisations, concepts, or hypothesis emerge from an examination of the data. There is a discovery of new relationships, concepts, and understandings.

### **Types of Case Studies**

Educational case studies are developed through the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, psychology and history. Case studies are categorised by what they produce at the end. Specifically, different types of case studies are classified as being interpretative, descriptive or, evaluative.

Descriptive case studies provide a detailed account of the event being studied. They are useful in presenting basic useful information and do not aim to analyse or make generalisations. Interpretative case studies take descriptive details and uses them to “develop conceptual categories, support, or challenge assumptions” (Merriam, 1988 p. 28). This research reflects and aligns with an interpretative case study model. The aim of this study is to gather data from Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in order to interpret the nature of their relationship for the purpose of understanding it. Evaluative case studies involve description, explanation, and judgement. According to Guba and Lincoln (1981) this type of case study “provides a thick description”, is grounded, is holistic and life-like and simplifies data to be considered by the reader, illuminates meanings, and can communicate tacit knowledge” (pp. 375-376). They continue by saying that “this type of case study weighs information to produce judgement. Judgement is the final and ultimate act of evaluation” (p.375).

### **Limitations of case studies**

Case studies have limitations. One limitation is that generalisations can not be made using case studies because case studies are determined by the context of that particular school (Cohen et al., 2000). Stake (1995) however argues that case studies do not rely on making generalisations but on the uniqueness of the particular case. Yin (2003) supports case studies by stating that they increase depth and understanding because it comes from multiple sources of evidence. Yin (2003) further notes that although case study design is restrictive, because it relies on a few cases and therefore generalization can not be made, the findings can be generalised on a theoretical level.

Findings determined from one context can find similarities in other areas. This outcome provides comfort and reassurance with other teachers who realise that they are not alone in their practice (Pring, 2000). While generalisations may not be possible using case studies the validity can be enhanced by ensuring that the data gathered is sufficiently rich so that readers can determine whether relevancy across context is possible but this depends on the clarity of the descriptions (Cohen et al, 2007).

### **Validity and Reliability**

Validity, reliability and quality promote accuracy (Nardi, 2003). Validity in qualitative research includes honesty, depth, richness, the participants, and the objectivity of the researcher. The interview questions are piloted so as to identify any difficulties, ambiguity and relevance to the study thereby enhancing reliability.

In this study multiple participants from multiple schools were used. The participants came from different backgrounds with varied years of teaching experience. Their responses were unique, personal and rich in detail. The participating schools covered a wide range of rural and urban locations as well as decile ratings.

Maintaining quality of research is vital for reliability and validity. In order to protect reliability and validity, practical measures are put in place to ensure that quality in educational research is maintained. Stacy (2000) argues the point of best evidence and discusses issues particular to educational research. She goes on to highlight the need for 'clarity of methodology' to include justification for the study as well as triangulation, trustworthiness and reflexivity. Tooley (2001) goes further to say that in order to meet a minimum requirement to satisfy both new knowledge and quality a series of questions would need to be answered affirmatively:

- Does the research involve triangulation to establish the trustworthiness of its findings?
- Does the research avoid a sampling bias?
- Does the research use primary sources in the literature review?
- Does the research avoid partisanship in the way the research is carried out and in the interpretation of the data?
- Do the conclusions follow from the evidence presented?

(pp. 123-124)

These questions (along with others) ensure, according to Tooley (2001), that research provides a serious contribution to knowledge concluding that there is a "severe weaknesses in educational research" (p.138). They provide a checkpoint for research scrutiny. Validity and reliability in qualitative research focuses on trustworthiness and rigour of the process, findings and conclusions.

Triangulation is used by many researches in order to provide creditability to their work. This method provides greater confidence in the findings because it uses more than one approach. Triangulation is used on multiple levels including data gathering, theory and methodology. While popular, this method has its critics who claim that triangulation causes conflict whereby the researcher uses it not to find explanations but to reject other findings as being flawed (Stacy, 2001). But the benefits of triangulation out

weigh its flaws and as Tooley (2001) notes this method goes along way to determining reliability and validity.

## **Research Process**

The main objective of this study was to identify key elements that determine which practices currently being utilised by Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty encourages an effective relationship and which practices hinder it.

For logistical and practical reasons it was necessary to complete the research within a tight timeframe (Cohen et al, 2007). At the same time I did not want to over burden members of Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty with additional stress on top of already busy schedules. With this in mind I decided to limit the number of interviewees in each of the five schools to one member of Senior Leadership Team and one Head of Faculty.

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data. This method allows for the triangulation of data across the participants (Denzin, 1997; Cohen et al, 2007). The first part of the interview was to gather data related to general information about the interviewees including their length of service as teachers, service within the school, length of time, respective roles and the composition of the school. The questions that followed were open ended with the flow of the interview being determined by the flow of the exchange. To that end, while questions were prepared before hand, exactly when they were asked, if they were asked at all, and in which order they were asked was again determined by the responses of the participant.

### **Selecting the case study schools**

Selecting participants required identifying a 'population' and 'sample' (Nardi, 2003). This study called for the maximum involvement from five secondary high schools using a purposive sampling from the Hamilton - Greater Waikato area. A multiple case study design was selected as this would enable the identification of emerging themes across a range of selected schools. Multiple schools sites were chosen as this would add strength to the data and allowed for the corroboration of evidence across multiple sources (Cohen et al, 2007).

One of the initial issues was a tight time-frame in which to conduct the research. Candidate schools would have to meet the following criteria before the school was invited to participate. The schools were required to be co-educational state schools. They would be required to represent a spread of decile rating, student population size, urban and semi-rural mix and would also be required to be within 45 minutes travel time from Hamilton City Boundaries for reasons of practicality. With the criteria established 11 possible candidate schools were identified as the 'population' (Cohen et al, 2007). Of these identified eleven high schools my own school of employment was excluded so as to avoid possible conflicts of interest and issues which might compromise the research (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). This left ten high schools in the Greater Waikato area from which a 'sample' would be identified for the study.

The selection process for the sample group was managed carefully so that a principal who gave a favourable response to participate was not then informed they were not required. Letters of invitation and an information sheet were sent to the principals of five initial schools, which covered the breadth of the established criteria, inviting them to participate.

Of the five initial schools sent letters, one principal responded to indicate their support for the research to take place in their school. One principal declined to participate and three principals did not reply to the initial invitation. Invitations to the three non reply principals were made a second



and third time. From these additional invitations one more principal responded to signal their support. At this point the non-responsive schools were removed from possible selection and two other principals from the population list were sent invitations. One more principal responded favourably and one declined to participate. One final invitation was sent which received a favourable response. Eventually five schools were identified as the sample group from which the study would collect its data.

**Table 1. Participating schools**

<b>Participating Schools</b>	
Schools with a student population greater than 1200	2
Schools with student population less than 800	3
Number of urban schools	2
Number of rural schools	2
Number of semi-rural schools	1
Schools with decile rating of 6 or high	3
Schools with decile rating of 5 or lower	2

Table 1 reports data for the five participating schools. The participating schools represented a range of co-educational state secondary schools from the Hamilton - Greater Waikato Region. Of the five schools three had a student population of less than 800 and two schools had a student population of more that 1200. Three schools are urban; two schools are rural and one school semi-rural. Three schools have a decile rating of 6 or higher with the remaining two schools having a decile rating of less than 5.

### **Selecting the participants within the school**

Principals who agreed to participate were asked to nominate a member of the Senior Leadership Team and a Head of Faculty to be interviewed. Some principals volunteered themselves while others preferred to nominate someone else within the Senior Leadership Team. The Principal was also asked to nominate a Head of Faculty to participate based on a set criteria they were given. The criteria given to Principals were for a member of staff who currently held a permanent position either as a

member of Senior Leadership Team or a Head of Faculty and must have held that position for no less than 4 years. Once a Head of Faculty was identified a letter of invitation was sent to him/her along with an information sheet outlining the research he/she would be asked to participate in. This meant that from the five schools, a maximum of 10 interviews were going to be conducted. For all participants their participation was purely voluntary and they could withdraw at any time prior to the data being analysed. The selection process (Cohen et al, 2007) provided a range of participants across gender and positions within Senior Leadership Teams. Two Principals, two Deputy Principals and one Assistant Principal participated in the interviews. The same selection process also provided a range of Heads of Faculties representing four different faculties.

**Table 2. Participating Heads of Faculty**

Participant	Years of Service as a teacher	Years of Service in the school	Years as a Head of Faculty
A	15	11	8
B	This participant chose to withdraw during the study		
C	16	12	7
D	11	11	6
E	This participant chose to withdraw during the study		

Table 2 reports data for the Heads of Faculty. The average length of service as a teacher was 14 years with 7 years service as a Head of Faculty. During the course of the study two Heads of Faculty requested to withdraw from the study. Both cited uncertainty and apprehension about what they had shared and felt uncomfortable with the possibility of repercussions. At the very start of the interview both individuals wanted complete reassurance of confidentiality and anonymity and at different times during the interview they again wanted reassurance that complete confidentiality would be maintained. During the interview they showed moments of nervousness and seemed uncomfortable with some of the responses they had provided. Many of their responses were short and to the point. While they were informed that the intent of the research was to investigate the effective nature of their relationship with the Senior

Leadership Team their responses were quite the opposite and lined with frustration, hurt and anger. In both cases they were uncomfortable with the presence of the recorder and requested the recorder to be turned off but allowed written notes to be taken.

**Table 3. Participating members of the Senior Leadership Teams**

Participant	Years of Service as a teacher	Years of Service in the school	Number of Years in a SLT	Current position on SLT
A	31	20	15	Principal
B	30	15	18	Principal
C	29	29	18	Assistant Principal
D	18	9	9	Deputy Principal
E	16	12	7	Deputy Principal

Table 3 shows data for the participating members of the Senior Leadership Teams. The average length of service as a teacher is 24 years with the average length of time on a Senior Leadership Team being 13 years. A mix of different Senior Leadership Team roles was represented. Each participant described how they developed and maintained their relationship with their Heads of Faculties.

### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

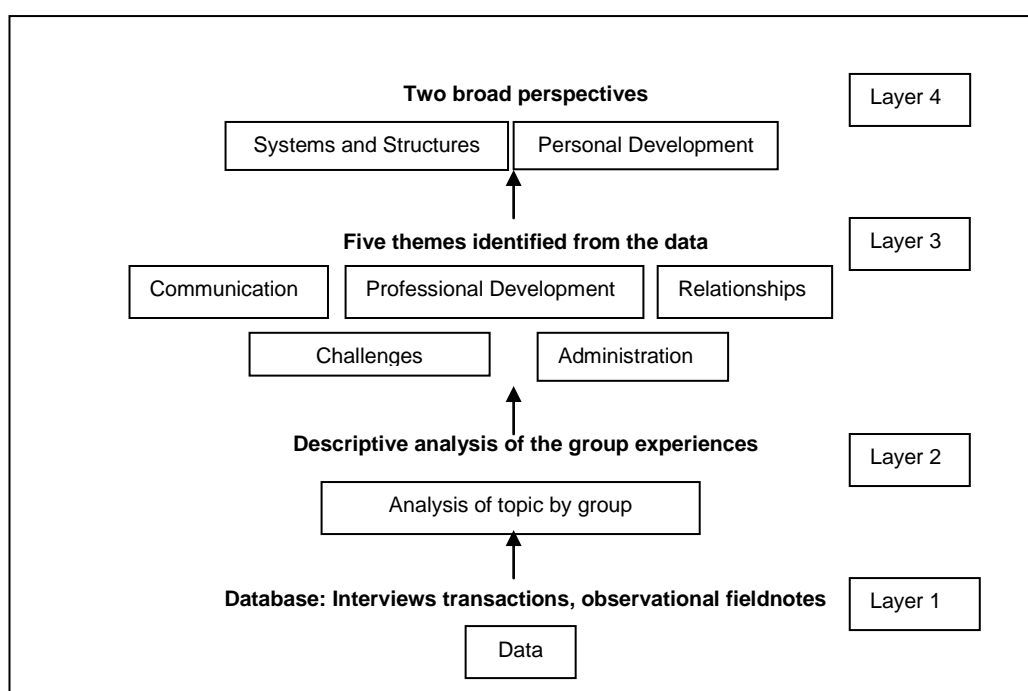
The length of the interviews ranged from between twenty to fifty-five minutes each. The choice of using a semi-structure interview provided an opportunity for the participant to define their own experiences in their own way (Cohen et al., 2000; Cohen et al, 2007). Questions were designed in such a way as to allow the participant to share their experiences and the nature of those experiences (van Manen, 1997), I was interested in noting facial expressions, body language, any changes in voice tones depending on their relationship to the stories they were sharing. I was interested in points of view, insights, perspectives, how they placed themselves in the context of their stories as well as any concerns and issues. These issues included frustrations, conflicts and difficulties. Thus a semi-structured

interview allowed for a range of responses to emerge. Interviews were recorded and analysed using a coded system which allowed an initial insight into understanding the wealth of information gathered in the collection stage of the process.

### Organisation of the data

Following the interview each one was transcribed. Each transcript was read through a number of times in order to gain an over all sense of the interview. The transcribed interviews were then divided into their Senior Management or Head of Faculty groups and read through again to identify an initial list of common emerging themes. The emerging themes were then layered to show the correlation between basic themes and more sophisticated themes (Cresswell, 2008).

**Table 4. Layering themes**



This table is adapted from the example used by Cohen Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.), London, England: Routledge. p. 265.

Table 4 illustrates the layering and interconnection of the emergent themes. The layering of themes organises themes from the basic level themes to more sophisticated level themes. Layering the themes in this way allows and shows the interconnection of themes across multiple levels.

### **Reporting the Findings**

The findings are reported using textual information. They are presented by theme mixed with a combination of selected responses and narrative.

### **Ethical Considerations**

#### **Access to participants**

Access to the participants was through the Principal. The approach was made via email which consisted of formal letters of introduction from me, the research and information sheet. The Principal was asked to identify and nominate one member of the Senior Management Team and one Head of Faculty to participate in the research. Once permission from the principal was granted and possible participants identified, letters of introduction, an information sheet and a consent letter were sent to the member of the Senior Leadership Team and the Head of Faculty.

#### **Informed consent**

Informed consent is to ensure that participants know and understand what they are consenting to. This was based on the premise that for participants to 'know and understand' they must also have an appreciation and comprehension of the information given to them (Cahana & Hurst, 2008).

Participants were informed through an information sheet outlining the aim and purposes of the study, what was required of them, the methods for data collection, and how the results would be reported. Participants were provided with a consent form which they needed to sign before the research was undertaken. Participants were able to read through both

documents and consider their involvement (Wilkinson, 2001; Cohen, et al, 2007; Cahana & Hurst, 2008)

Participants were given the option to decline or discontinue their participation without reason and withdraw prior to the data being organised. Participants were informed that communication with them would be in writing. Documents such as the letters of invitation, consent form, transcript were either posted or emailed to the participants.

Participants were informed that data gathered would be used for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of a Master of Educational Leadership Thesis, and as the basis of possible future conference presentations and journal publications. They were informed that the thesis may be published or presented and that a digital copy of the thesis would be available for public access via the University's digital repository: Research Commons.

### **Confidentiality**

The issue of confidentiality was discussed with the participants before the interviews took place. Any questions or concerns regarding confidentiality were resolved then. Information collected remained secure at all times. Information would not be disclosed without their written consent.

Participants were assured that only the researcher and supervisors would have access to the raw data and that their identities were protected. The names of the subjects were removed from all data collection forms to protect their privacy and were replaced by pseudonyms. Thus readers of the research were not able to infer the identity of the participants. The participants were sent the transcript of their interviews to make any alterations to the raw interview data.

### **Potential harm to participants**

This research was about relationships between two vital groups in a high school environment within a New Zealand context. Because of the

professional closeness of the participants it was vital to ensure that participants were completely safe from harm. This was achieved by ensuring that the participants' emotional, professional, physical and psychological needs were treated with respect (Wilkinson, 2001).

Potential harm was minimised through procedural ethics. These robust procedures were governed by the Waikato University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee whose duty and role was to act as a first line of review for both participant and researcher and to give approval for the study to proceed. Approval from the Waikato University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee for this research was granted on 7 8 February 2011. Guillemin and Gillam, (2004) argued that the committee through the researcher was to protect the "participants from obvious forms of abuse" (p. 268). This protection was to ensure that as the researcher I worked within the boundaries approved by the committee.

Participants were also protected from harm through ethics in practice. Ethics in practice is where the procedural ethics leaves off only to be picked up by the researcher. They are the 'moments' that take place, the thoughts that develop, the decisions that must be made and the steps that are taken and then justified when unexpected situations arise (Jackson, 2009). These moments can be rewarding and gratifying. These moments can be seen as a position of ethical maturity which can also have positive effects on the participant (Gilbert & Sliep, 2009). In this maturity comes the rationalisation of what has to be dealt with, how to deal with it without "losing one's head" while at the same time continuing to demonstrate respect towards the participant by what the researcher does.

It was important for participants to understand the nature and consequences of their participation. During the course of this research, participants' integrity was maintained. They were not subjected to physical, psychological, emotional, or cultural harm (Wilkinson, 2001; Cohen, et al, 2007; Cahana & Hurst, 2008).

# **CHAPTER FOUR: THE RESEARCH FINDINGS - THE VOICES OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAMS AND HEADS OF FACULTIES.**

## **Introduction**

Five emerging themes were identified for both Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties. In reporting the findings from the interviews, this chapter was structured by themes illustrated with a narrative as an example of the theme. These themes were not isolated, but overlapped. For example mentoring, as part of professional development, was as much about relationships as it was about communication.

**Table 5. Five emerging themes**

<b>Five Emerging Themes</b>
<b>Communication</b>
<b>Administration</b>
<b>Relationships</b>
<b>Professional Development</b>
<b>Challenges to the relationship</b>

Table 5 shows the themes that were identified during the reading and organisation of the data. These themes consolidate the responses given by the participants during the interviews. Communication refers to the flow of information. Administration signifies structures, systems and processors used to ensure that the school operates effectively. Relationships denote the connections made between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in their efforts to work together productively. Professional



development indicates programmes that promote personally and professionally growth. Challenges allude to obstacles that impede the establishment of an effective relationship.

### **Communication**

All the members of Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties spoke of the importance of communication. All participants identified the importance of communication across all levels of the school and the difference it makes to the smooth running of the school. They noted that the lines of communication were vital in the development and success of their relationship with each other. One Senior Leadership Team member put it this way:

*“I think for me the key to the success between those relationships is communication always...The communication is just critical, having a good rapport with the people in your team and understanding them as individuals”.*

Clarity of communication was important for some Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty. For Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty this meant that they both knew and could articulate what the schools vision, mission and common goals were as well as knowing how these were going to be achieved.

All the Heads of Faculty spoke of the importance of having the opportunity to have their say. For the Heads of Faculty it included the chance to contribute to discussions and decision making. Some Faculty Heads spoke of being given the opportunity to bring up new things and taking an active part in developing school statements. For other Heads of Faculty it was knowing that any concerns with the Ministry of Education they had was going to be passed on. All the members of Senior Leadership Teams spoke of the importance of ensuring that Heads of Faculty had the opportunity to participate. The opportunities came in the form of meetings and the formal process of consultation. As one Senior Leadership Team member stated:

*“We start with the school goals; we present them and say, what do you think about this? Maybe a bit of tinkering with it, they may have some suggestions that may help us. It’s to engage them in any process that you have. It’s to engage them in the process of consultation as much as...you know you have to encourage them to be part of things and they all are. They feel that it is a process and that consultation is really important and then they are very happy if we go back and say this is what they are”.*

Heads of Faculties identified the importance of having continued and unrestricted access via ‘an open door policy’ to the Senior Leadership Team. They also spoke of the need to have this access to discuss concerns; provide suggestions; and request clarification. This is reinforced by an experience of one Senior Leadership member who had two Faculty Heads in her office on separate occasions before 8.00am on the same morning. There was no scheduled time but just when the Faculty needed it.

Some Heads of Faculty wanted to know that decisions and assignments made at meetings were going to be reported back or followed up. One member of the Senior Leadership Team spoke of the value and effectiveness of feeding back to the Heads of Faculty, while one Faculty Head wanted to be reassured that they were being taken seriously.

