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How senior teachers in kindergarten associations in Aotearoa New Zealand, define, understand and enact leadership.

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Abstract

Leadership in early childhood education is gaining increased attention as evidence suggests leadership is a key factor in raising the quality of early childhood curriculum provision and learning outcomes for children. The present study examined the way in which one group of positional leaders, senior teachers within kindergarten associations in Aotearoa New Zealand, define, understand and enact leadership. The study was situated within a pragmatic paradigm and was descriptive in approach, offering insight into participant's beliefs and practices. Employing a survey to gather both qualitative and quantitative data provided an avenue for participants to describe their understanding, practice and enactment of leadership. Qualitative data were analysed thematically with an inductive approach taken to identify patterns of meaning, while simple descriptive statistics were used to summarise and interpret quantitative data such as categorisations and ratings. Findings indicated the leadership role of the senior teacher is characterised by complexity, including the identification of eight key areas of responsibility: curriculum development, collaboration, managing human resources, staff development through the provision of professional development, liaison within and outside of the organisation, oversight across multiple sites, compliance and internal evaluation. Senior teachers' understanding of leadership as a collaborative, relational endeavor focuses on building the professional capabilities of others, with the intention of strengthening curriculum and pedagogy and thereby influencing outcomes for children. Findings also revealed senior teachers navigate multiple and at times competing demands on their leadership work, exacerbated by the complex external environment within which it is enacted. While leadership was seen to be rewarding and valuable, noted challenges included lack of time, a concentration on compliance and accountability functions, perceived lack of influence on strategic work within their organisations, human resources activities and at times, limited scope to change the practice of others.

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In memory of Terence Leo Hall.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	1
Chapter One: Introduction.....	5
1.1 Overview.....	5
1.2 Background and Context of the Study.....	5
1.2.1 Kindergarten.....	7
1.2.2 Kindergarten Associations.	8
1.2.3 Senior Teachers.	8
1.3 Rationale for the Study	11
1.4 Researcher Background	13
1.6 Summary of Chapters.....	14
Chapter Two: Literature Review	16
2.1 Introduction.....	16
2.2 Operational Definitions of Leadership	17
2.3 Conceptual Definitions of Leadership	20
2.4 Leadership Enactment.....	25
2.4.1 Leadership Practice.	25
2.4.2 Leadership Functions.	29
2.5 Contextual Influences	31
2.6 Influence of Leader Values and Beliefs.....	33
2.7 Conclusion	35
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	37
3.1 Introduction.....	37
3.2.1 Research paradigm.....	37
3.2.2 Design.	38
3.3 Participants.....	40
3.4 Dissemination of the Survey	41
3.5 Positioning of Researcher	41
3.6 Data collection.....	43
3.6.1 Survey Design.	43
3.6.2 Survey Pilot.....	44

3.6.3 Survey Instrument.....	45
3.7 Data Analysis	47
3.8 Ethics.....	48
3.8.1 Informed and Voluntary Consent.....	49
3.8.2 Respect for Privacy and Confidentiality.....	49
3.8.3 Avoidance of Conflict of Interest.....	50
Chapter Four: Results	51
4.1 Introduction.....	51
4.2 The Participants.....	51
4.2.3 Job Title.....	53
4.3 Context	54
4.3.1 Description of Role and Key Responsibilities.....	54
4.3.2 Role Difference.....	57
4.4 Beliefs about Leadership.....	58
4.4.1 Effective Leaders.....	59
4.4.2 Important Leadership Tasks and Functions.....	61
4.4.3 Involvement in Leadership Functions.....	65
4.4.4 Skills, Attributes and Characteristics.....	66
4.5 Enactment of Leadership	69
4.5.1 Actions.....	69
4.5.2 Challenges.....	70
4.5.3 The Rewards.....	72
Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion	74
5.1 Introduction.....	74
5.2 Context and Complexity.....	76
5.3 Beliefs and Understandings	80
5.4 Enactment.....	86
5.5 Strengths and limitations of the study	93
5.6 Future Research.....	94
5.7 Key Insights and Contributions	97
5.8 Conclusion	99
References	102
Appendix A: Information Sheet for Associations	114
Appendix B: Letter of Information to Participants	116

Appendix C: Ethics Approval	119
Appendix D: Survey Questions	120

List of Tables & Figures

Table 1 Participants' teaching qualifications	52
Table 2 Participant's Job Titles	53
Table 3 Important Leadership Characteristics	68
Table 4 Leadership Actions	69
Figure 1 Leadership Functions' Relative Importance.....	64
Figure 2 Involvement in Leadership Functions and Tasks	65
Figure 3 Value of Leadership Functions.....	66

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Overview

This study examined the way in which one group of positional leaders, senior teachers within kindergarten associations in Aotearoa New Zealand, define, understand and enact leadership within their organisations. Leadership is positioned as an individually constructed and situational phenomenon. Kindergarten senior teachers were selected because of the potential to offer insight into the work of these leaders in addition to being an identifiable and accessible group who sit in a unique leadership role. The researcher is also a member of this group making it both a pragmatic decision and one of high interest to the researcher. The study was descriptive, using survey as a means of data collection to provide the opportunity for individual participants to describe their work as leaders and how they construct and enact their role. To set the context for the present study the introduction chapter outlines the rationale for the study, describes the background, the sector and organisational context within which it occurs, and identifies the researcher's position.

1.2 Background and Context of the Study

It is essential to consider the uniqueness of the organisational contexts within which research is conducted (Heikka, Waniganayake & Hujala, 2012) and the historical influences at play. The following section describes the early childhood education sector within Aotearoa New Zealand, outlining the development and current positioning of kindergartens within this context and the role of the senior teacher as a positional leader.

In this study early childhood is defined as education for children aged from birth to school entry. Early childhood education provision in New Zealand is characterised by diversity, with leadership roles and structures varying across different services and potentially within services (Thornton, 2010). *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum document (Ministry of Education, 2017) notes these services have a range of ownership and governance structures and operating models and “have emerged over time and in response to changing social contexts, educational aims, and parental employment patterns” (p. 8). These include parent led playcentres, kindergartens, ngā kōhanga reo, education and care (private, corporate and not-for-profit), and home-based services. Cooper (2014) notes that diverse approaches to leadership suit the values and philosophical underpinnings of each context. Leadership may be influenced by differing cultural perspectives such as ngā kōhanga reo or Pasifika services, structural differences, organisational and philosophical emphases such as Montessori or Steiner, or the ways in which parents, whānau and communities are involved (Ministry of Education, 2017). The diversity of services therefore influences the conception of leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand (Thornton, Wansborough, Clarkin-Phillips, Aitken & Tamati, 2009).

It is also suggested early childhood education within Aotearoa New Zealand is subjected to neo-liberal agendas (Scrivens, 2000) and is becoming increasingly market driven with a focus on outcomes and accountability and the adoption of managerial approaches (Turton & Wrightson, 2017). Scrivens (1998) forecast this focus when she suggested there was evidence of successive governments separating professional leadership from management and imposing increasing levels of accountability leading

to promotion of private sector management. The on-going impact of neo-liberalism continues. The effects of privatisation within the early childhood sector in Aotearoa remains increasingly influential with competition a feature and fiscal sustainability a necessary focus. This present external influence is at odds with the collective nature of leadership proposed within the extant literature and yet it is within this environment that senior teachers are tasked with enacting their leadership.

1.2.1 Kindergarten. Kindergartens in Aotearoa New Zealand began in the 1870s and are a network of associations offered nationwide, across diverse communities developed to educate young children, originally from age 3 to 5 years. The basis for the movement came from overseas, being part of a worldwide movement, which originated in the work of Friedrich Froebel (Bethell, 2008). Unlike other educational institutions at the time, kindergartens were open to children of all social classes and religious denomination (Bethell, 2008). By 1914 kindergartens received government subsidies and operated under a voluntary management model. This structure largely remained the same with initiatives such as the Meade Report (*Education to be More*, 1988) and *Before Five* (1998) legitimising the systems that were present at the time (Scrivens, 1998). Since then kindergarten associations have been engaged in a process of restructuring to meet the evolving demands of the wider contextual changes within early childhood education and wider society. Bulk funding in the early 1990s of both operations and teacher salaries for kindergartens led to services becoming self-managing and eventually self-funded and privatised (Scrivens, 2000).

1.2.2 Kindergarten Associations. This research was undertaken within kindergarten associations across Aotearoa New Zealand. Kindergarten associations are those that control free kindergartens within the meaning of section 120 of the Education Act, 1989. They are governed by volunteer boards who employ the General Manager (GM) or Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who hold the Ministry of Education licence for the kindergartens. In 2017, there were 30 regional kindergarten associations supporting over 650 kindergartens (Kindergarten Heritage Collection of New Zealand, n.d.). A kindergarten association is defined in the Education Act of 1989 as “an organisation founded for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a kindergarten or kindergartens”. They are independent, autonomous not-for-profit entities and registered charities. Kindergarten associations reflect the communities they serve in response to local decision making at the regional level. There are currently two major umbrella organisations for associations; The New Zealand Kindergartens (NZK) and the Kindergarten Federation (Early Childhood Leadership) with the Gisborne Association operating independently.

1.2.3 Senior Teachers. The early 1980s saw the introduction, by the National government of the time, of the Kindergarten Support Scheme which funded kindergarten associations to employ senior teachers to provide professional support and supervision to kindergarten teams (May & Bethell, 2017). It is recognised that educational leadership is distributed throughout kindergarten associations. In this study senior teachers are acknowledged as positional leaders who have a formal leadership role as designated by their General Manager or Chief Executive Officer, with responsibility for teaching and learning and “oversight or keeping the big picture in

mind” (Denee & Thornton, 2017, p. 41). Leadership is therefore invested in senior teachers who hold a formal position of leadership. Leadership is shared with head teachers and centre managers who fulfil the day to day leadership within each teaching and learning site across the organisation. These “hierarchically defined positional leadership roles” (Denee & Thornton, 2017, p. 34) differ from a head teacher role as senior teachers do not generally teach with those they lead, rather working from association offices off-site. Their leadership thus sits at the organisational level rather than at the individual centre level where head teachers are perceived as the leaders within the kindergarten: “in fact senior teachers have a role that is midway between the teachers and head teachers and the employing body” (Scrivens, 1998, p. 40).

In 1991 the Kindergarten Support Scheme was reviewed, and senior teacher job descriptions gave as the primary objective of the role “the provision of high quality education in kindergartens through sound professional advice and support” (Duncan, 2001). In the Education Review Office (1997) publication *What counts as quality in kindergartens*, the senior teacher role is noted as the provision of support and guidance to the teaching staff and their employers; reporting on the quality of the programmes being offered in kindergartens; involvement in staffing matters; and ensuring association policy is implemented and legal requirements and contractual undertakings are being met. In effect senior teachers are “delegated the responsibility for the management of the education programmes delivered by kindergartens” (ERO, 1997, p. 20). A set of national standards was developed in 2005 for kindergarten

teachers, head teachers and senior teachers to provide national consistency in performance management while remaining flexible to enable individual associations to adapt them to their particular community (Ministry of Education, 2005). The *Professional Standards for Senior Teachers* are divided into four categories with a series of associated indicators alongside. The categories include *professional leadership* (6 indicators), *strategic leadership* (4 indicators), *professional relationships* (4 indicators) and *operations and management* (3 indicators). These standards remain in place and are included as an appendix to the Collective Agreement for Kindergarten Teachers, Head Teachers and Senior Teachers (NZKA, 2017). They are expected to form the basis of senior teachers' performance appraisal (for those on the collective agreement).

Senior teachers employed by associations under the umbrella of New Zealand Kindergartens Incorporated Te Pūtahi Kura Pūhou o Aotearoa (NZK) and the umbrella of the Kindergarten Federation (Early Childhood Leadership) are included within this study, along with the Gisborne Association which operates independently. Although nomenclature is experiencing change with some senior teacher titles now becoming 'Professional Practice Leader' and 'Professional Service Manager' and others, in this research the term senior teacher has been used for all participants.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

Attention has increasingly focused on the impact of early childhood education.

Evidence shows that quality early childhood education has long term positive effects on children's subsequent educational achievement (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2007; Thomas & Nuttall, 2014; Heikka, Hattunen & Waniganayake, 2016; Strehmel, 2016) and there is growing evidence that leadership is a key factor in raising the quality of early childhood programmes (Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2003; McDowall Clark, 2012; Thomas & Nuttall, 2014). Policy makers' desire to reduce the persistent disparities in educational achievement between different groups of children has heightened this scrutiny. However, ambiguity remains in defining and conceptualising leadership in this sector. There is no universally accepted definition of leadership in early childhood education and increasing recognition of a need to highlight multi-layered understandings that can respond to the distinctive contexts found within early childhood services (Kah Yan Loo & Agbenyega, 2015). As Aitken (2013, p. 119) comments, "roles, responsibilities and practices of leadership vary from context to context and are dependent on practices, attitudes and intentions". Research on educational leadership has not kept pace with changes occurring in the field and there has been limited theorisation of early childhood leadership that supports leaders to further understand and conceptualise their roles in times of significant change (Davis, Kreig & Smith, 2015).

As a senior teacher in a kindergarten association in Aotearoa New Zealand I have been aware of differing expectations around my role and those of my peers across Aotearoa New Zealand. This diversity of understanding relating to the requirements of the role

occurs across a range of stakeholders including CEOs and Managers, Governance boards, teachers and other positional leaders within associations and to some extent senior teachers themselves. I became increasingly aware that although we may have the same or similar titles, the leadership work that we did could, and did, look different according to the context and I wanted to examine this more closely.

The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (formerly Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand) has a 2016-2020 Strategic Plan focused on enabling leadership at all levels of the education system with the intent of designing “a strategy that supports and develops a powerful leadership ecosystem for professional educators” (Education Council, 2016, p. 1). This has now evolved into a *Leadership Strategy and Leadership Capability Framework* that is designed to advance educational leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand (Education Council, 2018; 2018a). While similarities between leadership in ECE and the compulsory school sectors have been identified (Thornton, 2010), there remains a need to support practitioners to consciously interrogate their own experiences and preconceptions and explore what leadership is in each sector and setting (McDowall Clark, 2012). To be able to contribute effectively to dialogue on leadership the ECE sector needs to examine leadership as it currently exists within the diverse learning communities that constitute the sector. Therefore, the present study seeks to illuminate the beliefs and understandings of one group of leaders and explore how they enact leadership within their context.