*“One thing is the follow up from the meetings, what happens from the meetings is really important, what the senior management’s doing, you know things that are discussed at, they need to go away and do some work and come back to us...that follow up happens, because if doesn’t happen, that’s when the HOFs can get frustrated and that relationship can break down a bit”.*

Both Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty emphasised the importance of having and participating in regular meetings. Some

members of Senior Leadership Teams spoke of meetings as a means to not just to pass on information but also to have professional dialogue, to get a feel of things from around the school and to get feedback from subject areas. One member of the Senior Leadership Teams noted the importance of regular meetings *“So that is probably the most important [thing] as a group, as an entity, is that fortnightly meeting”*.

Some Senior Leadership Team members noted that over time meetings have become more efficient and productive. For them these meetings have moved from administrative “nuts and bolts” to the sharing of learning philosophies and ideas.

*“[To] move away from “ nuts and bolts” stuff and start talking about sharing of ideas, sharing of philosophy looking at sharing what we are doing in the curriculum, sharing good practice that sort of thing, discussing the bigger picture stuff rather than focusing solely on the here and now but I think that that is also a change from the beginning teacher right through to the principal”*.

### **Administration**

Responses by both groups of participants acknowledged the importance of effective administration as part of the success of their relationship. Mentioned by some members of Senior Leadership Teams and all Head of Faculty was the knowledge of having a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities. The Senior Leaders responded that having specific job descriptions was ‘really good’. Heads of Faculty were more articulate with their responses. Some admitted that having a specific job description was only a recent development for them and their school but acknowledging at the same time that the implementation of such has helped the whole school *“They do have [a] much more refined roles and it is much easier for people to know who to go to because they are responsible for X, Y, Z”*.

Some Heads of Faculty spoke of the importance of accountability across the staff. They stated the importance of fulfilling their roles, providing

reports on the progress of the faculty and ensuring the information is passed on.

*“We have all been made a lot more accountable so then like boring stuff like reporting to the board which we never used to have to do, analysis of all your NCEA results, where to from here, what are you doing. [It’s] making sure we are thinking about all that stuff we should be doing as HOF but yea, making us more accountable”.*

Only one individual mentioned timetable schedules as part of their response. The response was short and side stepped with a simple remark of placing it ‘in the too hard basket’ putting it aside for the end of the year.

### **Relationships**

All participants from both Heads of Faculty and Senior Leadership Team spoke of the need be satisfied with the work they were doing and the building of positive connections with each other. Most Senior Leadership Team members described their staff as having positive relationships. They spoke of their staff as being cohesive, warm, and a community of leaders.

*“It is generally a very friendly forum there is very little negativity we still meet as a staff often and I think the staff, dynamically are very cohesive...It was pretty much an open forum and generally a warm community of learners”.*

The Heads of Faculty spoke of a group of colleagues who were collegial; proactive; dynamic; a group of colleagues working together; and a collective of Heads of Faculty who got along with members of the Senior Leadership Team. One Head of Faculty stated that these working conditions meant that staff retention remained high.

*“I think we have been a very very happy, collegial staff who are proactive, well ahead of the field. No “stick in the muds” and that has made for a school where most staff don’t want to leave”.*

All Senior Leadership Team members spoke of efforts to build and develop leaders at all levels. Most members on the Senior Leadership Teams spoke of developing emerging leaders who were given tasks in order to develop their skill and knowledge. Some Heads of Faculties spoke of being offered challenges acknowledging at the same time that making mistakes was part of their development. One Head of Faculty publicly acknowledged the practices that his respective Senior Leadership Team were doing to build leaders in the school.

*“If you can see that the Principal has your best interests at heart always, as well as the school’s, but also yours personally, there is a huge amount of trust...They want you to succeed or they want you to move on and go up the next level...It means you have to have a much closer working relationship because [with] a lot of things you do, you’ll be in charge of quite strategic things”*

One Senior Leadership Team member mentioned the growing of leaders by sharing power while another Senior Leadership Team member was actively shoulder tapping people to encourage them to take leadership roles. Two members of the Senior Leadership Team gave detailed descriptions of the development of leaders through all the levels of the school structure:

*“My relationship with the HOD/HOFs is through the extended leadership team, to role-model first of all, to raise issues, to talk about what we can do, to talk about how to bring about a better outcome for our students and for people to then come up with the ideas, foster the ideas through the Department, foster leadership throughout the department so they can bring those to the table put them in place so we can have a go”.*

## **Professional development**

All the participants spoke of the importance of continued professional development as it leads not only to personal satisfaction but also to improvements to achievement outcomes for students. All Heads of Faculty identified the importance of being mentored and receiving direct practical guidance from the Senior Leadership Team rather than being left to themselves. They spoke of being offered opportunities to improve professional skills with the aim of future promotions.

*“I think one of the relationships between Senior Management and Faculty Heads will be sometimes... more hands-on practical guidance. I think [it] will start to happen or they will have specific senior leaders who are here to, not chaperone, but to aid middle managers where in the past you were said here’s your job just go to it, this is what you’ll have to do”.*

Some Senior Leadership Team members spoke of developing relationship through mentoring as a way to up-skill Heads of Faculty and as a means of providing support and training when dealing with students and fellow staff.

*“We’ve done a little bit of work with a number of them... how to have difficult conversations with their staff, but that’s the most difficult thing for anyone to do but I think it is something that teachers find particularly hard”.*

Responses from both Heads of Faculty and those in Senior Leadership Teams revealed that pedagogy and the continual development of classroom practice was important. A teacher visiting other teacher’s classrooms to view their practice was a common practice mentioned by all the Heads of Faculties. One of the Head of Faculty stated that the practice of visiting and watching other teachers teaching was important not only for those wanted to learn new strategies but also for the development of staff collegiality. Another Head of Faculty added that the practice was also to

create a sense of 'normal practice' and that it was 'considered alright' to see others teaching and to have 'your practice looked at'.

*"It's considered alright to actually see other people teaching and be involved in other people's classes to have your practice to be looked at by lots and lots of people".*

Only three participants from the Senior Leadership Teams mentioned the development of pedagogy in their responses. Those that responded spoke of reorganising the daily timetable structure to allow Heads of Faculties to have faculty development time. One senior leader spoke of how Heads of Faculty who use this time effectively can bring the faculty closer together.

*"They say... 'time...time'...and we listened to that and we approached the Board and we have Wednesday, that's today, we finish school an hour earlier and I have to say that the time they spend, running from 2.30 to 4.00 is the most productive we have ever had in the school for professional learning".*

Three Senior Leadership Team members spoke of the success that had been achieved through effective Heads of Faculty who had been given time with the faculty. It was not enough just to give Heads of Faculty a sheet to complete and hand it back.

*"They work together and the HODs have a certain autonomy as to how they manage that and they have to report back on what they are doing so that we are not giving them a sheet that says fill it in like this".*

Allocating more time to Heads of Faculty was not enough to encourage success. Heads of Faculty were also guided with a sense of purpose, an opportunity to improve and the freedom to decide their own course of action:

*“If you give people autonomy if you give people the opportunity to achieve mastery and you give them a purpose for doing things then it is more likely to happen. You can work on any project you like but you must come back with something and they do”.*

Professional development through leadership experiences were identified as being vital to the development of the relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty. All the Heads of Faculty spoke of distributed leadership and how it is practiced in their respective school. The benefits of this practice were seen as being beneficial to the entire school and not just specific individuals. All the Heads of Faculty stated that they had clearly noticed an increase in the use of distributed leadership practices in the last 5-7 years. They further noted that the increased use of the practice was a result of increased demands on Principals.

*“They share leadership, because I don’t think these days that you can have, or can expect just 2-3 leaders to actually lead the school because the demands are so huge and the skill sets needed are so varied now”.*

The Heads of Faculties recognised that following a distributed leadership model was reflected in their practice of developing leaders.

*“Trying to develop them as leaders and constantly talking to them about being leaders, and so a lot of it is definitely distributed leadership, quite strongly following that model and has been for quite a while, and I think it is one of the first and most obvious things”.*

All the Senior Leadership Team participants were clear on the importance of distributed leadership and its close connections to transformational leadership. All of them identified their role in promoting and encouraging the practice.



*"I think it is all very important in fostering leadership and having an inclusive leadership style and a distributed leadership and transformational in many ways".*

All the Senior Leadership Team participants acknowledged the progress that had been made in their respective schools with the adoption of distributed and transformational leadership practices. They noted the increase of teams working together, their own passion of encouraging and promoting leadership and the practice of consensual decision making. All Senior Leaders acknowledged their own personal satisfaction with the progress that had been made:

*"I personally gain power by sharing power".*

### **Challenges**

Both the Senior Leadership Teams and the Heads of Faculty identified a number of challenges as they worked to establish and maintain an effective relationship.

All the Faculty Heads spoke of the increase of workload demands. They mentioned Senior Leadership Teams who knowingly or unknowingly continually added extra 'tasks' to their list of jobs without making allowances for extra time to complete the extra tasks. The Heads of Faculty further stated that new skills were going to be required by them to meet these and future demands.

*"The demands are so huge and the skills sets needed are so varied now and I think a lot of the things that have come in have fallen on middle managers. [Our] senior leaders, each of them will say you need to do this. They will each individually say that and at the end of the meeting we realise that we've got 3 weeks of work to do".*

Both the Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty participants mentioned a level of friction and strain that existed between the two

groups. Two Heads of Faculty spoke of members of the Senior Leadership Team assigned to them as being too busy, having a lack of empathy; not knowing what their own job was, a lack of communication, the failure of Senior Leadership to provide a training or induction programme, providing very little support, and not expecting too much from Senior Leaders.

*“If I say go to my senior leader and say there is this problem they’ll say well it’s not my problem and I’ll say well it’s in your agreement. They don’t really want to know. It’s a theoretical relationship... Where do I go, I don’t have anywhere to go really because my person really doesn’t want to know”.*

Some members of the Senior Leadership Team identified historical events involving Heads of Faculties that were holding the schools back from moving forward. Other Senior Leaders further noted that a culture had established itself where the Heads of Faculty did not want to participate in discussions.