1.4 Researcher Background

I am a senior teacher within a kindergarten association and have been so for 8 years. Prior to this I worked within the tertiary sector for 10 years and before that was a kindergarten head teacher for 8 years and teacher for 2 years. A significant influence on the decision to undertake this research was my observation that the target population of which I am a member has been struggling to define ourselves as a group, to develop a shared vision and understanding of our role and how we enact this role at various sites across Aotearoa New Zealand. Although the group meet annually at Senior Teacher Hui, and this issue is often on the agenda and prompts much debate and dialogue, progress is slow. The extended time frame between these discussions means frequent change of personnel in the group and continued change in the context within which they operate. Recent structural changes within many of the regional associations has changed the context of the work undertaken by senior teachers and in some settings the expectations of the role. This is most visible in the various title changes experienced by these positional leaders. For example, my title has changed from Professional Service Manager to Senior Teacher within my term of employment. My own experience suggests senior teachers' work increasingly operates within rising demands for compliance from the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Education Review Office (ERO), responsiveness (to teachers, children and whānau of each community), accountability (to government, own organisations), all within an entrepreneurial/competitive model of education not evident in the past but increasingly prevalent in the current context. For these reasons I sought to conduct the present research to begin the process of highlighting senior teachers' leadership work within such a complex internal and external context.

1.6 Summary of Chapters

The present chapter set the context and background for the study. Chapter Two provides a review of the literature related to leadership within early childhood education. The review identifies the need for further examination of the way in which leadership is being enacted and how positional leaders in Aotearoa New Zealand negotiate and navigate their leadership practice. The extant literature also indicates the context in which leaders undertake their leadership work is influential in shaping this work and yet little is understood about this within the multiple contexts within Aotearoa New Zealand.

Chapter Three identifies and describes the research design of the study and selection of a pragmatic methodological approach using survey as a means of gathering both qualitative and quantitative data. This allows for an exploration of participants understanding as they seek to interpret their work as leaders. The scope of the data collection is identified, and the participants, settings and positioning of the researcher are described. Ethical issues are discussed along with methods of analysing the data gathered.

The results of the survey are presented in Chapter Four. Both qualitative and quantitative data are presented, and key themes and trends are identified. Direct quotes from senior teachers were used to emphasise key messages.

Chapter Five offers a combined discussion and conclusion. It begins with discussion of the significance and implications of the findings in relation to the extant literature, in attending to the core research question of how leadership is defined, understood and enacted by senior teachers within kindergarten in Aotearoa New Zealand. The strengths and limitations of the present study are identified and discussed in addition to key insights, contributions to the field and implications for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

There is now significant interest at both a practical and theoretical level in leadership within early childhood education, in contrast to what was seen as a dearth of literature in the not so distant past (Thornton, et al., 2009). This interest has been prompted by an accumulating body of evidence that quality teaching matters in early childhood education (Thomas & Nuttall, 2014) and that quality leadership enhances teaching and promotes positive outcomes for children (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2007; Aubrey, Godfrey & Harris, 2012; Thomas & Nuttall, 2014; Fleet, Soper, Seamann & Madden, 2015; Davis, Kreig & Smith, 2015; Coleman, Sharp & Handscomb, 2015; Heikka, Hattunen & Waniganayake, 2016; Strehmel, 2016).

There is however less certainty around defining and conceptualising effective leadership. Multiple theories, models and approaches to leadership have been identified and debated within the literature and while research is beginning to identify conceptions of leadership that are more conducive to leading within typically democratic and inclusive early childhood education settings (Dalli & Thornton, 2013; Thornton & Cherrington, 2014), further examination in this area is required.

In addition, early childhood education occurs within diverse contexts. Such diversity and the complexity of context influences how leadership is enacted. Leadership is

defined and operationalised in different ways, influenced by a range of factors at many different levels across varying and increasingly complex or layered contexts. The dichotomy appears to be that while more recent literature suggests leadership is highly contextualised and difficult to define and qualify, there is a drive for vigorous, evidence-based leadership that supports positive outcomes for children, addresses and solves social ills and meets increasingly levels of accountability imposed by government agencies (Sims, Forrest, Seamann & Slattery, 2015).

There is still much to do to progress the discourse and increase understandings of what leadership looks like, and how it is conceptualised and enacted within the multiple contexts in which it operates. The present work will add to this discourse by describing how leadership is defined, understood and enacted by senior teachers within kindergartens in Aotearoa New Zealand and will begin with a review of the literature on leadership within early childhood education.

2.2 Operational Definitions of Leadership

Leadership is an elusive, ambiguous concept to define (Kah Yan Loo & AGENCYEGA, 2015) “evidenced by its numerous, sometimes conflicting, definitions and descriptions” (Cooper, 2014, p. 86). Aubrey, Godfrey and Harris (2012) suggest various definitions involve traits, behaviours, situational contingency function and effectiveness, vision, values, intelligence and wisdom, and propose that “at its most fundamental level, leadership requires followership; some degree of social influence” (p. 7). Leadership

as a position of influence is commonplace in the literature (McDowall Clark, 2012). Hallet (2013) found in her study on leadership styles and practices of early year's graduate leaders, that leadership was viewed as a process involving groups of people influencing and inspiring one another as opposed to one person leading alone. Such collaboration is an extension of the notion of *leadership as influence* and supports a collegial, relational construct. The developing consensus regarding the benefits of a collective rather than individual approach to leadership in the sector is increasingly noted (Thornton & Cherrington, 2014; Matipo, 2017; Dalli & Thornton, 2013; Tamaiti, Hond-Flavill, Korewha, & whānau of Te Kōpae Piripono, 2008). Stamopoulos (2012) also acknowledges the collaborative aspect of leadership where sharing of a reciprocal process was highlighted, emphasising the pursuit of change as a necessary component of being a leader and contributing to a shared vision. Cooper (2014) adds that "teacher leadership is not a technical task, but involves an intellectual, complex, and moral commitment to children, other teachers and families" (p. 90).

The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (formerly known as the New Zealand Education Council Aotearoa), an independent professional body for teachers with the aim of providing leadership to increase the status of teaching and strengthen accountability while raising standards across the educational system, have defined leadership as:

the practice of supporting others to make a positive difference to children's and young peoples' learning. It involves creating and sustaining the conditions known to enhance their learning. It requires the capability to

work effectively with colleagues and other adults to support learning and to create new solutions and knowledge together. For those in positional leadership roles it also involves building and sustaining thriving teams and institutions that support ongoing professional learning (New Zealand Education Council, 2018, p. 8).

There is debate within the literature about the necessity or desirability for one clear definition or conceptualisation of leadership given that it occurs across so many diverse and often complex contexts. Davis, Kreig and Smith (2015) for instance, outline the difficulties of developing a single construct of the woman leader while Cooper (2014) claims the notion of teacher leadership resists a single, narrow definition and that the needs of the distinct context in which leadership occurs will shape what this looks like. Male and Palaiologou (2013) agree that the view of leadership held should be responsive to and influenced by the context in which it occurs rather than reduced to any one concept or model.

Others recognise that while problematic, further investigation into the local and universal dynamics of leadership is necessary to increase understandings and enable exploration of challenges encountered (Heikka, Hattunen & Waniganayake, 2016).

Advancing a postmodern theory, Nicholson and Maniates (2016) support the need for multiple understandings and suggest these conceptualisations need to be dynamic, socially constituted, negotiated, complex and undergoing continuous transformation.

Within this construct, meanings are understood to develop in highly contextualised ways “where individual’s experiences and understandings are recognised and always

mediated by a range of cultural, social, historical and political influences in their lives” (p. 68). A post-modern discourse therefore suggests that leadership needs to be understood within the *unique site ontology* of a given community of practice and that “understanding how this has been shaped over the years by a number of external and internal influences allows opportunities for transformational leading and learning” (Turton & Wrightson, 2017, p. 26). A social construction of leadership is on-going, therefore further exploration of the meaning of leadership held within early childhood education is essential to develop new ways of understanding (McDowall Clark, 2013).

Summary

The previous section has outlined the complexities and challenges visible within the current discourse on leadership in determining one clear operational definition within early childhood education and questions the necessity to do so. There are calls for retaining the complexity in leadership rather than seeking simplicity (Bottery, 2006). Leadership is emerging as a constructed, situated and interpretative phenomenon. Extant literature supports the notion that definitions of leadership are contextually specific and dependent on the conceptualisation of leadership held. The next section will identify these conceptualisations.

2.3 Conceptual Definitions of Leadership

There are multiple approaches, models or conceptualisations of leadership evident in this field of literature where diverse leadership nomenclature such as distributed, democratic and shared leadership are being used interchangeably and uncritically

(Heikka, Waniganayake & Hujala, 2012). It is suggested a potential consequence of this lack of clarity within the leadership discourse is a reduction in the impact on the practices of early childhood leaders (Sims, Forrest, Seamann & Slattery, 2015). What is clear in the literature is that a traditional conception of leadership which places the leader in an ultimate position of authority with a reliance on management and administrative functions, reflects a masculine or hierarchical business model that does not resonate with early childhood teachers (Kah Yan Loo & Agbenyega, 2015; Davis, Kreig & Smith, 2015).

A transformational conceptualisation of leadership is identified within the literature as being a move towards a more changeable, dynamic and proactive notion of leadership where a leader inspires, promotes change, provides vision and persuades others to follow (Bottery, 2006). Yet, it has been argued that this heroic notion of leadership can be viewed as an extension of the traditional one-leader model which is more focused on the relationship between the leader and followers than on the educational work of the school leadership, and “the quality of those relationships is not predictive of the quality of student outcomes” (Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008, p. 665).

Pedagogical or instructional leadership sees leadership as focused on actions taken to improve or maintain quality instructional effectiveness, and to evaluate whether desired outcomes are being achieved. Pedagogical leadership is focused on ensuring that effective implementation of curriculum and teaching occurs (Snyder, Crowe &

Crow, 2012). Rouse and Spradbury (2016) define a pedagogical leader as someone who understands how children learn and develop and what makes this happen, and who lead and mentor co-workers in building pedagogical practice through a shared understanding of the aims and vision in supporting learning and development in young children. Male and Palaiologou (2013) go further to claim pedagogical leadership as concerned with the links between desirable educational outcomes and the set of social realities that surround the educational setting, suggesting a focus only on the dual relationship of teaching and learning is simplistic. In addition, claiming it is an ethical approach that respects values and should be concerned with the exercise of reasonable and justifiable judgements.

A focus on the development of pedagogy and curriculum has been criticised as quite a narrow focus of leadership within the early childhood sector (Cooper, 2014) with Sims, Forrest, Seamann and Slattery's (2015) findings suggesting that "key elements of pedagogical leadership are not yet strongly embedded in participants perceptions of leadership capacity" (p. 159). This study reported the understanding of leadership held by 351 early childhood leaders within the Australian context who were students enrolled in a leadership course. While there are self-acknowledged limits to their data collection, they assert their participants valued the relationship component over and above the mentoring role and the end point of quality improvement.

Distributed leadership is often promoted within the ECE leadership literature and is seen as being collaborative in nature and resonating with the more team-oriented and relational ways of working within early childhood education (Thornton, 2010).

Distributed leadership has broad theoretical meanings but commonly includes concepts of interdependence, leadership practice and professional learning (Heikka & Hujala, 2013; Colmer, Waniganayake & Field, 2014). It represents a change from traditional hierarchies and assumptions of leadership and privileges relationships (Nicholson & Maniates, 2016). Denee and Thornton (2017) suggest a distributed approach views leadership as a focus on practice rather than a person, while Kangas, Venninen and Ojala (2015) suggest the prominence of distributed leadership within early childhood education is due to the complexity of the challenge of leading early childhood services where no one person can cope with the multiple demands and complex contexts.

Denee and Thornton (2017), in a discussion paper challenging positional authority, also describe distributed leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand as being both positionally assigned and a required practice of all teachers and suggest this notion of leadership is “reflected in government policy and underpins the pedagogical leadership measure within the ERO framework” (p.33). More recently *the Leadership Strategy for the Teaching Profession of Aotearoa New Zealand* suggests there is “a need to build and foster shared understandings that powerful educational leadership maximises the talents and abilities of all learners, and it needs to be exercised across a wide range of formal and informal roles and responsibilities” (Education Council, 2018, p. 13).

Leadership is not necessarily seen as belonging only to formal leadership structures or titular positions leading to the notion that everyone can have influence. Here leadership is viewed as “distributed across group members and characterised by interdependence and cooperation” (Dalli & Thornton, 2013, p. 308). Cooper (2014), again within a New Zealand context, also talks about leadership as seen within the everyday practices of teachers and as collaborative, contextualised and community based.

There is therefore an emerging focus on leadership as residing within all members of the teaching community rather than any one positional role. However, distributed leadership approaches can recognise the role of positional leaders as moving beyond a leader/follower mind-set to one which is distributed across both positional and information leadership and is possible within a hierarchical structure (Colmer, et al., 2014). They suggest distribution does not replace positional leaders rather, both are important in improving educational practice.

Summary

The previous section has identified how leadership has been conceptualised within the current literature. While a distributive pedagogical model appears to be emerging, there is caution in the promotion of any one approach and suggestions the various conceptualisations identified have not been helpful to those actually engaged in the process or practice of leadership (Bottery, 2006).

Emerging critique of these conceptualisations of leadership suggest that while most of the early childhood leadership literature discusses these approaches to leadership it does not go beyond that to interrogate the underpinnings of such models or support leaders to further understand and conceptualise their roles in practice (Davis, Kreig & Smith, 2015). Therefore, the next section will review findings from the literature on how leadership is enacted and explore the practices and functions of leadership within early childhood education.

2.4 Leadership Enactment

Murray (2013) suggests the early childhood sector is having difficulty with applying leadership theory with early childhood pedagogy and the distinct contexts within which it operates and calls for a new paradigm of leadership that considers the characteristics of early childhood education. Some commentators (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2007; Stamopoulos, 2012; Dalli & Thornton, 2013; Kah Yan Loo & Agenyega, 2015) turn to the attributes associated with being a leader while Davis, Kreig and Smith (2015) claim there are some core principles of sound early childhood leadership.

2.4.1 Leadership Practice. An emphasis on leadership practices focuses on the how and why of what leaders actually do. “This suggests rather than adopting a particular style, effective leaders take on diverse roles depending on the situation and context” (Dalli & Thornton, 2013, p. 308). The following will outline the capabilities of effective leaders as determined within the literature.

Siraj-Blatchford and Manni's (2007) influential *Effective Leadership in the Early Years Sector (ELEY's)* study identified three fundamental requirements for leaders of learning – contextual literacy, a commitment to collaboration and the improvement of children's learning outcomes; thus favouring a distributive and pedagogical conceptualisation of leadership. Categories for effective leadership were also identified in their study. These were: identifying and articulating a collective vision; ensuring shared understandings; effective communication; encouraging reflection; monitoring and assessing practice; commitment to on-going professional development; distributed leadership; building a learning community and a team culture; encouraging and facilitating parent and community partnerships, and striking a balance between leading and managing.