*“There was quite a bit of, a lot of friction...there became a culture of I think, I think even longer before I started, a culture of we don’t need to say anything we will be driven by the top and then later on, we won’t say anything because we’ll be cut down by some other people”.*

Most of the Senior Leadership Team members spoke of being used by some of their Heads of Faculties as a dumping ground for problems as well as being continually frustrated by some Heads of Faculty because of their lack of active input.

*“I find with the Heads of Faculty meeting I feel that I have to drive where we’re going with it. There is not a lot of discussion, for example we were looking at our targets, school target and annual plan in the senior management team the other day and this was a 30min-45min discussion. I had a HOF meeting 2 days ago I said ok is there any discussion on it? I was deafened by the silence”.*

One Senior Leadership Team member spoke of a high level of mistrust that existed through past historical events and recognised the amount of hard work it takes to rebuild that trust.

*“There were a heck of a lot of bruised staff ...quite a lot a disaffected staff very unhappy staff, untrust...untrustworthy..., untrusting staff. It's taken quite a lot of work to I guess gain their trust”.*

# **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

## **Introduction**

This chapter presents a discussion of the research findings in relation to the literature review in chapter two. This chapter discusses five themes grouped under two broad perspectives. The five themes are Communication, Professional Development, Relationships, Administration and Challenges to the Relationship. The two broad perspectives: Systems and Structures and Personal Development. These themes and broad perspectives show how an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties in New Zealand High Schools can be established and maintained. Conclusions are drawn from these findings.

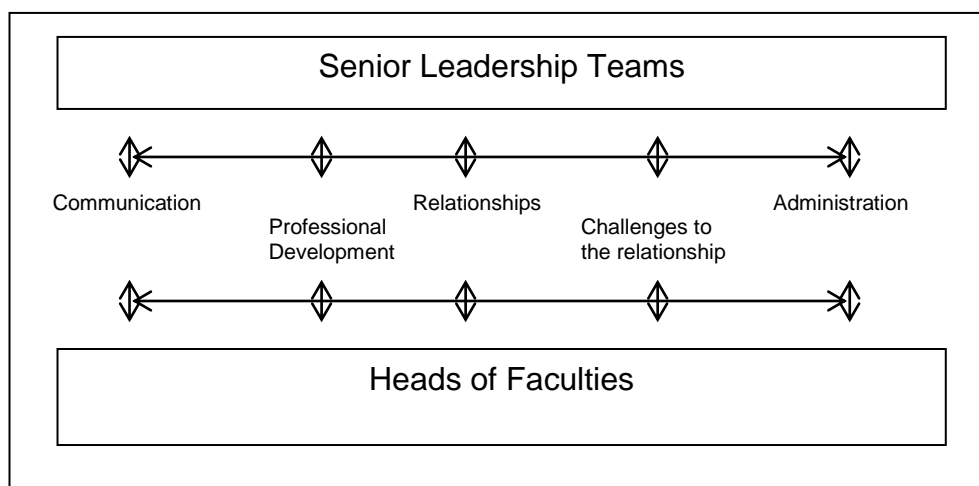
## **Discussion of findings**

In this study, both Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty raised several aspects of their relationships with each other. While the intent of this study was to investigate the nature of their effective relationship, responses by both groups also generated some conflicting issues.

The findings of this study from the previous chapter demonstrate both the importance and complexity of relationships between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in New Zealand High Schools. Table 6 (page 84) illustrates the complexity of the relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty and elements that can both establish and hinder an effective relationship between them. The components of the effectiveness of their relationship are best shown as interlinked not only between groups but also across themes. Table 6

shows that no single theme creates an effective relationship on its own but that each theme only makes up part of an effective relationship.

**Table 6. Connecting themes, Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties**



An effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in New Zealand high schools is important because these relationships deal with individuals (Barth, 1991; Wheatley, 1996 Reynolds, 1997; Kezar, 2004). Being a member of the Senior Leadership Teams or a Head of Faculty alone is not enough to guarantee that an effective relationship will develop, it takes time and effort. The effort applied here has connections to organisational culture (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Richter, van Dick & West, 2004) transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Boga & Ensari, 2009) and distributed leadership (Macbeth, 2006; Spillane, 2006; Spillane & Diamond, 2007; Harris & Spillane, 2008).

Effective relationships are based on the key attributes that promote, stimulate and build effective relationships. For Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty to have an effective relationship a high level of satisfaction, trust, and commitment must exist between both groups. As Jo (2006) noted, these attributes have been shown to be critical relationship indicators across multiple settings and context and a global measure for organisational public relationships.

Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty responses identified a number of key areas related to the effective nature of their relationship. Two broad perspectives were identified: Systems and structures and Personal development. Under these two broad perspectives are the five themes identified from the responses. The findings are discussed in detail below.

## **Systems and structure**

### **Communication**

Effective communication is essential to the survival of all organisations. ‘The responses from both groups support the literature that effective communication is seen as essential to the development of an effective relationship (Fielding, 1993; Sai & Sai, 2009). Communication is more than just the exchange of words or emails between these groups. Effective communication between them ensures that the message reaches the person or group it is intended for, that the receiver understands and comprehends the message that has been sent and that any reply is understood correctly (Sai & Sai, 2009). Effective communication is achieved by upwards, downwards and lateral communication (Fielding, 1993).

There was evidence to support Reina and Reina (2006) findings that successful communication is directly linked to trust and that the ‘best relationships’ stem from good communication. One Head of Faculty articulated that:

*“That’s one of those important things in that relationship is actually one being very clear with the other person what the expectations are, what you need and what you don’t, but also being quite trusting, trusting. I think those [are the] best relationships”.*

Effective communication between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in New Zealand High Schools is essential because their relationship has a direct influence on other individuals and groups within the school. Communication was the most common response by all the participants in this study to be identified as a key to an effective relationship. Communication between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty is vital because it connects everything that they do. Without these connections the relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty does not function and the relationship falters.

Responses of Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty were similar in their identification of the absolute need for clarity in the direction of the school. The desired clarity needed for Heads of Faculty and other organisations was to know in which direction the school was heading, how the school was going to get there and what role each person or group was going to play in order to achieve the goal. Clarity of communication does not mean the best use of electronic systems. Even these systems will fail if people who use them can not work well together (Fielding 1993).

The findings also demonstrated that clarity of communication was from the top down rather than the bottom up. This reinforced the perception, gained through personal experience that despite efforts to remove the presence of a formal hierarchical model within some New Zealand High Schools, practices between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty continue to promote the continued existence of such a traditional model.

The findings showed that the opportunity for people to have their say was critical for all participants. Heads of Faculties acknowledge that they have been 'allowed their voice' whereas the Senior Leadership Teams' responses indicated providing opportunities for this but also having to encourage 'them' to engage in the process. Creating opportunities to participate in discussions did not guarantee that Heads of Faculty would choose to participate in discussions. This was demonstrated in the

experience of one particular Senior Leadership Team member who was *“deafened by the silence”* of the Heads of Faculty at a meeting to discuss school targets and annual plans. This experience showed that the platform available for Heads of Faculty to participate is more important than the actual participation itself.

Providing the opportunity to have a say on its own is not enough. It is building the trust between individuals and groups where people can speak the truth. It is creating the conditions and environment for honest communication to take place to allow people to express their concerns or voice their feelings without others overreacting. It is giving people the chance to speak without fear of repercussions or retributions. Sadly, it is for these reasons of possible retributions from their respective Senior Leadership Teams that two Heads of Faculty withdrew during the course of this study. Their voices are silent in this study but their decision to withdraw speaks volumes. It speaks of the loss of trust and a failure of the development of an effective relationship.

It was important for Heads of Faculty to know that an open door policy was in place and supported by the Senior Leadership Teams. Having an ‘open door policy’ was important for Heads of Faculty to know that they could approach the Senior Leadership Team and in particular the Principal when there was a need. From the findings comes the impression that an ‘open door policy’ swings one way. That is, Heads of Faculty did not mention having the same policy available to the Senior Leadership Teams and the Senior Leadership Teams did not mention this in their responses as a form of communication. Senior Leadership Teams responses further revealed that a number of methods to maintain communication links with Heads of Faculty were attempted. While the Senior Leadership Teams mentioned the need for meetings, listening, and informal chats Heads of Faculty did not.



## **Administration**

Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Faculty responses identified a range of aspects linked to administration that can support an effective relationship. Effective administration reduces stress and anxiety. Amongst the responses linked to administration were job descriptions.

A job description is a statement of purpose, scope, duties and responsibilities of a specific position or job (Woodall & Winstanley, 1998). Job descriptions focus both accountability and professional dialogue.

All Heads of Faculty stated that they had a job description but some Faculty Heads spoke of job descriptions as if they were a phenomenon that had only recently occurred in their respective school, a phenomenon that is supported by other research findings (Chetty, 2007).

It is evident from the Heads of Faculty responses that defined job descriptions allowed the clarification of who was responsible for doing what job. This view is supported by the literature which states that a job description outlines the level of work the employee will be expected to perform (Henderson, 1975; Casteleyn, 1996; Stybel, 2010). Heads of Faculty also commented that job descriptions supported the structure of the school by providing “a mechanism for the on-going dialogue about accountability” (Cardno & Piggot-Irvine, 1997, p. 27). A response from the Senior Leadership Teams regarding job descriptions merely remarked that having job descriptions was ‘really good’.

Other responses by Heads of Faculty identified accountability and timetables. Heads of Faculty recognised the importance of accountability to members of their faculty and to the Senior Leadership Teams. Accountability is closely linked to job descriptions. It is through accountability that the actions or inaction of individuals are either celebrated or challenged. Some researches such as Ranson (2003) have argued that accountability in education has been more about regulation and performance than educational improvement. Ranson (2003) further argues that this comes on the back of a continual move towards decentralisation of education focusing more on the professional abilities of

the classroom teacher. Accountability is important because it provides legitimacy to officials and an increasingly critical public. It is about engaging with, and being responsive to stakeholders (Blagescu, de Las Casas & Lloyd, 2005; Bovens, 2010). Meeting performance accountability for Heads of Faculty has meant providing reports to both Senior Leadership Teams and or Boards of Trustees of their stewardship. To this end accountability through reports, reviews and presentations is seen as a measurement of performance of the Faculty that the Heads lead (Moller, 2009).