Similarly, Stamopoulos (2012) identifies four aspects of leadership that are essential for early childhood leaders to know, understand and apply in their work. These are professional knowledge, professional identity, application of interpretive lenses (the ability to reflect and engage in self-inquiry) and relational trust. Interpersonal relationships are seen as integral to leadership effectiveness. McDowall Clark (2012) recognises effective leadership practices as including encouraging reflection, building a team culture and common purpose or shared goals, creation of an emotional climate that supports continuing improvement, and commitment to own professional development. Coleman, Sharp and Hanscomb (2015), within the UK context, demonstrate core behaviours of leaders as engaging responsively to families, using evidence to drive improvement, motivating and

empowering staff and embracing integrated working. They also emphasise that “the nature of effective leadership is unavoidably compromised unless it is accompanied by efforts to secure a deeper understanding of the context within which it is enacted” (p. 78).

Heikka and Hujala (2013) investigated the distribution of responsibilities for leadership within the Finnish context. They focused on the enactment of leadership by exploring how early childhood stakeholders perceive their leadership responsibilities. This study identified different practices of leadership distribution between those of different responsibilities. Leadership responsibilities were concerned with quality improvement, pedagogical leadership, daily management, HR management, external relationships and advocating for early childhood education.

The Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) in Aotearoa New Zealand, *School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why* (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009) which is based on school research and commissioned by the Ministry of Education, has been very influential in the current leadership dialogue within Aotearoa New Zealand. It claims effective leaders identify areas of learning strength and areas for improvement, negotiate goals and expectations, oversee the planning, implementation and evaluation of curriculum and teaching, ensure resources are allocated to support the agreed priorities, invest in their own and others learning, and maintain a professional learning environment (Robinson, et al., 2009). Thornton

(2010) suggests four of these eight leadership dimensions are most relevant to early childhood education. These are establishing goals and expectations; planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and curriculum; promoting and participating in teacher learning and development; and engaging in constructive problem talk. She suggests a significant aspect of the leadership dimension is the leader's role in providing both formative and summative feedback to teachers. Thornton (2010) also identifies four areas of leadership knowledge, skills and dispositions that are seen to make a difference to student outcomes in schools and that are still relevant to the New Zealand early childhood education sector. These are: ensuring administrative decisions are informed by knowledge about effective pedagogy; having the ability to analyse and solve complex problems; building relational trust and engaging in open to learning conversations.

More recently, Denee and Thornton (2017) on the basis of the findings of their qualitative research within the New Zealand early childhood sector and analysis of literature on distributed leadership, developed a framework of effective leadership practices consisting of mentoring and coaching; fostering relational trust; and creating vision and designing supportive structures that lead to successful facilitation of distributed leadership. Scrivens (1998; 2000), also within the New Zealand context, is one of the few researchers to examine the perceptions of the practice of leadership held by senior teachers within the kindergarten service. This small-scale study involved interviewing six senior teachers working across two kindergarten associations. Aware of the limitations of sole reliance on semi-structured interview as a means of data

collection, senior teachers were also asked to keep a log of their work for a week and provided additional documentation for review. Participants were asked their ideas about leadership, perceptions of the way they worked, their involvement in communication and decision making within their work place and examples of their involvement in facets of their work (Scrivens, 1998). Her participants saw leadership as being consultative and were committed to power sharing, being supportive to teachers and promoting good teaching. Senior teachers within this study also identified communication skills, previous teaching experience and the need to have a vision and be aware of management practices as characteristics of their leadership (Scrivens, 1998).

2.4.2 Leadership Functions. Heikka, Waniganayake and Hujala (2012) suggest that prior to 2013 most research on early childhood leadership had focused on the separation of responsibilities between administration, management and leadership functions. As the notion of distributive and pedagogical leadership evolves, it is suggested there is opportunity to integrate these three orientations (i.e., administration, management and leadership).

Aubrey, Godfrey and Harris (2012) investigated how early childhood leaders described the core roles, responsibilities and characteristics of their leadership work. Their research uncovered that leaders within the UK context found themselves “taking on major operational tasks, necessitated by the changing nature and scale of their organisations” (p. 23) finding “a different balance of leadership, management and administration across settings emerged, indicating the existence of multiple leadership

roles in diverse domains of early childhood settings” (pp. 23-24). They suggest the influence of leaders on organisational outcomes is generally recognised as an important element of leadership performance or effectiveness.

Hujala, et. al (2016) in their exploration of leadership tasks across three countries, Finland, Japan and Singapore, claim pedagogical leadership means taking the lead in three key elements: developing educational practices; taking care of human relations; and administrative management from the perspective of supporting educational goals. Tasks include: supporting the educational goals of the organisation; service management, HR management, financial management, change management, network management and daily management. How leaders spent their time was dependent on what they considered the most important and what the context of their work was.

Nicholson and Maniates (2016) suggest that for almost two decades there have been attempts to expand the concept of leadership beyond management. They argue that while discussion around leadership is more inclusive and has expanded the definition of leadership, modernist ideas are still perpetuated, equating it to specific activities that leaders do. They suggest that individuals and the work that they do cannot be neatly placed in siloed categories as this undermines the complexity of early childhood educator’s work.

Summary

The literature reviewed within the previous section notes the emergence of similarities of core practices and functions undertaken by effective leaders identifiable across diverse settings. This is not however unproblematic. While the discourse promotes leadership as distributed and focused on teaching and learning, the complexity of the contexts in which leadership resides may create tensions in managing the practice and functions of leadership. The next section will review the literature on the influence of context on how these core practices and functions are enacted.

2.5 Contextual Influences

Contingency theories stress that contexts, both internal and external, matter (Warwas, 2015) and are based on the premise that a leader's effectiveness is determined by the extent to which their style addresses the various demands of the context within which it is situated (Coleman, Sharp & Handscomb, 2015). Early childhood education is now operating within an external environment of increasing government scrutiny and calls for accountability and is being influenced by neo-liberal agendas with a climate of privatisation and adoption of managerial approaches influenced by business corporates and their models (Turton & Wrightson, 2017). Bottery (2006) argues that leaders are working within untrusting environments with many competing external pressures, many of which sit outside of the education system. Such pressures may include external economic rationales based on market forces, competition, compliance and accountability. Anderson and Cohen (2015) talk of market-based reforms of education as shaping policy and curriculum and "driving at the very core of what it means to be a teacher or leader" (p. 1). Strehemel (2016), in the German context,

talks about management tasks taking up the most time in leaders' work with other tasks neglected due to the lack of time and insufficient resources accessible to those in leadership positions. These other tasks included pedagogical leadership. Rouse and Spradbury's (2016) study of pedagogical leaders in the Australian context found the key factors impacting on their role was inadequate time to do the role, lack of clarity, changes in the sector and limited management support to do the job.

Stamopoulos (2012), within the Australian context, claims that educational reforms and accountability measures have imposed significant and onerous responsibilities on early childhood leaders. The role has moved from predominantly teaching children and leading small teams to leading with intent, mentoring and advocating within different and at times quite distinct contexts in partnership with children and families, within community settings and in response to national educational initiatives.

When it comes to leadership, the literature is clear that external context is influential. It is further suggested that the internal organisational environment within which the leader works, itself strongly influenced by the external context, is also an important factor influencing how the leader behaves and what tasks they engage in (Sun-Keung Pang & Pisapia, 2012). The challenge is these organisational contexts of leadership within early childhood education provision are diverse, as illustrated by Ebbeck and Waniganayake's (2003) definition of these as "the kaleidoscopic variation of children's services" (p. 13).

Summary

The previous section outlined the wider context within which early childhood organisations operate noting the increasing complexity within which leaders perform their role. This broader context influences the work of early childhood services and organisations, and the leadership roles and tasks enacted by the leaders within them. To date, however, there is limited evidence within the New Zealand context of the nature of positional leaders' work, their values and beliefs. The following section will explore the literature on the importance of identifying these.

2.6 Influence of Leader Values and Beliefs

Male and Palaiologou (2013) suggest there are both external and internal axes that shape leaders work. The external axes include societal values, global economy, mass media, social networking and the national curriculum, while the internal axes are defined as values, beliefs, culture, religion, customs and the local economy.

Values are defined as "a set of chosen, strongly held beliefs that forms one's philosophy, and are expressed through feelings, behaviours, and decisions" (Fritz & Guthrie, 2017, p. 48). As leadership requires making choices or decisions amongst competing ideas within challenging contexts, it is not difficult to posit that the leaders' values may influence or affect the decisions made (Warwas, 2015). Haydon (2007) argues leaders need to have a clear sense of what they are trying to achieve, a purpose or vision and that ultimately all questions about what education should be doing comes down to questions about values; what is important, what matters. Jayarant (2016), in a study of the characteristics and behaviours of effective leadership for

social justice and equity in primary schools in Auckland New Zealand, affirms the role of values, noting a distinct phenomenon in their research was leader's axiological philosophy (values, beliefs and morals) underpinning their leadership. It is positioned that leadership is the enactment of values; "values are not only attached to everything that we do but also in everything we do not do" (Jayarant, 2016, p. 6). Murray and McDowall-Clark (2013), when researching how early years professionals were interpreting and applying their professional purpose in leading practice in the UK, found working theories of leading practice stemmed from leaders' values and pedagogy rather than position or authority.

Warwas (2015), in her examination of the combined effects of professional values and contextual conditions on observable dimensions of school principals' leadership behaviour, found that "professional values modify contextual influences on leadership behaviour by informing the value holder about appropriate and expedient responses to contextual prerequisites" (p. 326) and suggests that this warrants further investigation. Male and Palaiologou's (2013) exploration of the views and experiences of highly effective headteachers in schools and leaders/managers in early years settings within the English context also suggest that leaders had moderated expectations of the national and local stakeholders and adopted the vision and mission of the setting in favour of the local community. Liljenberg (2015), within the Swedish school context, found that "leaders make symbolic responses to external demands but also transform these demands to make them fit with norms and values that prevail in their local organisations" (p. 457). The leaders displayed agency with values driving

the decision-making process rather than the external context of increasing external control, marketing and managerial accountability.

Summary

The literature posits that leader's values and beliefs play an important role in influencing how they enact their leadership, the decisions they make and the functions and practices they engage in. While it is recognised they display agency to moderate both internal and external demands on their work it is acknowledged that further work is required across the diverse early childhood contexts to understand this more fully.

2.7 Conclusion

Much has been theorised and conceptualised about leadership in early childhood in recent times. The importance of leadership has been emphasised frequently within the literature although additional work still needs to occur to continue to build on understandings and practice. While effective leadership is readily accepted as supporting quality educational provision, the literature provides few ways of best implementing leadership and limited detail as to how leadership is currently being enacted in specific contexts (Dalli & Thornton, 2013). As Stamopoulos (2012) suggests, leadership conduct is situated within specific workplaces and conditions of employment and is best understood in this context. It is suggested further research across a range of contexts will add to the current discourse on leadership.

More needs to be known about how leaders are negotiating or navigating leadership practices within early childhood that are responsive to the contexts, respond

effectively to policy imperatives and stay true to the values and relationship emphasis

.Of work undertaken in these contexts (Thomas & Nuttall, 2014). It has been suggested in a range of literature that it is important to explore the perspectives of those

enacting leadership within the sector, to capture their voices and highlight their lived experience of leadership and the practices they enact on a daily basis (Fleet, Soper, Seamann & Madden, 2015).

While descriptions of leadership as a situated, socially constructed, and interpretive phenomenon are now prevalent within the literature (Nicholson & Maniates, 2016; Aubrey, David, Godfrey & Thompson, 2000), there are few studies within the New Zealand context specifically focused on those in positional leadership roles. The following research is thus intended to describe how one leadership group within a section of the early childhood sector in Aotearoa New Zealand defines and enacts their leadership role and potentially develop a collective understanding of this role allowing values and influences (both internal and external) to surface, in order to be compared and discussed at a later stage. The study is thereby guided by the following research question: How is leadership defined, understood and enacted by Senior Teachers within Aotearoa New Zealand Kindergartens?

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design of the present study which examines how leadership is defined, understood and enacted by senior teachers within kindergartens in Aotearoa New Zealand. The study is descriptive and uses survey as the primary method of data collection to gather senior teachers' perspectives of their leadership role. Information about the context in which they work and engage in leadership is also viewed as important to interpret their experiences. To set the context for the research the methodological approach is grounded in the research paradigm and rationale for research design decisions. This is followed by a description of participants, means of dissemination of the survey, positioning of the researcher, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Methodological approach

3.2.1 Research paradigm. This study is situated within a pragmatic, and interpretivist paradigm, recognising that understanding is constructed, contextual and provisional (Ling, 2017). "Pragmatism places great emphasis on the 'practical' rather than the 'abstract' when it comes to issues of knowledge and truth and it operates on the premise that the value of theory can only be gauged by how well it addresses real practical needs and how it works in practice" (Denscombe, 2007, p. 91). The intent is to gain insight into participant's understanding and enactment of leadership using

survey as a means of data collection. The theoretical framework is based on contextuality; an understanding that context including the organisational structure and wider early childhood sector in Aotearoa New Zealand shapes the leadership discourse and leadership culture. Leadership is positioned as an individually constructed and situational phenomenon.

The reality of the senior teacher leadership role (as perceived by them) within kindergartens in Aotearoa New Zealand is explored and described founded on the belief in individual agency in constructing reality (Murray & McDowall, 2013). A constructivist stance is adopted in recognition that knowledge and meaning are constructed through interactions with the world (Nolan, MacFarlane & Cartmel, 2013). From this perspective, examination of the voices of those experiencing, interpreting and describing their professional purpose is valued and highlighted. It is therefore noted that the context within which the participants operate and the personal constructions of how their work as leaders is viewed are essential elements in this study.

3.2.2 Design. This study employed survey as a tool to gather both qualitative and quantitative data as this allows for an in-depth exploration of participant's understanding (Ling, 2017) as they seek to describe their work as leaders within kindergarten associations across Aotearoa New Zealand. A pragmatic decision was made to use survey as a means of accessing a breadth of responses across the population of senior teachers within kindergarten associations in New Zealand with

depth being provided by using a range of open questions to gather participants' voice and description.

The survey was web based using the online platform Survey Monkey. The choice of a survey design was seen to align with the pragmatic and interpretivist paradigm of the study as it provided the opportunity for individual participants to describe their work as a leader and how they construct and enact their role within the context in which it occurs. Survey is a means of gathering data at a particular point of time, allows access to multiple participants with ease, reduces costs and personnel requirements for data collection, and can increase the speed of analysis and reporting while also producing valid information (Denscombe, 2007). Surveys are noted for being useful in the gathering of data on attitudes and preferences, beliefs and predictions, opinions, behaviour and experience and provide descriptive, inferential and explanatory standardised information where the same instruments and questions are provided to all participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The population of the study (kindergarten senior teachers) was readily identifiable and using survey allowed the researcher to contact most members of the population group.

As with all research, ensuring plausibility, credibility and trustworthiness lies at the centre of validity and are established by acknowledging and minimising threats to validity (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Potential disadvantages to the survey method were considered and means of minimising such limitations were enacted.

Disadvantages included the potential for low response rates (Ling, 2007). This potential limitation was minimised by various procedures being employed to

encourage as many respondents as possible to participate. These included a carefully phrased approach letter and re-contacting all potential recipients to remind them of the survey. There was also an understanding of the high work load of these leaders, so timing of the delivery of the questionnaires was important and understood by the researcher. Surveys also rely on participants self-administering and self-reporting with the potential to introduce bias, avoiding socially undesirable responses and giving socially desirable answers (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Additional design decisions to minimising potential limitations or biases are described in the relevant sections in the remainder of this chapter.

The aim of the research is to provide an avenue for participants to describe the practice and enactment of their leadership. While it is not expected the findings will be transferable to other settings it is suggested they will add further understanding to the wider discourse of leadership.

3.3 Participants

All senior teachers employed by regional kindergarten associations in Aotearoa New Zealand were invited to be participants, excluding myself and one from within my own association (for ethical purposes). As defined within the collective agreement, a senior teacher means a teacher who is employed as a senior teacher to carry out professional support and guidance, administrative and management roles under delegation from their employer. It is recognised that not all participants may hold the title of Senior

Teacher although they are employed to fulfil that role and undertake the responsibilities of a Senior Teacher as described above. Publicly available information showed there were 55 senior teachers, excluding myself and a senior teacher colleague within my organisation, across 27 associations employed at the time of this research with some holding this role across more than one association and others working less than a full-time equivalent role. One other association did not have the number of senior teachers available nor their individual contact details.

3.4 Dissemination of the Survey

To disseminate the survey to potential participants, contact was made with each overarching body employing senior teachers to obtain the most up-to-date list of email addresses. These emails included the compulsory ethics statement as well as a brief outline of the research project (refer Appendix A). A total of 55 emails were then sent out to each senior teacher on the acquired lists (refer Appendix B). A list of senior teachers from the Auckland association was not publicly obtainable which meant contact with this organisation was limited to an organisation email which asked for the invitation to be passed on to eligible staff. The survey was open from 29 November 2017 until 15 February 2018 with three reminder emails sent during this period.

3.5 Positioning of Researcher

Insider research is described “as research conducted into intimately known communities such as one’s own profession, workplace, social grouping, or a specific aspect of their culture” (Adams, 2015, p. 1). The experiences of individual insider

researchers vary according to the nature of the research, the familiarity of the researcher with the participants, and the nature of the investigation.

My position at the time of the research was senior teacher within a kindergarten association in Aotearoa New Zealand; therefore, I was a member of the population studied. My own organisation was not part of the study because of this. My position provided me with valuable insight. The context within which senior teachers enact their work was very familiar to me having worked within a kindergarten setting, as teacher, head teacher and senior teacher for 15 years. The wider context of early childhood education was also familiar, given I have an additional 10 years working in the sector within a variety of other roles.

As an insider to the Senior Teacher group, I have knowledge, experience and expertise that support me to access participants. I am familiar to them and understand the nature of the work undertaken. This enabled informed decision making about research design and means of data gathering. This included the topic of research, use of survey to gain as many participants as possible and ensure survey completion time was not too onerous, timing of survey to gather as many responses as possible and framing of questions to align with the job role. A key of effective survey construction involves understanding research participants (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

While there are many benefits to the insider researcher role, there are attendant difficulties. Anning (2010) and Nolan, MacFarlane and Cartmel (2013) note some ethical concerns that need to be addressed with insider research. These include the potential issue of power relations that may be evident, over familiarity with the research contexts and participants, lack of impartiality and potential for invested interest in certain findings. To guard against these, I used a range of reflexive techniques based on engagement in self-reflection throughout the process to lessen any potential biases and increase trustworthiness. These included on-going discussions with two university supervisors, conversations with personnel within my own organisation who held the role of senior teacher (focused only on researcher practice not data obtained), gaining and acting on feedback from a group of fellow researchers particularly during the development of the survey and self-reflection (Adam, 2015). While cognisant of the potential issue of power, it was determined the likely impact of this was minimal given that I have a collegial relationship with participants and not a power-over relationship. Nonetheless, I made the decision that my work site would not be included in the research to limit potential complexity of ethical issues which may arise.

3.6 Data collection

3.6.1 Survey Design. The online platform Survey Monkey was used to collect survey data. The survey had 24 questions in total (refer Appendix D). This included a mix of open-ended and closed questions to collect qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data were collected through the use of ratings. Where ratings were used they were four point fully anchored rating scales. This mix of open-ended and closed

questions was intended to mitigate the potential disadvantages of each. Closed questions are amenable to statistical treatment and analysis, are quick to code and to analyse (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Caution was taken to limit the tendency to empiricism; where a focus on producing data and wide coverage is prioritised over depth and detail (Denscombe, 2007), through the use of open questions. Where closed questions were used, confining the answers to the choices offered, care was taken to ensure choices were comprehensive and linked to the extant literature on leadership. Open-ended questions were used to avoid the limitations of pre-set categories of responses and allow opportunity for elaboration and rich description as “an open-ended question can catch the authenticity, richness, depth of response, honesty and candour... which are the hallmarks of qualitative data” (Denscombe, 2007, p. 393).

Care was taken in the development of the questionnaire to ensure that respondents were able to understand the questions, understand them in the same way and understand them in the way intended by the researcher. In this regard the researcher’s contextual knowledge of the participants’ professional role was helpful in developing informed, targeted and appropriate questions that attended to the overall research question.

3.6.2 Survey Pilot. In designing the survey, the potential of questionnaires to impose a structure on the answers and shape the nature of the responses was recognised (Denscombe, 2007). To address these potential concerns the survey was piloted with members of the population within the researcher’s own organisation who

were not involved in the research, as well as with members of a university Early Years Research Lab. Refinements occurred based on feedback provided.

3.6.3 Survey Instrument. The survey was constructed in the online platform Survey Monkey and included eight sections. The survey began with a demographic section to gain an overall profile of participants including their age, gender and qualifications inclusive of leadership training. The second section gathered information about the context in which participants were enacting their leadership. This comprised their job title, the length of time they had held this leadership role, how they defined their role, what they considered were the key responsibilities within this role and how the position differed from a supervisor/manager or head teacher role. These were all open-ended questions.

The third section explored participants' beliefs about leadership generally and included two questions. The first asked participants the most important things a leader does. There was a choice of 18 responses derived from the extant literature (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2007; Sims, Forrest, Seamann & Slattery, 2016; Ryder, Davitt, Higginson & Smorti, 2016; Aubrey, Godfrey & Thompson, 2000). The second was an open question asking participants to describe an effective leader. Section four explored how leadership was enacted by participants where participants were asked to note their involvement in an array of pre-determined functions of leadership as identified within the extant literature, specifically the eight leadership dimensions identified within the BES, *Student Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why*

(Robinson et al., 2009) whose relevance to early childhood education was discussed in Thornton (2010). The rating anchors for involvement ranged from *not involved, not very involved* to *fairly involved* or *very involved*. Section five explored a continuum of what was valued by participants within their leadership. Participants were asked to note the value they placed on their involvement in those leadership functions (from section four) from *not valuable, not very valuable* to *fairly valuable* and *very valuable*.

Section six comprised a series of open-ended questions asking participants to describe what they believe are the most and least important tasks/activities they engage in within their leadership work, which aspects they found most challenging, what tasks they did not have time to complete, and those aspects of leadership that were most rewarding. These questions were derived from the work of Hujala et al., (2016).

Section seven explored participants' understandings and beliefs regarding the skills and attributes necessary in a leader. This began with an open question on the skills and attributes they believed had helped them succeed as a leader. Questions asking them to indicate the personal characteristics they considered important in their role from *not important, not very important* to *fairly important* and *very important* followed.

There was a choice of 17 characteristics.

The final section explored participants' conceptualisation of leadership. Questions in this section were multi-choice where participants had to choose (from a selection of four) the statement that best aligned with their view on leadership and their actions as

leaders. The final two questions were open-ended, asking participants to describe what their leadership would involve in their ideal world and if they had anything further to say about the topic.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data were exported in two formats. One was a PDF file, which listed and summarised all data. The second was an Excel file of the same response data. Quantitative data involved pre-coded scaled ratings and summarising categorical selections. Ratings data were converted into percentage of responses for each rating and mean score based on a 4-point scale: *not involved/valuable/important, not very involved/valuable/important, fairly involved /valuable/important, very involved/valuable/important*; respectively. Categorical data were summarised using percentage of responses for each category.

Qualitative data were analysed thematically. An inductive approach to thematic data analysis occurred. Thomas (2006) defines inductive analysis as “approaches that primarily use detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts, themes, or a model through interpretations made from raw data (p. 238). The six-phase process to thematic analysis identified by Braun and Clarke (2006) was utilised as a means of providing patterns of meaning across data. Qualitative data were post-coded with a coding frame devised after the completion of the survey. Codes were derived from and grounded in the data utilising an inductive, iterative process of refinement. Data analysis came from multiple close readings and interpretations of raw data searching

for themes, defining and naming these and then writing them up; Gibbs (2007) describes this as intensive reading.

The potential for researcher bias was noted particularly given the researcher's closeness to the topic and participants. There is a tendency for the researcher to allow personal views and perspectives to affect how data are interpreted and how the research is conducted. To guard against this I actively engaged in critical self-reflection about potential biases and predispositions through self-dialogue and monitoring my responses. I was also engaged in on-going discussions at monthly meetings with two university supervisors as the survey was constructed and during the analysis stage of the research.

3.8 Ethics

Prior to conducting the research, a Massey University Ethics Committee screening questionnaire was completed to ensure the design of the research included appropriate measures to protect the interests of the participants. The study was identified as low risk and was approved by the Massey University Ethics Committee, Application Southern B (refer Appendix C).

Particular care was taken to ensure the ethical principles of informed and voluntary consent, respect for privacy and confidentiality and avoidance of conflict of role or interest were met. These were particularly important given the professional role of the researcher.

3.8.1 Informed and Voluntary Consent. Participation must be voluntary and based on understanding of adequate and appropriate information about what participation will involve (Massey University, 2017). Access to the organisations where the research was undertaken was gained initially by an email to the General Manager/Chief Executive Officer notifying them of the research and providing them with an outline of the topic and the expectations of participants with an attached information sheet. Individual requests were then sent via email to each member of the population where these were known and to the General Manager/Chief Executive Officer if not, including a letter of invitation, and an information sheet (Appendix B). These information sheets included clear written information outlining the purpose of the study and data collection processes. Care was taken to ensure recipients were aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

3.8.2 Respect for Privacy and Confidentiality. All reasonable precautions were taken to protect confidentiality of responses and avoid disclosures of identities. Again, this was particularly important given the population and the role of the researcher. The use of Survey Monkey meant data were distanced from the researcher. It is noted confidentiality is difficult to guarantee for researchers using the internet as the reality is others potentially can trace back any communications (Denscombe, 2007). Precautions taken were to ensure all storage of data were password protected and access to the information was limited to the researcher and the supervisors of the research. Care was taken in the presentation of data and discussion to ensure individuals were not identifiable.

3.8.3 Avoidance of Conflict of Interest. The research was deemed low risk for conflict of interest. While the relationship the researcher had to both the topic and population being researched was a close one there was no direct influence of power or control in relation to the relationship between researcher and participants. As outlined previously reflexivity was maintained and supported by the researcher and supervisors. The topic was not judged a sensitive one although due care was taken to ensure participant's employers were informed of the research.

Summary

This chapter has identified the methodological approach taken. It has described the participants and setting and the positioning of the researcher. Data collection methods were discussed and the limitations of these noted with precautions taken to mitigate these identified. The process of data analysis was explained, and ethical considerations acknowledged. The following chapter will outline the findings of the research.

Chapter Four: Results

4.1 Introduction

The findings of the study are reported in this chapter. Section one describes the research participants with a focus on demographic details, qualifications and range of experience within the role of senior teacher. Section two examines the context and nature of the senior teacher role including how the role is described and the associated tasks and responsibilities. Section three explores participants' beliefs and understandings of the leadership role, what they believe an effective leader is and the skills and attributes they believe are useful in their role. The importance of a variety of leadership functions is also explored as is participant involvement in these. Section four describes how participants enact their leadership through examining which aspects of their leadership role they find most challenging and most rewarding. The final section explores the wider conceptualisation of leadership held by participants.

As one of the aims of the research was to provide an avenue for participants to describe the practice and enactment of their leadership, in presenting the results direct quotes from participants are used to highlight key themes and ideas. These are provided in italics.

4.2 The Participants

Nineteen senior teachers participated in the research. The majority of the participants (58%) were within the 50 – 59-year age bracket with 26% identified as 40 – 49 years

and 16% over 60 years old. Eighty-nine percent were female. Experience within the position of senior teacher (or equivalent) varied, with the shortest time being under one year and the longest being 30 years. The average length of service of participants within the role of senior teacher was 17 years.

Participants' qualifications varied with one senior teacher holding no teaching qualification. As shown in Table 1, 47% of participants held an undergraduate degree specific to the early years or early childhood education with 58% holding a Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood). Some indicated they had both a degree and diploma. Sixteen percent had post graduate papers, certificates or diplomas in early childhood education with 31% having a Master's degree or higher. 30% indicated they had other qualifications that were not listed including Bachelor of Education and diplomas in areas other than early childhood education.

Table 1 Participants' teaching qualifications

Qualification	% of senior teachers
Diploma of Teaching (ECE)	58
Bachelor of Teaching (ECE)	42
Bachelor of Teaching (Early Years)	5
Post Graduate Diploma (Education)	11
Post Graduate Certificate (Education)	5
Masters (Education) and higher	26
Other	30

Note: n = 19.

Training specific to leadership had been undertaken by all but one participant, with 12 having engaged in a leadership course or courses by professional development providers, and six involved in post graduate or masters' study and above.

4.2.3 Job Title. Table 2 reports the variance in job title held by senior teachers with the largest number bearing the name of senior teacher, some who have both senior teacher and professional leader in their title and others who identified as a team leader of senior teachers. Other titles include manager in their title either prefaced with education, education services or professional practice.

Table 2 Participant's Job Titles

	<i>N</i>
Senior Teacher	8
Education Manager	4
Education Services Manager	2
Professional Leader/Senior Teacher	2
Team Leader Senior Teacher	2
Professional Practice Manager	1

Note: n = 19.

4.3 Context

The following section presents data related to the context within which the participants are working, including their role within the organisation, their key responsibilities within this role and how this differs from the role of other leaders within their organisation.

4.3.1 Description of Role and Key Responsibilities. The role of participants within their organisations was characterised by multiplicity as senior teachers described a diverse range of roles and responsibilities, illustrated by the following response in which a senior teacher describes their role as including:

Performance management including appraisal; professional development provision; reporting termly on curriculum delivery to each teaching team; workshops to supporting teaching teams; teacher registration and overseeing competency advice and guidance plan development and delivery; Appointments and induction of new staff, leadership support and development programme; disseminating information to teachers regarding changes to education practice and delivery. Supporting and ensuring internal evaluation process is occurring; managing team dynamics issues; ensuring Bi-cultural and Pacifica advisors are achieving positive outcomes for teaching teams. Mainly making sure teaching and learning practice is current, assessment and general advice and guidance.