While timetabling was acknowledged briefly by Heads of Faculty it was quickly pushed aside as being in the 'too hard basket'. Senior Leadership Teams made no mention of timetables in their responses. The silence surrounding timetables is important in and of itself. The suggestion that timetables belongs in the 'too hard basket' is fraught with a reality check that it is simply too difficult and complicated to face. Silence from the Senior Leadership Teams perhaps suggests that timetables is not a Head of Faculty issue and therefore not worth mentioning.

## **Personal development**

### **Relationships**

The responses indicated by the participants identified the emerging theme of relationships. This theme includes satisfaction, building and developing leaders. The findings in regards to relationships revealed both similar and different responses. Both groups wanted to find satisfaction in working together. Satisfaction develops when the relationship produces more rewards than costs and the expectations of the relationship have been met if not surpassed. Fulfillment of satisfaction leads to the further development of trust. People who do what they say they will do contribute to building the rewards of the relationship. Individuals who do not meet expectations erode both the satisfaction and trust of the relationship (Jo, 2006).

Senior Leadership Teams were more articulate in describing what a satisfied relationship looked like than Heads of Faculty. From the perspective of the Senior Leadership Teams this was expressed in terms like 'cohesive', 'warm', 'understanding', 'recognition', and 'together'. It would be important for Senior Leadership Teams to identify what drives satisfaction, to monitor it and to take the right steps to foster it (Matzler & Renzl, 2006).

Heads of Faculty responses were minimal and used one specific word 'collegiality'. Collegiality is the result of a group or groups who have developed a sense of mutual identity. Mutual identity comes from ensuring that both groups have shaped and established a clear vision. Having established this vision both have the responsibility to work towards fulfilling the vision. Achieving the school vision is a combined concerted effort. The success of which is ensuring that both groups are pursuing the same goal. Pursuing the same goals with the aim of achieving the same vision solidifies a common bond between both groups. The achievement of which builds trust.

Effective relationships between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty depend on first, the individual, and then the groups' capacity to trust (Reina & Reina, 2006). The capacity to trust involves two components: trusting ourselves and trusting others. Reina and Reina (2006) argue that the capacity to trust is "fundamental to understanding how we bring ourselves to relationships with ourselves and others" (p.81).

A solitary response from Heads of Faculty may highlight a dichotomy. The response indicated that benefits of the relationship were either not being experienced by Heads of Faculty or that Heads of Faculties were not able to link the experiences they had to what they might consider as personally satisfying. In a study by Rich (1997) which looked at employees, employers and job satisfaction he argued that workers will be more

satisfied with their job when they have honest, competent, and reliable bosses that can be trusted.

Work satisfaction is crucial to an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties. Satisfaction is more than just getting a job done and then feeling good about it afterwards. High levels of satisfaction are a result of high levels of trust. Trust between workers and managers directly influences job satisfaction. This can be paralleled to the trust between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties in that the work performed by Senior Leaders directly affects Heads of Faculties as well as all other areas of the school. The development of an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty depends on both individual and group capacity to trust. The capacity to trust depends on the readiness of the individual and or group to trust themselves and trust others (Reina & Reina, 2006).

Trusting ourselves has a strong link to self esteem. When individuals and groups trust themselves they see themselves as reliable and have a sense of confidence. We see ourselves as reliable in that we know we can fulfill our own expectations and the expectations of others. When we trust ourselves we are more likely to take risks and try new things. We know we can deal with uncertainty and periods of anxiety when they occur. When we trust others we have confidence in them, we rely on their judgement and their word. For the Head of Faculty it is trusting that the Senior Leadership Teams will make the right decision in the best interest of the school. Some of these areas may include issues like a safe working environment, student achievement and building organisational culture. Both Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty might have questions for which the outcome might determine the development of trust, “ Can I trust that they will do their part?” or will they tell me what I need to hear as opposed to what I want to hear?” When the trust in these groups has been developed information is free flowing and honest; there is less of a need to micro-manage or control others to do their job. Trust between

Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty will remain until events demonstrate that neither group can be trusted.

Reina and Reina (2006) write that our ability to trust is influenced by our experiences. Our experiences tell us if we should trust or not. Our willingness to trust grows and decreases with new experiences. If trust between group or individuals is not present then past experiences with people or groups have taught us to be wary and cautious. To this end mistrust will remain until experiences demonstrate otherwise that someone or a group can be trusted.

Heads of Faculty however were more precise when it came to describing relationships and its connection with building leaders. Responses from Heads of Faculty reflect those provided in the literature for transformation and distributed leadership. The common thread that flowed through all the responses from the Heads of Faculties was the opportunity to develop to the next level, to be challenged with the next task, to promote and instill in them their capabilities, skill and mindsets as leaders. To this end the research has also stated that it is “important for school leaders to develop staff, nurture talent and distribute leadership throughout the organisation” (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007. p.1). The responses also revealed an underlying ambition to move up and forward. Responses by the Senior Leadership Teams focused around the opportunities for Heads of Faculties to improve. The tone of their response was reflective and looked at what they were doing or had done to provide opportunities. Senior Leadership Team responses also included small additional insights into relationships which Heads of Faculty did not provide. Senior Leadership Teams revealed that relationships for them included celebrating success. Celebrating success was not limited to the big events but recognised the small everyday moments.

### **Professional development**

This theme revealed a number of key findings related to professional development including mentoring; improvement of classroom practice; and the practice of distributed and transformational leadership. Responses of Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties were similar in their identification of mentoring. Mentoring is a powerful tool but it needs to be carefully managed to be successful. It is based on the relationship between the mentor and the mentee. The development of the relationship between them is vital to the success of the mentoring programme (Gray & Gray, 1995). Traditionally mentoring is the practice of bringing together the experienced and inexperienced with the former passing on their knowledge and skill (Colky & Young, (2006). As Alleman (1988) noted “mentoring is not a boss-employee relationship where job tasks are taught; performance is evaluated; and rewards or punishments are given. The mentor instead presents a broad picture, teaches generic and possible future tasks, assesses future potential, and acts as confidant, counsellor and sponsor” (Alleman, 1988. p.5).

Heads of Faculty spoke of the need to receive more practical guidance as well as being offered challenges to develop while being supported by the Senior Leadership Teams.

Mentoring describes what individuals can become, Villani (2002) argued that mentoring gave emotional support and provided opportunities to gain direct coaching guidance. Portner (2005) outlined that mentoring provided the “opportunity for teachers to assume leadership roles, as well as individuals and organisations to develop and grow” (p.193). It also developed their own practice, promoted growth and retention. Portner (2005) further added that “mentoring can be entrenched in the culture of the school and can promote continuous improvement in teaching and student achievement” (p. 243-244). Villani (2002) stated that mentoring “created schools in which students experience quality teaching in every classroom” (p.43).

The Senior Leadership Team response acknowledged their own work with multiple faculties and providing Heads of Faculty with training in how to have tough conversations with work colleagues. It seemed that this type of training was more for the benefit of managerial expediency rather than personal development and growth.

In terms of the continual development of school culture, successful mentoring provided opportunities communicating ideas, attitudes and work ethics already established in the school. In this way it is the tutoring of individuals into 'how things are done around here' and to some degree 'what is not done around here'. As so we find through mentoring that practices acceptable to the school culture are reinforced thereby securing that the culture, for now, survives until such time as the culture of the school shifts.

Responses from both groups found consensus on the need for continual pedagogical development. There was a common desire to focus on learning and improving classroom practice. This is supported in the literature by researchers such as Southworth (2000) who points out that a key to the success of a school are:

“...conditions which generate the internal capacity for organisational members to professional benefit from working with each other...it is the opportunity for staff to learn with and from each other, and for them to take responsibility for one another's professional training, as well as their own”. (p.12)

The greatest opportunities for teachers to improve their pedagogy come as a result of their learning from their colleagues with whom they work with every day (Southworth, 2002). Some of the greatest opportunities for professional development are unplanned and informal while others, highlighted by the participants in this study, stated took part in formalised

full staff meetings and within faculties where faculty autonomy towards professional development was encouraged.

Another key finding revealed the wide practice of distributed leadership. Just how much distributed leadership was practiced varied from school to school depending on the amount of support given to it by the Senior Leadership Teams and in particular the Principal. The findings showed that distributed leadership was the way forward and led to a number of benefits including the development of staff. The responses here echoed the literature in that distributed leadership practice has become widely spread in its use due in part in the intensification of the demands placed on principals (Copeland, 2003).. Furthermore traditional views that the idea of a single individual standing on top of the hierarchical structure is no longer applicable in today's educational environment (Camburn, Rowan & Taylor, 2003). Distributed leadership ensures that the success of the school does not rely solely on one individual but upon the leadership and skill of many individuals across the entire organisation (Cardno, 2002).

The findings of the study and the literature on Distributed Leadership support each other on the benefits that this practice provides. The development of leaders by way of task distribution not only reduces the load resting upon Principals and Senior Leadership Teams but it allows, first and foremost, for individual professional development, growth and work place satisfaction and promotes whole school improvement and collegiality (Little, 1990; Rosenholtz, 1989).

The literature on Transformational Leadership is prolific and findings from this study mirror the literature. Transformational leadership is key to fostering leadership and is supported by Burns (1978) who declared that it "lifted people into their better selves" (p.4). Fostering leadership in this context aims to convert followers into leaders. To this end it asks transformed leaders to put aside their own interests for the good of the group or organisation. It also asks transformed leaders to put aside the instant gratification of the moment in order to enjoy long term rewards



later. Responses by some members of the Senior Leadership Teams acknowledged their role in developing transformational leaders as well as the improvements they had witnessed in their respective schools.

### **Challenges**

The relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty was not immune to challenges. For the participants this theme included increased workloads and demands, friction, and mistrust.

Heads of Faculty indicated that the demands expected of them from the Senior Leadership Teams had increased dramatically and that a lack of time to fulfill their roles impacted on their ability to fulfill their responsibilities. A lack of time also restricted the amount of time Heads of Faculty could spend on professional development. From this study Heads of Faculty indicated that the Senior Leadership Teams *“don’t realise how long it takes”*, that the *“demands have just increased...increased”* and that *“the demands are so huge”*. Chetty’s (2007) research findings noted that those in middle management didn’t have enough quality time with people to really serve their needs.