Two participants identified that their role included responsibility for leading other senior teachers within a team. Their responses indicated additional responsibilities,

including leadership work for other associations and organisations, as well as project work:

I oversee a team of senior teachers and curriculum support staff. I look after 6 kindergartens as well as and work with Kahui Ako. I quote for and manage SELO and maintain management contracts with another association and 5 community based services. I act as academic leader for students, and design and implement change plans and project work.”

The complexity of the role was reflected through participants providing lists of tasks they undertook within their role to describe the work they do. Analysis indicates eight key responsibility areas including curriculum development, collaboration, managing human resources, staff development through the provision of professional development, liaison within and outside of the organisation, oversight, compliance and internal evaluation.

The most salient work was identified as curriculum development where leadership is focused on ensuring effective implementation of curriculum and teaching occurs (Snyder, Crowe & Crow, 2012). Forty two percent of senior teachers acknowledged this focus with one describing their role succinctly as being a “*teaching and learning leader.*” Another senior teacher described being “*responsible for the education side, supporting teachers with all aspects of their teaching practice.*” This was elaborated further by others when they talked about supporting the development of quality practices and the provision of a high-quality programme highlighting “*the purpose of*

the senior teacher role is to provide professional leadership and support for teachers in the kindergartens and ensure kindergartens demonstrate sound and effective practice responsive to its learners and families.”

The collaborative nature of the work undertaken by senior teachers was a consistent theme within the data, expressed through comments such as *“working with all kindergartens”* or *“together we...”* This collaboration included working as part of a team of senior teachers as well as working with teams of teachers. In addition, the notion of support was highlighted and seen as a collaborative endeavour occurring within the context of relationships, as reflected in comments such as *“supporting pedagogy in the organisation and ensuring it keeps in line with Te Whāriki and the organisations philosophy/strategic plan. This is done through positive relationships.”* Collaboration was therefore aligned with quality provision and positive outcomes for children and families.

Senior teachers also indicated their role encompassed a range of activities that can be described as managing human resources. This included tasks such as performance management, staff appointment and induction. Aligned with this focus on human resources, staff development work was also featured including planning, designing and implementing professional development, mentoring of provisionally certificated teachers, and appraisals of head teachers.

Ensuring centres were compliant with the Ministry of Education, Education Review Office and the Teachers Council of Aotearoa New Zealand regulatory and legislative requirements was identified by senior teachers as another key responsibility. This included policy development, health and safety development and meeting licensing requirements. Aligned with the accountability function was identification of evaluation work such as, *“internally auditing kindergartens for pedagogical and health and safety requirements, and progression.”* Having oversight across multiple contexts was also identified by senior teachers as a descriptor of their roles, a key responsibility and a means of ensuring this accountability of expectations. This was evidenced within the following senior teacher response, *“overseeing all aspects of the care and education component of our centres – audits of licensing requirements, oversee ERO reviews... internal evaluation.”*

Liaison work was also identified as one aspect of the role of the senior teacher; in some instances, this was with the Chief Executive Officer of the organisation with 21% of participants noting they were part of a wider executive management team, and with others this was with external agencies. The least number of senior teachers highlighted advocacy work, knowledge sharing and strategic work within their role descriptors.

4.3.2 Role Difference. Key findings revealed senior teachers’ understanding of the distinction between the senior teacher role and the role of head teacher was an

increase in scope of the role, a focus on adult relationships and an increase in responsibility and oversight. The most significant of these differences was described as that of increased scope across the wider organisation and within multiple sites: *“seeing a wider view of the umbrella organisation and making sure consistent pedagogy and roles/responsibilities are happening across the association. That the key vision of the association is reflected in all kindergartens that we oversee”*.

In addition, a key difference in roles was the adult focus of relationships compared with the more child focused relationships of head teachers or supervisors/managers who work with children. The senior teacher role was not one that was perceived of as having direct influence on children but rather a step removed, being *“not hands on with children and families as centre staff are. We are a step back from the coal face, so our line of leadership is directly with the head teacher.”*

An increase in responsibility within their role in comparison to head teachers was also highlighted as a point of difference and was linked to the increase in scope of the role, *“I have to have an overview of across the Association not just one kindergarten. I am responsible for ensuring all kindergartens offer equity and excellence...”* Staff development through the provision of professional development and learning and human resource functions were also seen as points of difference between the two roles although to a lesser degree than others highlighted.

4.4 Beliefs about Leadership

The following section presents senior teachers’ beliefs and understanding of leadership beginning with an exploration of what they believe an effective leader is; the

leadership functions and tasks they believe are important, their involvement in these and the skills, attributes and characteristics they believe help them in their leadership.

4.4.1 Effective Leaders. Senior teachers' beliefs regarding what constitutes an effective leader, attained via descriptive responses, can be summarised as one who is collaborative, improvement focused both in regard to building the capacity of the individual and the core work of the organisation, and capable of coping with the complexity of the contexts within which they operate. They believe leaders are influential and capable of challenging and promoting critical inquiry through relationships with others. Senior teachers believe effective leaders influence by challenging and promoting critical inquiry, as well as displaying high personal and professional values and ethics such as integrity and honesty that engender the trust of others.

The data consistently revealed senior teachers' belief in the necessity of collaboration to be an effective leader. This was expressed through phrases such as *"walking beside others"* and *"takes others on a journey."* The data also affirmed that the intent of collaboration was improvement focused, supportive of others and encouraged them to realise their potential; *"someone who can influence others to be open to continuous change leading to on-going improvement in all areas of their lives."* Others highlighted the ability to provoke and challenge, identifying an effective leader as one who is *"willing to be challenged and challenge the thinking of others, listen to the message behind the words and work with people toward a common understanding."*

Displaying integrity, which one participant defined as “*one who does the right thing rather than things right!*” was also highlighted as being an important aspect of effective leadership. This was exemplified in a response where an effective leader was described as:

Honest, open, trustworthy, ethical and show great integrity. They live what they stand for and follow through with their commitments. They work from a strength-based model and use consistent, clear and active communication skills. Is responsive to the culture, language and identity of learning communities and are guided by commitment to the dual heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Senior teachers believed effective leaders play a role in influencing others to provide positive learning outcomes for children, “*...a leader who builds teachers capabilities to be the best they can be to support positive outcomes for tamariki...*” While they did not see themselves as directly impacting on positive learning outcomes for children, senior teachers saw their role as to “*work alongside others to ensure equity and excellence and positive outcomes for all ākonga [children].*” This reflects the role difference between senior teachers and head teachers as previously identified, who have a more direct relationship with children.

Other attributes senior teachers believed were necessary for effective leaders included being open to change, inspirational, and being culturally responsive although these were noted less frequently than those above.

The complexity and high expectations of the leadership role was alluded to throughout responses as highlighted in the following statement where an effective leader is seen to be:

collaborative, respectful, organised, supportive, has high expectations, leads change, is highly capable to connect and communicate in an effective and appropriate way, engages in educative mentoring, promotes leadership capability in others, implements an association's core values and philosophy, is able to engage in learning conversations and facilitate critical inquiry.

More succinctly put was the response that an effective leader was “*superwoman!*”

4.4.2 Important Leadership Tasks and Functions. The following section presents the questionnaire ratings for nineteen pre-categories of leadership functions as gathered from the extant literature, in relation to level of importance (rating anchors were a four-point scale from *not important* to *very important*). Ratings data are integrated with senior teacher comments that elaborate on the importance placed on these functions.

The complexity and breadth of the senior teacher role was again emphasised in both qualitative and quantitative data, exemplified by one senior teacher who noted that

“anything that supports teachers to provide the best possible learning environment for children” was important. The key findings revealed relational functions and tasks were viewed as very important and seen as a vehicle to strengthen curriculum and pedagogy through growing the capacity of leaders and teachers working with children and whānau.

As identified in Figure 1 (see p. 64), functions including developing and sustaining relationships with teachers, developing and maintaining their own professional knowledge and supporting the professional development of teachers were rated as *very important* by 89% of senior teachers. This was reflected in descriptive responses such as *“having relationships which are honest, open and generate a culture of respect; sharing professional knowledge, empowering innovation and helping in a huge variety of day to day tasks which affect kindergartens, teachers, children and whānau.”*

Advocating for all children and families was rated as *very important* by the majority of senior teachers, as was developing individual and collective capacity of teachers through the promotion of inquiry and reflection, highlighted as *“advocating for children and whānau, community relationships; leading professional learning and development for new and current teachers.”* Another senior teacher articulated advocacy as *“upholding the belief that children are at the centre of all decisions through my actions and conversations.”*

In addition, supporting teachers to enable effective delivery of the curriculum for children was rated as *very important* by 15 senior teachers. This focus on the development and strengthening of curriculum and pedagogy was a theme of the descriptive responses as exemplified by the following quote: *“supporting effective teaching practices for diverse learners...providing professional guidance to head teachers and teachers ensuring that kindergartens are implementing a high-quality early childhood curriculum to meet the needs of the children and families of their communities.”*

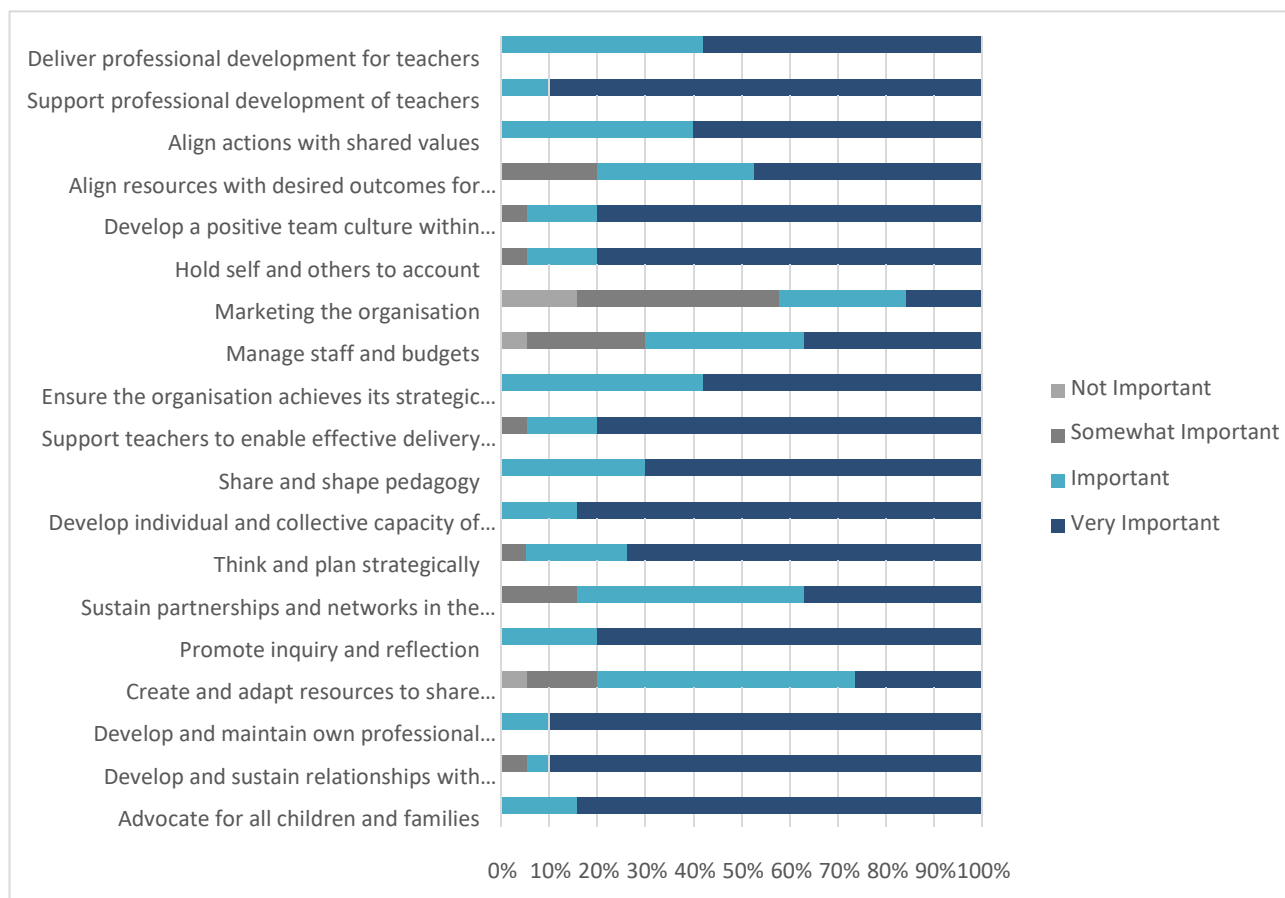
When asked to describe the least important tasks they engaged in within their leadership roles, 26% of senior teachers were reluctant or unable to do this, reflected in comments which as *“I don’t know – I feel it is all pretty important”* or *“all important currently”* to *“I don’t have any roles that are unimportant – I have some that I don’t like doing but they are not unimportant!”* Of those that did identify specific areas they felt less important than others, responding to administrative tasks, *“signing forms and the over expectation of documentation”* and budget considerations, *“managing budgets – although I know I have to do them and this job is vital”* were identified. Other tasks deemed less important were contributing to the strategic direction of the organisation and reporting to the board. Ten percent of respondents suggested this was due to perceived lack of influence to affect decision making.

Marketing the organisation was believed to be the least important function with managing staff and budgets also rated as *less important* by senior teachers along with

creating and adapting resources to share knowledge. It was however recognised that these were necessary tasks that sat within their role:

I'm actively involved in all aspects of the association from teaching and learning to property and financial matters as they all impact on outcomes for children and support teachers to do their job well. Advice and guidance to the General Manager and governing board ... establishing benchmark for quality around teaching and learning with our organisation. Developing guidelines and resources to support teachers, ensuring professional learning and development is provided that is targeted and meets the needs of teachers.

Figure 1 Leadership Functions' Relative Importance

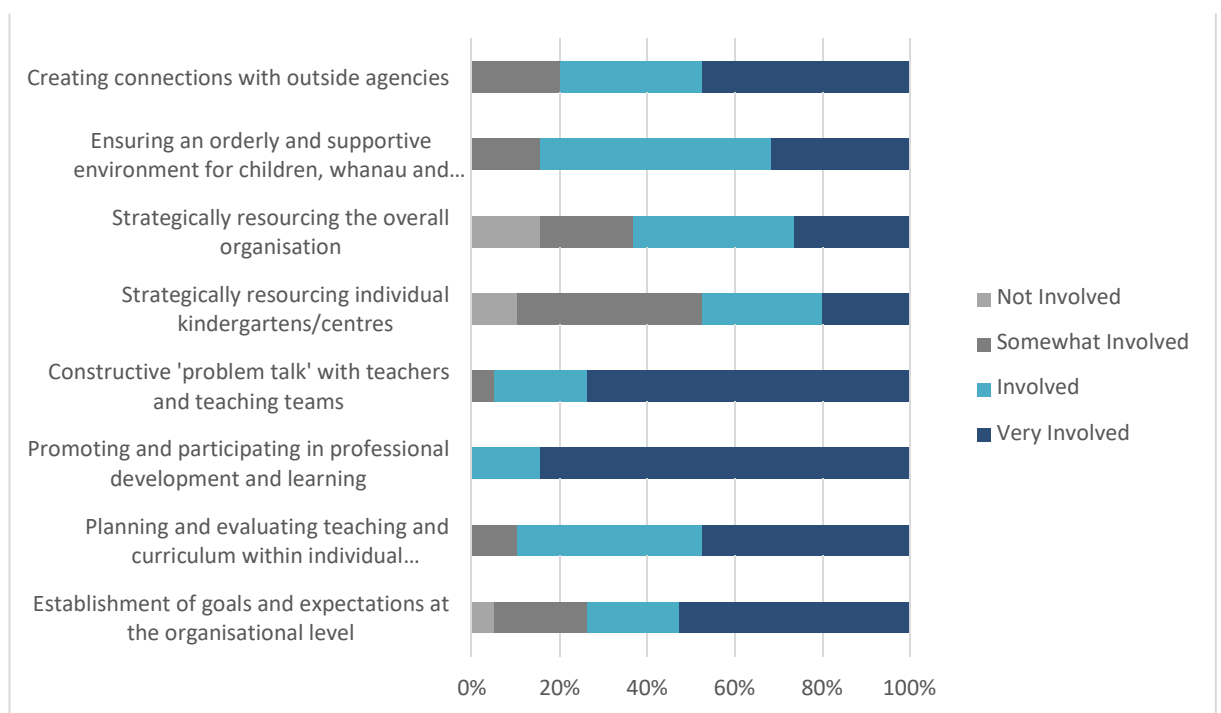


Note: n = 19

4.4.3 Involvement in Leadership Functions. The following section presents the data related to senior teachers' involvement in leadership functions and tasks and the value they place on this involvement. These data were gathered via selection from pre-categories sourced from the extant literature.

Figure 2 shows senior teachers believed they were *least involved* in strategically resourcing individual kindergartens and centres followed by strategically resourcing the overall organisation. Whereas all senior teachers noted they were *involved* or *very involved* in promoting and participating in professional development and learning followed closely by engagement in constructive 'problem talk' with teachers and teaching teams. The differences are slight with the weighted averages ranging from 2.58 to 3.84.

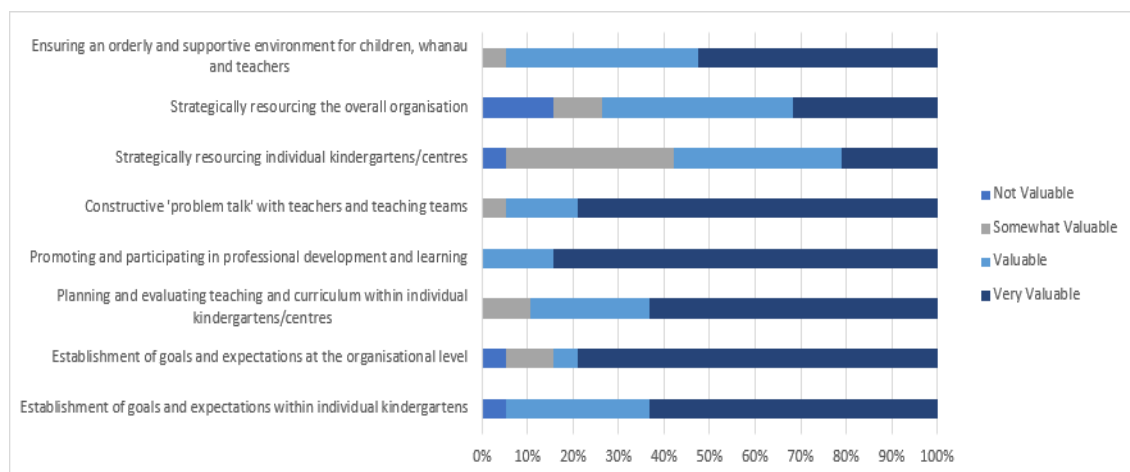
Figure 2 *Involvement in Leadership Functions and Tasks*



Note: n = 19.

Figure 3 (see p. 66) signals that the value senior teachers placed on their involvement in a range of leadership functions is aligned with how involved they were. Senior teachers value highly their involvement in promoting and participating in professional development and learning. Constructive problem talk is also valued by the majority along with establishing the goals and expectations at an organisational level although a small minority indicated this was not valuable. Strategically resourcing either the overall organisation or individual kindergartens was either *not valued* at all or seen as only *somewhat valuable*.

Figure 3 Value of Leadership Functions



Note: n = 19.

4.4.4 Skills, Attributes and Characteristics. The following section presents responses to ratings of fourteen pre-categories of leadership characteristics obtained from the extant literature, which senior teachers believe are important for their leadership role. This is integrated with descriptive responses from senior teachers as they describe the skills and attributes they believe help them in their leadership role.

The skills, attributes and characteristics that senior teachers believe most important in their leadership role can be placed within two categories; the personal and interpersonal, both of which are viewed as supporting the development of positive relationships with others. Personal qualities include experience in teaching, being open to learning, resiliency, a belief in kindergarten, and being organised and knowledgeable, as exemplified by the following: *“empathy and compassion, genuine like of people, positive disposition, resilience and determination with a sprinkling of good humour. Belief in kindergarten and 100% trained.”*

Interpersonal skills include the ability to communicate effectively, motivate others, and be connected with others as demonstrated by the following: *“Respect, kindness, humour and being available and connected. The ability to be able to quickly establish relationships and empathise where necessary – then excite others with energy and passion.”* Relational work appeared focused on improvement and *“... having an achievement orientation which is enacted through having effective relationships.”*

Table 3 (see p. 68) shows what senior teachers view as important characteristics for their leadership role. Being professionally confident and empowering of others were the most highly rated characteristics for the leadership role of senior teacher. Being rational, goal oriented, assertive and calculated risk takers were not believed to be as important as being proactive, knowledgeable (about teaching and learning),

courageous, reflective, visionary and kind, warm and friendly. Being business oriented was the least valued characteristic.

Table 3 Important Leadership Characteristics

Characteristic	Number of participants				Total N
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	
Proactive	0	0	4	14	18
Professionally confident	0	0	3	16	19
Empowering (of others)	0	0	3	16	19
Knowledgeable (about teaching and learning)	0	0	4	15	19
Visionary	0	1	4	13	18
Kind, warm, friendly, nurturing	0	0	7	12	19
Rational, logical, analytical	0	1	8	10	19
Systematic planner	0	1	7	11	19
Goal oriented	0	2	9	8	19
Courageous	0	0	4	15	19
Influential	0	0	7	12	19
Assertive	0	3	9	7	19
Reflective	0	0	3	16	19
Business oriented	2	7	7	3	19
Calculated risk taker	0	3	10	6	19

4.5 Enactment of Leadership

The following section reports on aspects of senior teachers' enactment of leadership and includes senior teachers' nomination of a statement from pre-set categories that best reflects their actions as leader within their role and integrates this with identification of the challenges and rewards of enacting leadership through descriptive responses.

4.5.1 Actions. When senior teachers were asked to nominate a statement that best reflects their actions as leaders from a set of four pre-determined responses, the key finding was the promotion of interdependence, collaboration and cooperation within and across teaching teams for the majority of participants.

Table 4 Leadership Actions

Statement of Actions	Percentage of Senior Teachers
I promote interdependence, collaboration and cooperation within and across teaching teams	58
I ensure effective implementation of curriculum and teaching occurs	26
I promote change and future focused tasks	11
I perform management and administrative tasks	5

Note: n = 19.

Curriculum and pedagogical development best described the focus of their actions for just over a quarter of senior teachers followed by the promotion of change and future

focused tasks with the lowest percentage indicating that the performance of management and administrative tasks best reflects their actions.

4.5.2 Challenges. The challenges of enacting leadership as perceived by senior teachers will be presented in this section where data were gathered from descriptive responses. These challenges can be summarised as time, multiple and competing demands of the role, human resource activities (specifically performance management) and lack of growth within teams.

When asked which aspects of their leadership role they found most challenging, managing time effectively was identified most frequently. The reasons for lack of time included the travel that was associated with the role as they moved between geographically distant sites, the size of the organisation and the number of kindergartens/services they were supporting. This led to comments such as, *“it is time consuming and at times unavoidable that I feel the time is not used efficiently and effectively, as I would like to spend more time with Head Teachers and Teachers observing practices and giving them support.”*

When asked directly if there were any leadership tasks/activities that they felt they do not have time to enact to the extent they wanted or needed to, 37% of senior teachers indicated there was not. Within that 37%, 16% qualified this with a ‘but’ for example *“no – but sometimes I would like more time to complete them”*. This concept of more

time came through in both yes and no responses for example, *“not really, I work long hours and work quickly. I would like more time looking at the quality of the output in my team but am quite trapped into other work in multiple accountabilities.”* And, *“Yes, plenty, the job is a constant juggle of priorities on a daily basis and the changing and moulding of documents to support teachers are never done e.g. appraisal, guidelines for internal evaluation....”* Own appraisals and the appraisals of others were seen as two tasks that there was not time to complete by some senior teachers.

The notion of multiple and competing demands on the time of senior teachers' is reflected in the following comment: *“running complex HR processes simultaneously. This is not difficult within itself but can be time consuming and usually occurs in a context where other competing work streams continue to demand resourcing.”* Human resource activities were noted as being challenging. These specifically related to managing performance and competency issues. One respondent noted that it is *“very hard to balance being the person who provides support with the person who makes the judgement.”* Another indicated that *“It is also challenging when we want to support kaiako [teachers] and HR have a differing view and we are then unable to sign off.”*

Lack of growth in teams and maintaining motivation in others was identified as a challenge for some senior teachers as accentuated in the following:

The most challenging aspect of my role is dealing with Head Teachers, teams who have a negative disposition and want to remain doing what

they have always done – not moving with the times or being excited or motivated with change; barriers being put up by some teachers without thinking about what their core purpose is.

Other challenges noted less frequently included the positioning of the senior teacher role within the organisation and the relationships between the board and overall manager with comments such as *“the position between teaching teams and boards, sometimes we are the invisible person, yet we are the conduit”* and *“different values that sometimes conflict...”*

4.5.3 The Rewards. This section reports on aspects of the leadership role senior teachers found most rewarding. The findings can be characterised by a key theme of making a difference.

The most rewarding aspect of their leadership work was the achievement of growth in teachers and teaching teams, for example, *“when people take responsibility for their own growth and development and get excited about seeing improved outcomes that result from their change”* and *“when I support teachers to implement something that works and there are positive outcomes for children.”* This reported reward of growth or improvement of people and curriculum was seen as occurring through the process of collaboration, *“the relationships with the teams and my peers. The time when I have made a difference and know that it has made a difference for children.”* Constructive talk and problem solving were also noted as rewarding for senior teachers as encapsulated in the following response: *“working with and alongside people, whether*

it is a challenging or positive situation. I particularly enjoy working through a problem to an outcome that fits with our philosophy.”

Summary

This chapter has outlined the findings of the present study attending to the core research question: how is leadership defined, understood and enacted by senior teachers within kindergartens in Aotearoa New Zealand? The role of the senior teacher as described by participants is characterised by complexity with a multiplicity of tasks and functions undertaken across numerous contexts encompassing a range of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.

Senior teachers understand leadership as a collaborative, relational endeavour where supporting others to build on their professional capabilities is highly valued. This drive for improvement is inclusive of personal and professional growth and development of teachers, head teachers and other leaders with the intention of further developing and strengthening curriculum and pedagogy and influencing positive learning outcomes for children.

The conceptualisation of leadership held by senior teachers in this study as collaborative and focused on building capability in others through support and within relationships was enacted through a range of actions. These required senior teachers to display an array of dynamic personal and interpersonal skills, attitudes and characteristics of which the most highly rated was that of being professionally confident and empowering of others. The following chapter explores these findings in relation to the extant literature on leadership.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This study explored the way in which one group of positional leaders within kindergartens in Aotearoa New Zealand describe their leadership, offering insight into the senior teacher leadership role. Key findings affirm leadership as a collaborative and relational endeavour with the intent of enhancing both the professional and personal capacities of teachers and leaders within early childhood services. For participants, key leadership motivation was derived from the opportunity to strengthen pedagogy and curriculum to foster positive outcomes for children. Yet, participants' experience of leadership involved multi-faceted and, at times competing demands on senior teachers as they enact their role within complex organisations. The study was guided by the research question: how is leadership defined, understood and enacted by senior teachers within kindergartens in Aotearoa New Zealand? For the purpose of the discussion the three elements of defining, understanding and enacting leadership will be interwoven rather than examined separately due to the integrated nature of the findings and the complexity of the senior teacher role.

Senior teachers' own words play an essential role in authentically capturing and reflecting their leadership experiences and were essential in reporting key findings in Chapter Four. Additional quotes are utilised within this chapter to centrally position participants voices and accentuate key findings and themes. Acknowledging my role as a Senior Teacher within a Kindergarten Association, an insider perspective of the

researcher is also brought to the discussion in providing contextual knowledge and understanding.

This chapter begins by revisiting the external and internal contexts within which senior teachers enact their leadership role, highlighting the complexity and scope of the senior teachers' leadership practice. In addition, the beliefs and understandings senior teachers bring to their leadership work will be examined. Their constructions of leadership as collaborative, relational and improvement focused will be discussed and the skills and attributes senior teachers assign to effective leaders are identified. Discussion then considers how senior teachers describe the enactment of their leadership highlighting their involvement in roles and responsibilities, the diverse challenges experienced by them and the rewards of their leadership. Tensions and limitations will also be explored. Connections will be made to the attendant literature reinforcing the notion that while a leadership of learning is emerging as a key orientation, there are challenges to negotiating what this looks like and how it can be enacted. In concluding the chapter, the strengths and limitations of the study are identified and discussed, along with possibilities for future research. Key insights and contributions of the study are articulated with an emphasis on the need to build the capacity of leaders to respond proactively and positively to the future context of the senior teacher role.

5.2 Context and Complexity

Leadership occurs within increasingly complex external and internal environments that place many significant, and at times competing demands on the leader. Responses affirm that the complexity of the senior teacher role is created as they are required to attend to multiple internal and external demands for support, guidance, accountability and compliance. Thomas and Nuttall (2014) talk about the “shifting grounds on which leadership is located” (p. 40) recognising the increasing contextual complexity that shapes how leadership is enacted. Davis, Kreig and Smith (2015) further refer to the “complex, sometimes contradictory messages about the ‘dance’ that informs the practice of leadership” (p. 145). This provides a helpful analogy for understanding the nature and complexity of senior teacher roles and the context they operate within. The following section briefly outlines the changing external context of early childhood education which has influenced the organisational structures of kindergartens, and in turn has placed multiple demands and responsibilities on senior teachers.