Heads of Faculty further noted that their relationship with the Senior Leadership Team remained strained when the Senior Leadership Team distanced themselves from Heads of Faculty and remained strained when the lines of communication broke down and when there was a lack of understanding.

A lack of support by the Senior Leadership Team was also mentioned by Heads of Faculty. Specifically the findings indicated a lack of support for those stepping up to Head of Faculty roles. The responses support previous research conducted by Chetty (2007) which found that while the Senior Leadership Teams felt that Heads of Faculty received the appropriate support this was refuted by Heads of Faculties who argued that they were *“not receiving the appropriate induction, appraisal and mentoring”* (pp. 80-81). Adey’s (2000) study stated that Heads of Faculty

needed training and guidance not only for themselves but also members of their faculty. This finding matches the findings of other studies, notably, Adey (2000) and Brown, Boyle and Boyle (2002).

Some of the Senior Leadership Teams responses indicated a culture of friction that had existed for a number of years and as a result had suppressed the development of an effective relationship. More explicit and damning from some Senior Leadership Teams was the response that it was the Head of Faculty group that was holding schools back from moving forward. Senior Leadership Teams also commented that their frustration intensified when they were subjected to constant complaining by Heads of Faculty. The existence of friction and tension is due in part to the betrayal of trust. The betrayal is more profound when one understands that trust was not taken away, it was removed. It was removed because individuals failed to keep commitments, expectations were not met and thus trust betrayed. After the betrayal, whether large or small, intentional or unintentional, comes the disappointment, frustration, pain and, if left unaddressed, the anger. When this happens people withdraw themselves and shut down. Blaming, finger pointing, and back biting, subtle at first, becomes more noticeable over time. At this point the relationships collapse, collegiality falters, and effectiveness is lost.

# **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS, STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **Introduction**

The basis for this research came out of my own experiences as a Head of Faculty working with the Senior Leadership Team. In my experience in the role of Head of Faculty I have found that an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty is vital to the day to day operational success of the school and the achievement of a school's short and long term goals. The profession of education is all about relationships. Furthermore without this relationship the connections between the individuals within these groups are broken. Trust is replaced by betrayal, satisfaction is replaced by anxiety, and clarity is replaced by confusion. The review of the literature focused on understanding the nature of effectiveness and the practices employed by both Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty to develop that relationship.

The following questions provided the basis of the study. The study investigated the perceptions of members of the Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Faculty and the effective nature of their relationship with each other.

1. What is the nature of an effective relationship?
2. Which 'practices' develop an effective relationship between Heads of Faculties and Senior Leadership Teams and which practices hinder this?

The most appropriate method for these questions was the use of a qualitative approach. In order to gather data about their relationship and the reality of their experiences semi-structured interviews were used. This process involved interviewing Heads of Faculty and members of the Senior Leadership Team from selected schools in the Hamilton-Greater Waikato Region. According to Cresswell (2008) research is a process used to collect and analyse information to increase our understanding of a topic or issue. In its simplest form, research consists of three steps: 1. Pose a question, 2. collect data to answer the question, and 3. present an answer to the question. Referring to qualitative research Levy-Malmberg (2010) argued that the “main objective is to gain new insight in addition to existing information...and to extend the knowledge base in the discipline for the benefit of knowledge” (p.108). Husen (1997) conjectured that the main purpose of educational research was to establish foundations upon which action can take place. Chetty (2007) further argued that “practice without theory and research negates previous findings and experience and risks repeating the mistakes of the past” (p.87). It is a repeat of past and present mistakes or practices that hinder Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties from establishing an effective relationship with each other.

The research findings in this study raised two key broad perspectives: Systems and Structures; and Personal Development. Under these broad perspectives are responses from Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty that identified four emerging themes that established an effective relationship and one theme that hindered it they are: communication, professional development, relationships, administration, and challenges to the relationship.

As seen from the data no one relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty at each school was exactly the same as another. The strength of these relationships varied, depending on the connections or lack of connections between them. Connections between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty are stimulated and

developed through trust, satisfaction and commitment. As Reina and Reina (2006) argued the need for connections between co-workers is essential.

## **Conclusions**

### **Communication**

Heads of Faculties, more than Senior Leadership Teams, indicated a lack of knowledge and skill in effective communication between them. This challenges other comments by them that effective communication was essential to their relationship. There is an indication that specific training in all aspects of effective communication is needed between these groups and across the entire profession. Communication methods used ineffectively created confusion, uncertainty and a lack of clarity. There was a lack of imagination in the types of methods deployed and a lack of clarity in the message that was sent and received. The need for clarity for the Heads of Faculty in New Zealand high schools was to know the direction of the school. This reflects the literature which argues that effective communication is essential to organisations (Fielding, 1993). It also mirrors the discussion found in the development of organisation culture (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Willcoxson & Millet, 2000; Richter, van Dick & West, 2004). Having this knowledge and awareness gave focus and purpose. Having clarity for Heads of Faculty is to know what the school goals are and what is expected of them by the Senior Leadership Team

In this study there was a consensus on the need to 'have a say'. Heads of Faculty wanted opportunities to contribute to discussions and dialogue. While Senior Leadership Teams spoke of the importance of ensuring that Heads of Faculty had the opportunity to participate. Creating opportunities to participate in discussions did not guarantee that Heads of Faculty would choose to participate in discussions. Having a say therefore was not conditional on the opportunities presented in order to contribute. This was demonstrated in the experience of one particular Senior Leadership Team member who was "*deafened by the silence*" of the Heads of Faculty at a

meeting to discuss school targets and annual plans. This experience contradicts the literature which highlights the expectations that Heads of Faculty fulfill their responsibilities as leaders of learning areas by presenting their faculty (New Zealand Curriculum Framework, 2007). It also showed that the platform available for Heads of Faculty to participate is more important than the actual participation itself.

There is a challenge then for Senior Leadership Teams to create an atmosphere and culture that encourages Heads of Faculties to speak freely. The atmosphere must be one of trust developed through positive relationship building experiences over a period of time (Reina & Reina, 2006). The concern for Heads of Faculty to feel that they can say what is on their mind is challenged by an uncomfortable apprehension that they might be subjected to repercussions and/or retribution for voicing their thoughts. The possibility of repercussions is real for some Heads of Faculties. This is illustrated by those Heads of Faculty who withdrew from the study. These fears are borne out of experiences that have strained their relationship with their Senior Leadership Team. Time and/or changes in personnel have not healed the wounds of betrayal but this has not stopped them continuing to work together. The literature acknowledges the loss of trust and its restoration when it is broken (Reynolds, 1997, Reina & Reina, 2006).

Communication in some New Zealand High Schools continues to be hierarchical. Communicational models from the literature and experiences shared by the participants showed that the information current flowed regularly from the top down and only sporadically from the bottom up (Fielding, 1993, Halawah, 2005). Senior Leadership Teams are very much aware of the importance of having established communication lines and they tried very hard to ensure the flow of information was constant. There is a lot of pressure on the Senior Leadership to ensure that these lines remain open and unrestricted not only for the exchange of information but also to maintain good relationships. As seen from the data the expectations of Heads of Faculty were that they wanted to be kept

informed from the top. They wanted to not only be in the loop but part of it. There was an expectation from Heads of Faculty that they would contribute to discussions as well as the decision making process.

### **Administration**

An effective relationship is developed between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty through job descriptions. The literature related to job description supports the conclusions (Henderson, 1975; Casteleyn, 1996; Woodall & Winstanley, 1998; Stybel, 2010). That job descriptions removed ambiguity and created clarity. Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty require job descriptions so that delineation of responsibilities is made clear to everyone. Without the clarity responsibilities between individuals and across groups become blurred and lead to confusion. Job descriptions for Heads of Faculties had been adopted by all the participating schools even if some were only recent developments. The adaptation of job descriptions provides a statement of purpose, scope, duties and responsibilities of a specific position or job (Woodall & Winstanley, 1998). Job descriptions are vital because they allow both groups to carry out their roles effectively thereby allowing their professional relationship to develop. The effectiveness of jobs descriptions is not just to outline who does what and when. Job descriptions provide an avenue of dialogue to which expectations can be reinforced and accountability measured.

Both Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty identified accountability as being critical to their relationship. Mirrored by the literature (Moller, 2009; Bovens, 2010) accountability is linked to performance management. It is through accountability that the actions or inaction of individuals are either celebrated or challenged. There has been a major shift in which accountability in education has been more about regulation and assessing teacher performance than educational improvement. This has seen a continual move towards decentralisation of education focusing more on the professional abilities of the classroom teacher and their ability to fulfill their job responsibilities. Accountability is

being responsible to educational stakeholders. Meeting accountability for Heads of Faculty has meant reporting on performance, to this end accountability through reports. Reviews and presentations are seen as a measurement of performance of the Faculty and its leaders (Moller, 2009). Heads of Faculty do not have an issue being held responsible so long as they know what they are accountable for.

### **Relationships**

Work satisfaction is crucial to an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties. Satisfaction is more than just getting a job done and then feeling good about it afterwards. High levels of satisfaction are a result of high levels of trust. Echoed by the literature, (Matzler & Renzl, 2006) trust between workers and manager's directly influences job satisfaction. Also paralleled by the literature (Reina & Reina, 2006; Matzler & Renzl, 2006) that the trust between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties in that the work performed by Senior Leaders directly affects Heads of Faculties as well as all other areas of the school. The development of an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty depends on both the individual and group capacity to trust. Without the capacity for both Heads of Faculty and Senior Leadership Teams to trust there can be no relationship. Trusting ourselves and trusting others is a dual combination of how to build and develop an effective relationship. When we trust ourselves, we are reliable; we know we can fulfill our own expectations and the expectations of others. We are more likely to take risks and try new things. We know we can deal with uncertainty and periods of anxiety when they occur. When the capacity to trust is developed we know that we can trust others will do their part or that people will be honest in their comments (Reina & Reina, 2006).