Within kindergartens, the external context (political, economic, legislative and regulatory) in which senior teachers are leading continues to change and evolve as does organisational response. The ongoing impact of neo-liberalism has continued the shift to a technicist, managerial, corporate notion of leadership with a focus on compliance and regulation (Anderson & Cohen, 2015). The effects of privatisation within the sector have been significant. Kindergartens, while defined as not-for-profit, need to be fiscally sustainable resulting in a competitive and business focus. The early childhood environment is becoming increasingly market driven with a focus on

outcomes and accountability (Turton & Wrightson, 2017). Klevering and McNae's (2018) research highlighted the contextual complexities of the early childhood context as a significant influence on leadership in negotiating leadership for learning within management, operational and strategic responsibilities. This influence was demonstrated in the present research by the multiple and wide-ranging demands, accountabilities and expectations placed on senior teachers.

When first established in the early 1980s, the role of senior teacher was focused on professional support and supervision (Duncan, 2001; May & Bethell, 2017). Since then the organisational context in which senior teachers work has undergone major restructuring following the shift to bulk funding of operations and teacher salaries for kindergarten (Scrivens, 2000). This saw the emergence of self-managing services (associations) which saw an increase in managerial work (May & Bethell, 2017) and a shift in focus from teaching and learning to compliance and accountability (Scrivens, 2000).

The positioning of the senior teacher role within each organisation adds to the complexity. As noted in the findings, the senior teacher does not work directly with children (with some exceptions in smaller associations). The role of senior teacher differs to that of other teachers within the organisation by an increase in scope and responsibilities, a focus on adult relationships and oversight or 'keeping the big picture in mind' (Denee & Thornton, 2017, p. 41) across a range of settings albeit within one

organisation. For senior teachers there is an indirect rather than direct influence on children's learning.

Findings reveal that senior teachers operate across multiple spheres of activity and across multiple sites, leading teaching and learning and engaging in operational and managerial tasks. In the context of the senior teacher role, leadership occurs at multiple levels with influence occurring most strongly in work with teachers and head teachers, with some influence at the management level, and less influence at the governance board level. Notably this multiplicity of activity and roles is reflected in the various job titles being used across and within associations for a role historically referred to as the Senior Teacher. This variance in job titles was first highlighted by Scrivens (1998) and is affirmed in this study. Scrivens (2000) claimed this change in titles "corresponded with the marketisation of the sector as it responded to the demands of neoliberalism" (Scrivens, 2000, p. 150). The continuance of differing titles in the current study show the enduring emphasis of neoliberal policies and business management on the role of the senior teacher (i.e. through the choice of including the word teacher, or manager in the title) and reflects the internal responses each association is taking to meet the demands of the external environment within which early childhood education operates. It is proposed that this evolving change of job titles has led to further difficulties in clearly defining the nature and scope of the role. As Argyropoulo and Hatira (2014) suggest, the organisational framework has a strong impact on the formation of leaders' perceptions regarding their roles and responsibilities.

Although the job titles of participants and leaders within kindergartens vary, the present research identified similarities in roles and responsibilities, noting an inclusive understanding of leadership as an integration of administrative, management and leadership functions. In the present study, the roles and responsibilities of the senior teacher fell into eight areas: curriculum and pedagogical development, collaboration, human resources, professional development, compliance with legislation and expectations of government services, internal evaluation, oversight of both curriculum and compliance across multiple sites, and liaison within and outside of the organisation. Similar findings have been reported in countries such as Australia and Germany (Strehmel, 2016), suggesting that while leadership can look different across settings and contexts there are some key similarities in roles and responsibilities.

These wide-ranging areas are indicative of an inclusive definition of leadership where leadership is located within multiple spheres of activity which place significant demands on senior teachers. As claimed in Ebbeck and Waniganayake (2003) “the early childhood professional is expected to perform a multitude of functions, and to be all things to all people (p. 26).” This is accentuated in this study when in response to being asked to describe her key responsibilities a participant comments, *‘hell where do I stop etc., etc., etc.’* These findings reflect the *Professional Standards for Senior Teachers* (Ministry of Education, 2005) which are divided into four categories: professional leadership, strategic leadership, professional relationships and operations and management.

The distinction between management and leadership is a perpetual discussion in the leadership literature with the interconnectedness of administration, management and leadership explored by a range of authors, including Ebbeck and Waniganayake, (2003), Argropoulou and Hativa, (2014) and Rouse and Spradbury (2015). Heikka, Hattunen and Waniganayake (2016) more recently introduce the notion of leadership as administering pedagogy, managing pedagogy and leading pedagogy. These three orientations are evident and represented within the areas of responsibility senior teachers identify. For example, ensuring compliance includes ensuring all services are staffed correctly and environments meet licensing standards which is largely an administrative function yet requires pedagogical knowledge and understanding to enact effectively. Like Argropoulou and Hativa (2014) the importance of teaching and learning is prominent in senior teachers' responses and is the principal reason given by them for their leadership work. While they understand that managerial work is a necessary component of what they do, and that these tasks impact on the role of supporting teachers to enable effective delivery of the curriculum for children to achieve positive outcomes, their main focus is on *"supporting pedagogy within the organisation."*

5.3 Beliefs and Understandings

As Hallet (2013) suggests, there is still much to learn about leadership in early childhood education, as leadership styles, practices and beliefs are not yet fully understood in this context. This section will discuss senior teachers' beliefs of

leadership as a collaborative and improvement focused endeavour, in light of the literature on pedagogical and distributive leadership. Improvement of others at both the personal and professional level is noted as highly valued (although not unproblematic), as is ensuring effective implementation of curriculum and teaching, in order to enhance quality outcomes for children and families.

A primary feature of the findings showed that senior teachers believed their leadership was best understood as collaborative; involving *walking alongside* and *with others* to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum. Similarly, Cooper (2014) talks of everyday teacher leadership as an act of influence within trusting and collegial relationships, where leadership is dispersed between team members, and collegiality and shared decision making is a feature. Although the senior teachers in the present study are positional leaders and have specific responsibilities (Tamaiti et al., 2008), they understood leadership as a distributed phenomenon, recognising value in a collective rather than individualistic approach. Thornton (2010) and Thornton and Cherrington (2014) identified this conceptualisation of leadership as distributed, and as an approach that resonates within early childhood education due to the collaborative nature of teaching. As Colmar, Waniganayake and Field (2014) assert, distributed leadership does not replace the need for positional leaders. Senior teachers believe they can and do engage in collaborative leadership influencing others and sharing leadership, but likewise serve an important purpose in leading and taking responsibility as a leader. Nicholson and Maniates (2016) identify distributed leadership in early childhood education of positional leaders as those who have access to pedagogical and

practical knowledge and are skilled at collaboratively sharing this knowledge to empower others.

While senior teachers first identified their leadership role as collaborative, the notion of empowering others has a direct connection with their focus on improvement of teaching and learning and the way curriculum is enacted for children. As leaders, senior teachers saw themselves as those *“who build teacher capabilities to be the best they can be to support positive outcomes for tamariki”* ensuring *“equity and excellence and positive outcomes for all ākonga.”* Warsaw (2015) identified capacity building as forming the essence of leadership, with leadership focused on actions taken to improve or maintain quality seen as pedagogical leadership. Rouse and Spadbury (2015) see a pedagogical leader as someone who understands how children learn and develop and models and mentors pedagogical practice. In the present study senior teachers were focused on collaborating with teachers to enable increasingly effective delivery of the curriculum to achieve positive child outcomes, a clear pedagogical orientation. While senior teachers recognised the importance of other responsibilities, supporting improvement was seen as the primary purpose of their role.

Senior teachers in this study therefore understand their leadership as a collaborative, improvement focused role reflective of both a pedagogical and distributive conceptualisation of leadership. The leader’s role is in part seen to provide the conditions necessary for collaborative and distributive leadership (Bottery 2006; Siraj-

Blatchford & Manni, 2007) and also raise the educational standards of the teachers and settings they support. In order to provide the necessary conditions to fulfil their roles, senior teachers highlighted key skills and attributes of effective leaders, while also noting that the skills and attributes of effective leaders are varied, nuanced and complex, encompassing both personal and professional characteristics (Snyder et al., 2012). The findings of the present study revealed personal and interpersonal characteristics as essential in supporting the development of positive relationships with others and enabling the possibilities of collaborative and influential leadership.

Personal characteristics highlighted by senior teachers included experience in teaching, being open to learning, resiliency, being organised and knowledgeable and having the ability to cope with complexity. It is proposed this is due to the aforementioned multiple demands and responsibilities placed on them and the multiple sites that they work across. Kah Yan Loo and Abenyega (2015) focused on the ability of the leader to display attributes of being a learner and to display versatility and the ability to adapt. Senior teachers believed they were *“willing to look at multiple perspectives and question what I do – always wanting to do things better.”* This positioning of themselves as a learner and *‘keeping an open mind’* was often stated alongside attributes such as *“good organisational skills and a solution focused approach.”*

Displaying high personal values and ethics including integrity, honesty and trust were also identified by senior teachers as highly valued or valued in their work as leaders as they

sought to build teacher capability. An emphasis on trust is evident within the extant literature with Stamopoulos (2012) stating, “the early childhood professional’s focus must be on pedagogical leadership that connects to practice, builds professional capacity and capability, and recognises the importance of relationship building...” (p. 47) with building trust a significant component of this relational work. Layen (2015) introduces the notion of the authentic leader, which is grounded in a leader’s positive psychological properties and ethics which such as an internalised moral perspective and relational transparency. Thornton (2010) suggests this ability to build relational trust is particularly important because of the close working relationship teachers have with each other. The present study proposes trust remains highly valued even though, as is the case for senior teachers, their leadership largely sits outside of the immediacy of the learning and teaching environment.

Thornton (2010) also suggests that, “being seen as competent is an essential aspect of demonstrating trustworthiness...integrity is an important quality for all those in positions of leadership and involves consistency between words and actions. All of these different aspects help build relational trust” (Thornton, 2010, p. 39). Being seen as professionally confident was highlighted as one of the two most highly rated characteristics necessary in a leader by senior teachers. Having knowledge was seen as one way of gaining and displaying this professional confidence as was experience within a range of roles within the early childhood sector. As one senior teacher commented, *“having been a kindergarten head teacher I feel teachers acknowledge my*

experience, sense of humour, ability to link systems and workload together, empathy and appreciation, honesty, problem solving and future focused.”

A current challenge is that individual associations are employing those without a teaching qualification or experience into similar roles to senior teachers, albeit with differing titles such as operations manager. Such roles sit outside of the Collective Agreement and thus outside of the *Professional Standards for Senior Teachers*. It remains to be seen the impact of this practice on the evolving role of senior teacher, especially in light of the present findings which affirm the importance of focusing on early childhood pedagogy being led by qualified and experienced teachers (Heikka, Hattunen & Wanaganayake, 2016).

Being rational, goal oriented, assertive and calculated risk takers were not personal characteristics generally valued as important by senior teachers, with the least valued quality being ‘business oriented’. This suggests that a relational, participatory, supportive approach to leadership is favoured by senior teachers, over a more managerial role with a focus on competition, choice and accountability that Scrivens (2000) would suggest is a response to neo-liberalism. Though senior teachers recognised that at times they did have to display some of these attributes it was not something they valued or spent a lot of time on and at times created some tension in their work, as explored further in the discussion.

5.4 Enactment

The following section will discuss senior teachers' enactment of leadership and the value they place on their involvement in different leadership tasks. The rewards, challenges, tensions and potential limitations of their leadership are highlighted and positioned alongside the complex context within which they enact their roles.

When asked to rate according to importance 19 leadership tasks spanning both managerial and leadership functions, relational work, advocacy, professional knowledge, promotion of inquiry and reflection, strategic work, managing budgets, marketing and professional development most were rated most highly in terms of importance by senior teachers. Senior teachers displayed high expectations of their responsibility as encompassing *"anything that supports teachers to provide the best possible learning environment for children."* This is further evidence of the complexity of senior teachers work and has the potential to place pressures on leadership sustainability as there are implications on workloads (Bottery, 2006).

Developing and sustaining relationships, maintaining their own professional knowledge and supporting the professional development of teachers were all equally valued by senior teachers within the present study over and above other responsibilities, albeit a small difference. As Stamopoulos (2002) suggests, *"interpersonal relations are integral to leadership effectiveness because they entice followers to contribute to the change process"* (p. 47). Motivation and empowerment are supported by strong communication skills. *"The ability to quickly establish*

relationships, empathise when necessary – then excite others with energy and passion”
was seen as an important way of enacting leadership.

Promoting and participating in professional development and learning followed closely by constructive ‘problem talk’ with teachers and teaching teams were functions they value most and were most involved in. This is aligned with the findings of the Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) *Characteristics of Professional Development Linked to Enhanced Pedagogy and Children’s Learning in Early Childhood Settings*, where the strongest correlation to student learning outcomes was the importance of leaders promoting and participating in teacher learning and development (Mitchell & Cubey, 2003). Supporting Thornton’s (2010) assertion regarding the most relevant leadership dimensions for early childhood as identified in BES *School Leadership and Student Outcomes: What Works and Why* (Robinson, et al., 2009), planning and evaluating teaching and curriculum and establishing goals and expectations at an organisational level were also valued. These were followed closely by advocating for children and families, developing individual and collective capacity of teachers through inquiry and reflection and supporting teachers to enable effective curriculum delivery. There is alignment with a pedagogical conceptualisation of leadership with a focus on improving and developing educational and teaching practices, taking care of human relationships and administrative management from the perspective of educational goals (Colmer, Waniganayake and Field, 2015; Hujala, Eskeline, Keskinen et al., 2016).

The lowest rated aspects of senior teachers' role from their perspective were marketing, managing staff, administration tasks, budgets and creating and adapting resources. These findings resonate with Aubrey, Godfrey and Harris (2012) who found roles, responsibilities and functions aligned with supporting high quality education and care and children's achievement were highly valued with views concerning business and entrepreneurial skills mixed. However, senior teachers saw these responsibilities as necessary aspects of their leadership work as they determined these impacted on the ability of teachers to collaborate and deliver quality provision of curriculum and pedagogy as encapsulated in the following, *"I am actively involved in all aspects of the association from teaching and learning to property and financial matters as they all impact on outcomes for children and support teachers to do their job well."*

Aspects of the senior teacher leadership role which they found most rewarding were largely framed around 'making a difference', as achieved through supporting the growth of others to create positive change in the curriculum and thereby improve outcomes for children. Making a difference was seen to occur within collaborative relationships and through constructive talk and problem solving, as accentuated in the comment, *"when I have been able to support teams with new ideas, systems and challenges and they have taken these on board as part of a review, implementing change and are maintaining and sustaining this change for the better. When this happens, I feel I have been effective in my leadership role."* Working collaboratively with others to affect this difference was also viewed as rewarding. Senior teachers

view their work as a “process of influence, a catalyst within” (Murray, 2013, p. 530) rather than an act of control over others.