### **Professional Development**

There is a lack of successful mentoring programmes between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties. Mentoring is crucial to the



development of effective leadership. The literature highlights the importance of mentoring programmes (Alleman, 1988; Colky & Young, 2006). Mentoring programmes are powerful tools that need careful management in order to be successful. It is vital that connections between the mentor and the mentee have been established before the programme takes place. It is therefore vital that partnering the right individuals together in this close working relationship is critical. This also means that any conflicts of personality between mentor and mentee must either be resolved or repartnering will need to be made. Even within the well intended atmosphere of professional colleagues, conflict of personality between members of Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty can and will destroy any attempt to function effectively together.

Mentoring is more than just providing practical guidance as it provides the passing of ideas, attitudes and work ethics already established in the school. In this way it is the tutoring of individuals into 'how things are done around here' and to some degree 'what is not done around here'. This is reflected in mentoring literature but also in organisational culture writings (Schwartz & Davis 1981; Schein, 1985; 1990; Yin-Cheong, 1989; Richter, van Dick & West, 2004). Therefore we find through mentoring that practices acceptable to the school culture are reinforced thereby ensuring that the culture, for now, survives until such time as the culture of the school shifts.

There is consensus from both groups on the continued importance of developing pedagogy. The literature is extensive on improving classroom practice (Fullen, 1993; Fullen, 2002; Gibson, 2005; Elton, 2006). Staff visiting, observing and learning from other staff was seen as the best forms of improving practice as well as developing staff collegiality. One Head of Faculty stated *"that the practice of visiting and watching other teachers teaching was important not only for those wanted to learn new strategies but also for development of staff collegiality"*. Another Head of Faculty added that the practice was also to create a sense of 'normal

practice' and that it was 'considered alright' to see others teaching and to have 'your practice looked at'.

*"It's considered alright to actually see other people teaching and be involved in other people's classes to have your practice to be looked at by lots and lot of people".*

Distributed leadership is wide spread in all schools with varying levels of practice. Both the findings and literature identify its use is the way, forward leading to a number of benefits including the development of staff. The shift towards distributed leadership replaces the traditional view of a single individual standing at the top of the hierarchical structure. This method of leadership is no longer applicable in today's educational environment. The Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty recognised the importance of developing and building leaders. Heads of Faculty wanted experiences to be able to develop to the next level. There was a clear underlying ambition by Heads of Faculty to move up and forward but this level of enthusiasm was not as strong from the Senior Leadership Teams. The drive and passion to move forward is more than just gaining a promotion. It is recognition of the time and commitment Heads of Faculty have put into their craft. There was no indication from the Deputy or Assistant Principals that were working to become future principals but were content with their current position.

Transformational leadership is also a wide spread practice but not as visible. Transformational leadership fosters leadership by lifting people into their better selves but like distributed leadership, transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Boga & Ensari, 2009) is more philosophical in its pursuit to develop change than distributed leadership which is deliberate and practical (Gronn, 2000; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002; Bennet, Harvey, Wise, & Woods, 2003; Frost, 2005; Macbeth, 2006; Spillane, 2006; Spillane & Diamond, 2007; Harris & Spillane, 2008) Transformed leaders are asked to put aside their own interests for the good of the group or organisation, to put aside the instant

gratification of the moment in order to enjoy long term rewards later. Whether distributed or transformational leadership is practiced more than the other is not important. What is important is the recognition that these practices are promoting within individuals.

### **Challenges**

Despite the best intentions and efforts to ensure that the relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty remain positive, progressive and strong it is inevitable that at some time the relationship will be tested, strained and challenged. Changes in national educational policy and international trends have increased the workloads of principals, Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties.

As reflected in the literature (Chetty, 2007) tensions and strains have increased as demands and expectations upon schools have increased workloads. The increase in workload however has not been extended to the time allocated for the completion of extra work. Indeed no extra time has been provided by schools who find themselves locked into an unchanged time structure. The lack of time is not just so additional tasks can be completed but so that the needs of individuals can be attended to.

Relationships were challenged when Heads of Faculty felt that they were unsupported in their role by Senior Leadership Teams (Fiest, 2007). Faculty Heads identified insufficient induction, appraisal and mentoring programmes. This lack of support contraindicated the desire of Heads of Faculty to progress towards becoming future Deputy Principals or Principals.

Tensions in the relationship were exacerbated when communication lines were broken down (Fields, 1993; Sai & Sai, 2009). As mentioned earlier in the conclusions communication was the key component of an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty. Both groups acknowledged the crucial part played by communication within high schools and yet communication skills were poorly developed.

The biggest challenge faced by both Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty to their relationship was the feeling of betrayal. Trust, satisfaction and commitment underpinned the entire organisation. When trust broke down so did work satisfaction, and commitment to the organisation. There is a high cost to betrayal, relationships that were once effective were now replaced by frustration, back biting, and blame. In this climate suspicions became rife, anxiety was high, individuals turned inwards in an attempt to protect themselves, relationships collapsed, collegiality faulted, and effectiveness was lost.

These conclusions provide a basis for action. Individually and collectively they offer practical steps to support the development and sustainability of an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in New Zealand High Schools. An effective use of communication skills working in parallel with effective systems and structures underpinned by trust, satisfaction, and commitment supported by a focused professional development programme can surmount the many challenges encountered by these groups.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

A strength of this research was the dialogue and the expression of the lived experiences that came through the interviews. This rich dialogue provided a backbone of the study where broad perspectives, themes, conclusions and recommendations could be arrived at. There was also a willingness by Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties to engage in this research study despite their tight schedules.

A further strength of this study was ability to find consensus or contradiction in the experiences and responses by Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in the same school and from a wider perspective across two identical levels across multiple schools. There were clear indications of both consensus and contradictions within and across schools.

A limitation in this study was insufficient triangulation. Triangulation provides greater confidence in the findings because it uses more than one approach Tooley (2001). The use of triangulation increased the reliability of the data because it was gathered through multiple techniques. In this study only one data collection tool was used: semi-structured interviews requiring verbal and non verbal responses. However, the gathered data was rich in lived experiences. The use of five New Zealand High Schools and ten participants across those schools added to the reliability. To provide better triangulation and hence more reliability another research method and a different researcher who had more experience and better refined skills would be used. Had triangulation been used in this study, it would have enhanced the reliability of the study.

Another limitation was the criteria used to select participating schools. The selected criteria excluded experiences from private schools, single sex schools, and a wider geographical area. While this study provides a snapshot of experiences between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty within the established criteria it is only a snapshot within that criteria.

A further limitation was the principal selecting the participants from their school. The process removed the randomness of the selection process and removed the confidentiality between participants. The removal of complete unanimity at this point meant that Heads of Faculty and the Principal would be known to each other. Any responses therefore would be able to be directly linked back to its source. There was a likelihood then that the Heads of Faculty who withdrew during this study found themselves in a situation where their responses about their relationship with their respective Senior Leadership Teams may result in negative consequences for them. Furthermore, they may have seen their relationship as being ineffective and therefore felt that they had little to offer this study.

## **Recommendations**

The recommendations below have been derived from the research and are identified as being pertinent to establishing and maintaining an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in New Zealand High Schools. They are communication, trust, mentoring, and further research.

1. I recommend that Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty undertake and attend professional training courses to become skilled in effective communication. Communication was recognised by both groups as being vital to their success. Indeed this is supported by the literature which stated that without effective communication an organisation does not exist and cannot survive. A lack of effective communication skills had deprived individuals of working in an effective organisation. Both groups relied more on school systems and structures to communicate their intentions to the right people and throughout the school rather than on the art of communicating effectively. Thus the training for effective communication must not rest solely upon the use of modern technology as a way to rectify communication issues. It must also cover communication issues such as process, language, timing, planning, delivery, and receiving. This will go some way towards clarifying confusion and uncertainty in the organisation.
2. I recommend that Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty up-skill their knowledge, understanding and practice of trust. There is a fleeting appreciation of trust in the work place. Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty would benefit from understanding why trust is important, how trust is developed, how trust can be broken and how trust once broken, can be restored. As separate groups both Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty must be proactive in the development of trust. An unequal balance of trust building currently exists between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty. This has created a one sided

expectation of trust. Currently Senior Leadership Team are expected to develop trust while some Heads of Faculty withhold their judgement waiting for Senior Leaders to demonstrate that they deserve to be trusted or Heads of Faculty given trust until actions show that they don't deserve it. Both groups must take responsibility for developing trust in each other and the organisation. Heads of Faculty must take up more of the responsibility of developing trust with Senior Leaders.

3. I recommend that a mentoring programme for Heads of Faculty in New Zealand High Schools be addressed at a national level. There are national conferences and induction programmes and other professional development programmes for members of Senior Leadership Teams. No such attention or programme exists for Heads of Faculty. Heads of Faculty and schools are left to find their own devices, source their own support, and manage their own development and expertise in order to learn and fulfill their responsibilities. A national programme would provide the opportunity to network and would address areas the Heads of Faculty indicate in which they required support and training.
4. I recommend that further research be undertaken to gather data for a national development programme for Heads of Faculty. This programme would provide support to Heads of Faculty at a national level that does not currently exist. This programme would concentrate efforts nationally for those who eventually will progress to Senior Leadership Teams for which national development programmes currently exist. Additionally, I further recommend that research be carried out on investigating communication levels of Heads of Faculty and Senior Leadership Teams.

These recommendations provide the next steps for discussion and action. Each of the recommendations is practical. They entail the improvement of understanding and use of communication, the need to build relationships

of trust, participation in purposeful mentoring programmes and future research. Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculties who adopt these recommendations will be able to face challenges with confidence knowing they possess the skills to resolve them.



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# APPENDICIES

## Appendix A - Letter to the School Principal

February 2011

Dear,

My name is Rhys Kerapa. I am a student at the University of Waikato. I am undertaking a research project as part of my Master of Educational Leadership qualification. The purpose of my research is to explore the nature of an effective relationship between Heads of Faculty and Senior Management in New Zealand High Schools. My research is experience based and focuses on exploring what practices between Heads of Faculty and Senior Management can be identified as developing an effective relationship?

I believe that the experiences between Heads of Faculties and Senior Management at your school would be of particular value to this research. I am writing therefore to request your permission to undertake my research project within your school and recruit one Head of Faculty and one Member of Senior Management who will be involved in a single, one on one, face to face semi-structured interview that will be centred on the following research question:

- **What is the nature of an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in New Zealand High Schools?**

The interview will take 45-60 minutes and be audio-recorded and transcribed. I would like to start the interviews in April 2011. I am currently still employed at a Secondary School in New Zealand and I am acutely aware and fully acknowledge how busy school leaders are, at any time of the year. However, I am hoping that the results of this research influence the practice of current and future school leaders at middle and senior management level. In the same way, it is envisaged that the data gathered from this study will assist in maintaining and sustaining of an effective relationship between Middle and Senior Management.

If you would like to be part of this research or have any queries about this request, please contact me on the following email address: [rnk1@students.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:rnk1@students.waikato.ac.nz). Should you have questions about the research, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor is Mr Anthony Fisher.

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Mobile 021 458 554

I sincerely thank you for your consideration of my request and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Rhys N. Kerapa

## **Appendix B – Invitation Letter to Senior Management**

February 2011

Dear,

My name is Rhys Kerapa. I am a student at the University of Waikato. I am undertaking a research project as part of my Master of Educational Leadership qualification. The purpose of my research is to explore the nature of an effective relationship between Heads of Faculty and Senior Management in New Zealand High Schools. My research is experience based and focuses on exploring what practices between Heads of Faculty and Senior Management can be identified as developing an effective relationship?

I believe your views, thoughts and experiences would be of a particular value to this research. For this reason, the purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in this study. The research will involve participants in a single, one on one, face to face semi-structured interview that will be centred on the following research question:

- **What is the nature of an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in New Zealand High Schools?**

The interview will take 45-60 minutes and be audio-recorded and transcribed. A copy of the transcript will be sent to you to ensure I have correctly transcribed your conversation. All information gathered will remain private and confidential, and your identity will not be disclosed.

I would like to start the interviews in April 2011. I am currently still employed at a Secondary School in New Zealand and I am acutely aware and fully acknowledge how busy schools leaders are, at any time of the year. However, I am hoping that you will consider being part of this research project. I have attached an information sheet and a consent form. I encourage you to consider these documents which clarify information regarding the research project and your involvement.

I have received permission from the Principal to approach members of Senior Management and Heads of Faculty inviting their participation in this research. If you would like to be part of this research or have any queries about this request, please contact me on the following email address: [rnk1@students.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:rnk1@students.waikato.ac.nz). Should you have questions about the research, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor is Mr Anthony Fisher.

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Mobile 021 458 554

I sincerely thank you for your consideration of my request and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Rhys Kerapa

## **Appendix C – Invitation Letter to Head of Faculty**

February 2011

Dear,

My name is Rhys Kerapa. I am a student at the University of Waikato. I am undertaking a research project as part of my Master of Educational Leadership qualification. The purpose of my research is to explore the nature of an effective relationship between Heads of Faculty and Senior Management in New Zealand High Schools. My research is experience based and focuses on exploring what practices between Heads of Faculty and Senior Management can be identified as developing an effective relationship?

I believe your views, thoughts and experiences would be of a particular value to this research. For this reason, the purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in this study. The research will involve participants in a single one on one, face to face semi-structured interview that will be centered on the following research question:

- **What is the nature of an effective relationship between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in New Zealand High Schools?**

The interview will take 45-60 minutes and be audio-recorded and transcribed. A copy of the transcript will be sent to you to ensure I have correctly transcribed your conversation. All information gathered will remain private and confidential, and your identity will not be disclosed.

I would like to start the interviews in April 2011. I am currently still employed at a Secondary School in New Zealand and I am acutely aware and fully acknowledge how busy schools leaders are, at any time of the year. However, I am hoping that you will consider being part of this research project. I have attached an information sheet and a consent form. I encourage you to consider these documents; which clarify information regarding the research project and your involvement.

If you would like to be part of this research or have any queries about this request, please contact me on the following email address: [rnk1@students.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:rnk1@students.waikato.ac.nz). Should you have questions about the research, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisors Mr Anthony Fisher.

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I sincerely thank you for your consideration of my request and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Rhys Kerapa

## **Appendix D - Participant Information Sheet**

### **Project Title**

The nature of effective relationships between Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Faculty in New Zealand High Schools.

### **Background**

I am undertaking this research as part of my Master of Educational Leadership qualification. I am studying in the Faculty of Education at the University of Waikato in New Zealand and I am supervised by Dr David Giles and Mr Anthony Fisher.

My research is experience based and focuses on exploring what practices between Heads of Faculty and Senior Management can be identified as developing an effective relationship? I am hoping that the results of this research influence the practice of current and future school leaders at Middle and Senior Management level. In the same way, it is envisaged that the data gathered from this study will assist in maintaining and sustaining of an effective relationship between Middle and Senior Management.

### **Aim**

The aim of this research is to explore the nature of effective relationships between Head of Faculties and Senior Management in New Zealand Secondary Schools. I am interested in examining the nature of your educational practice and the personal and professional experiences that influence this relationship.

### **Method**

For this research I would like to carry out several single one on one, face to face semi-structured interviews. The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes. This experience will enable me to hear your opinions, perspectives and experiences regarding your relationship with Heads of Faculties or Senior Management.

### **Your involvement**

I believe your thoughts and experiences would be of a particular value to this research. For this reason I would like to invite you to participate in the individual interview. The interview will be audio-recorded in order to have an accurate record of your conversation. The recorded interview will be transcribed. Before data from the interview is analysed, you will be sent the transcript, which I would like you to check in order to confirm the accuracy of the information. Please note that your participation in this research is voluntary.

### **Participants' rights**

All prospective participants have the right:

- To decline to participate in the research and/or related activities or any portion or any part of these
- To know the form in which the findings will be published
- To know the duration and security of data storage
- To withdraw any information they have provided up until analysis has commenced on their data
- To access and correct personal information
- To know the process for withdrawing information they have provided
- Ask questions about the study at any time during participation.

### **Confidentiality**

All the information you provide will remain private and confidential and will not be shared with anyone other than the supervisors. Unless your permission is obtained, your identity will not be disclosed in the final report or any other report produced in the course of this research. For further information refer to University of Waikato Ethics Websites provided below.

<http://www.waikato.ac.nz/official-info/index/Ethics-Matters>

<http://calendar.waikato.ac.nz/assessment/ethicalConduct.html>

### **Archiving of data, privacy, storage and destruction of data.**

All non-identifying data (eg data sets and transcripts) used for publication will be securely kept long enough to allow for academic examination, challenge, or peer review. This period would normally be at least five years. Identifying data such as consent forms, photographs, and videos will be securely stored consistent with agreements made under section 9(4)(a) of Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations 2008. The responsibility for data storage lies with the department academic unit

Data will not be made available to persons or for purposes that are not named on the application. For further information refer to University of Waikato Ethics Websites provided below.

<http://www.waikato.ac.nz/official-info/index/Ethics-Matters>

<http://calendar.waikato.ac.nz/assessment/ethicalConduct.html>

### **Use of the information**

The data gathered will be used for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of a Master of Educational Leadership Thesis, and as the basis of possible future conference presentations and journal publications. The thesis may be published or presented. A digital copy of the thesis will be available for public access and a copy of the thesis will be lodged permanently in the University's digital repository: Research Commons.

### **The results**

The results of my research are to be presented as part of my Masters Thesis. In case you are interested in being notified of the final results from this study, you will be provided with an electronic copy of a summarised report.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and consider this invitation. I will contact you in the next two weeks to see if you might be willing to take part in this research. Please feel free to contact my supervisor or myself if you have any questions about the project.

### **Contact details**

#### **Researcher:**

Rhys Kerapa

(Mobile) 027 340 9055

Email: [rnk1@students.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:rnk1@students.waikato.ac.nz).

#### **Supervisor:**

Mr Anthony Fisher

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## **Appendix E - Consent Form**

*Project: "The nature of an effective relationship between Heads of Faculty and Senior Management at New Zealand High Schools"*

Supervisor: Mr Anthony Fisher ([afish@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:afish@waikato.ac.nz))

Researcher: Rhys Kerapa ([rnk1@students.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:rnk1@students.waikato.ac.nz))

I have read and understand the information sheet and I am willing to take part in this research project.

I have had the opportunity to discuss the study and I am satisfied with the answers I have been given.

I understand that the interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed.

I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary.

I understand I can refuse to answer any particular question and terminate the interview at any time.

I understand I have the right to decline, discontinue or withdraw from the research without giving reasons or withdraw

I understand that I cannot withdraw data once it is organised and analysed.

If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts will be destroyed.

I understand that my participation in this study is confidential and that my identity will not be revealed.

I understand that the data I contribute to this research will be used for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of the Master of Educational Leadership Thesis and as the basis of conference presentations and journal publications.

I agree to take part in this research and acknowledge receipt of a copy of this consent form and the participant information sheet.

Participant's name: .....

Participant's signature: .....

Date: .....

Please provide the following information if you are interested in receiving a final summarised report of this research.

Address:

Email:

## **Appendix D – Interview Questions**

### **Background information**

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. How long have you been teaching at this school?
3. How long have you been a member of the Senior Management Team?
4. How long have you been a member of the Senior Management Team at this school?
5. What is your subject specialist area?

### **General Questions**

1. Tell me about your journey as a Member of Senior Management/Heads of Faculty?
2. Tell me about the relationship between you and the Heads of Faculties/ Senior Leadership Team here at .....
3. What was it like when you first stepped in the role?
4. What was it like when you first came here?
5. What was it like when you first got the position?
6. Tell me how this relationship is formed at the start of each year, what happens.
7. Tell me how this relationship developed.
8. What is it like now?
9. What has changed it?
10. What made it different?
11. Where were there any barriers you countered in establishing this relationship?
12. What possible barriers could you see?
13. Can you tell me about these?
14. Can you tell how you overcame them?
15. What experiences have you had that have influenced how you work with them?
16. What do you do now?
17. Based on our discussion and your experiences in an ideal world what would you see as an effective relationship?

18. If I was to come into one of your meetings between HOFs and SMT what would I see/hear/feel?

19. Is there anything thing that we have not shared that you would like to share?

Additional question prompts.

- How do they know that the relationship was/was not working
- Can you tell me a little bit about that ..... How do they know.....
- So.....In terms of.....what do each of those parties do?
- What specifically made it great?
- What specifically did you difficulty?
- You mentioned the HOF/SMT who made you feel really comfortable or developed a great relationship. What did they do?
- What did they do?