Ebbeck and Waniganayake (2004) suggest leadership in early childhood education is challenging and demanding with increasing pressure to provide high quality services often with limited resources, both financial and human and under increased scrutiny and accountability. When senior teachers were asked to identify the challenges of enacting their leadership, lack of time and the need to manage multiple and at times competing demands were noted most often. Similarly, Rouse and Spradbury (2015) highlighted factors impacting on leaders as including time and balancing all the demands of teaching and learning. Bottery (2006) talks about *function creep* where leaders are tasked with multiple roles and responsibilities and increasing levels of demands; noting the sheer volume of work as a threat to leadership sustainability. It was interesting to note that in the present study when senior teachers were asked what the least important tasks/activities they engaged in there was an unwillingness by some participants to identify these. Their responses suggest that while they did not necessarily enjoy or value some aspects of their role they felt they were a necessary part of the job as they all impacted on the work of teachers to support positive outcomes for children. Other aspects of their job that they were unable to give time to was networking with others outside of their immediate organisation. Given that this aspect of leadership is seen as valuable (Wenmouth, 2015) this may have implications for the effectiveness of their leadership.

Human resource activities, most specifically performance management, were also noted as a challenge of the role by senior teachers within the present study. The dual role of managing competency issues and *“ensuring all the correct processes are undertaken”*, whilst supporting the person to improve practices was seen at times as conflicting. Additional responses suggest the responsibility of *“dealing with someone’s career”* and wanting to reach a *“win: win situation for everyone”* weighed heavily, perhaps due to the strong relational disposition of the leaders. As Stamopoulos (2012) asserts, *“interpersonal relationships are integral to leadership effectiveness”* (p. 46) and this may be an example of the tensions senior teachers manage as they determine priorities of their leadership. An argument could also be made that as qualified teachers with limited leadership qualifications this was an area they had received little training in.

While making a difference through supporting growth and building capacity of others was one aspect of leadership work senior teacher’s found most rewarding, lack of growth in teams was identified as a challenge within the present study with some senior teachers finding it *“frustrating when we source professional development, run courses, outlay expectations, support teams, write reports, hold 1:1 conversations to ensure people understand our expectations and agree – go back 3 months later and no or little progress has been made and there are excuses to why this hasn’t been able to happen.”* McDowell Clark (2012) talks about leaders wanting to be supportive rather than confrontational and to challenge other’s thinking rather than their practice; which they suggest leads to a non-directive approach to changing practice. The result of a

non-confrontational approach was that change occurred in small increments rather than dramatic intervention. Senior teachers' frustration at lack of change may be an example of this in practice. Service (2016) challenges the assumption that through evaluation and accountability mechanisms, governments or organisational leaders can expect effective and ambitious change within an organisation. She suggests there are many and complex reasons for lack of motivation which require time to understand - time that perhaps senior teachers do not have or cannot prioritise given the multiple demands they experience.

The positioning of the senior teacher role and the relationship between senior teachers and organisational level leadership (e.g. governance boards, GM/CEO's) was identified as a source of tension with conflicting values noted as barriers to their leadership. Senior teachers saw themselves as *"wasting my time being involved in strategic direction for the association as our Board seem to have a different agenda, \$\$\$\$\$'s to be made"* and *"writing a report that they seldom read."* This tension was first highlighted in Scriven's (1998; 2000) research where senior teachers' trying to fulfil their leadership objectives engaged in a balancing act of their ideals and the demands of the kindergarten association and the Ministry of Education, as expressed by the General Manager.

When asked to describe their role, strategic work, while acknowledged in some responses, was identified less frequently as a component of senior teachers work

within this study. Aubrey, Godfrey and Harris (2012) found distinctions were made by leaders between future-oriented leadership, linked with the realisation of vision, strategic planning and moving people forward and present-oriented management concerned with day-to-day systems, functions and operations. While senior teachers' work involves aspects of both orientations, the main focus is on day to day pedagogical leadership. Where strategic planning was mentioned by one senior teacher it was in relation to implementation rather than creation or development. Big picture thinking was mentioned by a few senior teachers however, it was difficult to determine if this was in relationship to strategic thinking or oversight across multiple sites. Vannebo and Gotrassli (2017) found that while leaders were involved in strategic work, they did not specifically recognise it as such. The present study supports their assertion that "even if managers do not work with generic strategies, they are indeed exercising strategic leadership" (Vannebo & Gotrassli, 2017, p. 17) and advocates for a broader definition and understanding of strategic leadership within early childhood education.

Summary

The demands of enacting leadership remain complex, workloads high and challenges and tensions diverse. As Thomas and Nuttall (2014) would suggest, like other leaders within early childhood education, senior teachers within kindergarten associations are negotiating the boundaries of managerial, relational and educational discourses in ways that respond to the distinctive contexts they work within. A leader of learning is emerging within the wider literature (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2007) and this resonates with the findings of the present study. Pedagogical and distributive conceptualisations of leadership are evident in senior teachers' responses in this study

which shows commitment to collaboration and to the improvement of children's learning outcomes however, there are challenges to keeping the "relationship in leading" (Anderson & Cohen, 2015). The will and intent of senior teachers is there. The senior teachers studied are negotiating the tensions within their leadership role in a bid to strike a balance between managing and leading and finding a space to influence strategy.

5.5 Strengths and limitations of the study

"The voices of early childhood education leaders and teachers play a crucial role in growing and shaping leadership dispositions, responsibilities, knowledge and practice..." (Davitt & Ryder, 2018, p. 29). Using the voices of participants to describe their leadership practices was a strength of this study and an empowering and valuable process for participants, as indicated in comments within the survey such as, *"thank you this has allowed me to reflect honestly on my role"* as well as in personal communications from participants following completion of the survey.

The insider positioning of the researcher has provided an additional layer of authenticity to the research. I have been able to draw on my knowledge of the participants' work and the wider organisational context at each stage of the study, particularly the development of the survey and interpretation of findings. While this has been a strength, additional care has been taken to ensure that the discussion is data led, and all ethical mandates were upheld.

A further strength of the study was the opportunity to survey the entire population group of kindergarten senior teachers in New Zealand, although conclusions are tempered acknowledging that there are multiple individual experiences and the perspectives of non-respondents are not known. Nonetheless, the mix of quantitative and qualitative survey questions allowed for both a breadth and depth of findings, offering insight into the way in which senior teachers construct the practices, beliefs and experiences of their leadership.

Matipo (2017) argues there is little mention of the importance of culturally inclusive leadership or the role of leadership in promoting culturally inclusive pedagogy within the literature. This is a limitation of the current research. There were no questions that specifically and explicitly related to the role of culture in leadership within the present survey, although the open nature of some of the questions provided the opportunity for participants to raise this topic. While one participant made reference to *“a leader who is reflective of a Te Ao Māori approach in implementing Te Whāriki”* this was not expanded on elsewhere and is a valuable area for future study, particularly in relation to kaupapa Māori approaches to leadership.

5.6 Future Research

Thomas and Nuttall (2014) argue there is a need to more explicitly explore how leaders within early childhood education are responding to negotiating the multiple

expectations of their roles across various unique contexts. boundaries of managerial, positional, relational and educational discourses. While this study has made an initial step in illuminating the role of senior teachers within kindergarten associations, adding to the original work of Scrivens (1998), additional research could further explore these findings in more depth, and garner additional voices. Observations of senior teachers as they engage in their leadership practice would also provide additional information to contrast with the self-reported data captured in this study. Earlier research has found “high levels of congruence between the espoused leadership theories-of-action, and the observed leadership theories-in-use” (Davitt & Ryder, 2018, p. 19), which could be examined in the context of the senior teacher role.

Nicholson and Maniates (2016) posit that within distributive leadership there is a privileging of relationships which requires examining. The way in which role, power and authority impact on the senior teacher/teacher relationship would be an avenue for further exploration. This would be particularly useful given the competing demands of support and compliance elements identified by senior teachers and the challenges in leading change of teaching practice experienced by some senior teachers. The notion of leadership as a form of critical friendship has been suggested in the wider literature (Davitt & Ryder, 2018). The positioning of the senior teacher as a critical friend offers possibility for further investigation.

Further work could also include exploring wider organisational views (including CEO/GM) on the role of senior teacher. Scrivens (2000) noted as a constraint prevalent in her research a philosophical divide between the teaching professionals and kindergarten governance boards and senior management. While outside of the parameters of this research such division between levels of leadership was mentioned by some senior teachers and warrants further investigation. Such research could also include exploration of the roles and responsibilities currently undertaken by senior teachers in comparison with the expectations of management and the structure of the organisation. Exactly who performs what leadership tasks can be unclear and being able to effectively answer these questions may be of dual benefit to both the practice and theory of leadership (Heikka, Waniganayake & Hujala, 2012).

In addition, it would be valuable to continue to investigate the work of positional leaders, both across the kindergarten organisations and within other early childhood organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand. This would create opportunities to explore the similarities and differences in findings across larger organisations, as it is suggested that organisational differences have a strong impact (Argyropoulou & Hatira, 2014). For example, the key themes emerging from Klevering and McNae's (2018) recent study of leadership as relational, empowering and inclusive are evident in the current study. Also evident is the duality of leadership and management functions and the tensions these create. Further exploration may identify additional similarities emerging within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. Future work could also examine the perceptions of head teachers and teachers on the senior teacher role. In exploring other's expectations and experiences of senior teachers' leadership, would offer

insight into the alignment of practice with senior teachers' perceptions of their leadership.

More recently authors such as Clarkin-Phillips and Morrison (2018), and Davitt and Ryder (2018) propose that the principles of Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum of Aotearoa New Zealand provides a useful framework for conceptualising leadership in early childhood education and for guiding leadership practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. The current study provides support to the notion of leadership that is empowering of others/whakamana, holistic/kotahitanga, recognises that leadership requires a sharing of power and control and is based on strong respectful relationships/ngāhononga is occurring within Aotearoa New Zealand.

5.7 Key Insights and Contributions

The present study provided the opportunity for senior teachers within kindergarten organisations across Aotearoa New Zealand to individually reflect on their roles and responsibilities and explore their understandings of leadership and the priorities within their work. As Wilkinson and Kemmis (2015) suggest, the role of the positional leader is “to craft, shape and transform intersubjective space to make it hospitable to educational practices” (p. 356). The present study and extant literature have identified some challenges that may limit the ability of senior teachers to do this. Developing a strong collective voice to advocate for leadership as valued by them will be beneficial and it is hoped the findings of this study will be of assistance in this process.

There is an increasing awareness of the importance of focusing on early childhood pedagogy being led by well qualified teachers (Heikka, Hattunen & Wanaganayake, 2016) who are grounded in the common motivation of enhancing quality in ECE to support the well-being and education of young children and their families (Murray & McDowall Clark, 2013). Senior teachers in this study highlight this motivation as important to them and helpful to them as leaders.

The findings of this research also provide an additional challenge to senior teachers. Evidence suggests the continued prioritising of collaborative relationships by participants. This collaboration largely appears to be with the services they visit and lead. Turton and Wrightson (2017) discuss the potential for transforming from individualistic leadership to a more collectivist style which would suggest further potential for working together as a group of senior teachers. The challenges of their leadership as outlined above provide little time for this to occur currently. However, to impact and enhance the quality improvement aspect of their work it is suggested this would be a sound next step and support a networked group of leaders who have the potential to influence more widely the early childhood sector in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Findings would also suggest senior teachers need time and scope within their daily workload to look beyond the multiple demands made of them, to engage in critical reflection and find ways to effectively and collectively respond to the demands of

accountability, compliance and professional support. Determining the key priorities of their work and being able to articulate and advocate for such priorities will be important future tasks. If, as Service (2016) suggests, leadership that focuses on evaluation and accountability can become a barrier for authentic change there is a responsibility to challenge existing taken-for-granted practices. This will require senior teachers to let go of other demands on their time and provide opportunities for others to step into that space. Communicating the need for role clarity and diversification to those in a position to create structural change within organisations will also be a challenging future task.

5.8 Conclusion

Defining the nature of the work carried out by early childhood professionals is not easy, even for those familiar with the field (Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2005). What is evident is that context shapes the leadership discourse and the context is ever-evolving. Working with the sector to explore leadership within early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand would be valuable in helping raise the profile of leadership work (Thornton et al., 2009). The present study, through the exploration of how leadership is defined, understood and enacted by senior teachers within kindergartens in Aotearoa New Zealand contributes to this wider discussion.

Much like Thomas and Nuttall's work (2014) this study has examined the way in which senior teachers talk about their leadership and how this talk presents particular constructions of what it is to be a leader and to enact leadership. It has responded to the challenge from the wider literature on the need to explore positional leaders'

understandings of leadership in order to reveal the ways in which teacher leadership might be enacted (Cooper, 2014) recognising that positional leaders may play a central role in driving change and supporting leadership capacity in others.

Senior teachers hold an expansive definition of leadership viewing their work as collaborative, relational and improvement focused with the intention of increasing the capacity of others to strengthen pedagogy and curriculum and thus outcomes for children. These beliefs and understandings position their leadership as both distributive and pedagogical as described by the attendant literature. Multiple and at times competing demands, responsibilities and accountabilities are evident within their leadership work exacerbated by the complex external and internal environments within which it is enacted. The challenges of leadership inclusive of lack of time and growth in the teams that they work with and potential limitations such as ability to influence strategic work within their organisations has been identified. Critiquing the compliance and accountability functions senior teachers are currently tasked with has also been noted with suggestions for future investigation identified.

Aubrey, Godfrey and Harris (2012) suggest it is unlikely that one model or single leadership approach can be appropriate for such a diverse sector, citing flexibility as the way forward. Being open to revisioning and potentially reconstructing what leadership looks like within differing contexts remains an important task (McDowell Clark, 2012). What is also important is to extend and progress the debate and

boundaries of leadership. By illuminating the beliefs, conceptualisations and involvement in leadership of one group of positional leaders the present study adds to this discourse.

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Appendices:

Appendix A: Information Sheet for Associations



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
TE KURA O TE MATĀURANGA

E-mail: Subject Line: Leadership within Kindergartens

**Email Notification to Organisation Leaders for Senior Teacher (or equivalent)
Participation in an
Online Survey**

Leadership within Kindergartens in Aotearoa New Zealand

Kia ora General Manager/Chief Executive Officer/Principal,

My name is Gaylyn Campbell and I am completing a Master of Education (Early Years) with Massey University. As part of my research thesis, I am seeking to gather senior teachers' (or equivalent) views on their leadership role; specifically how leadership is defined, understood and enacted by senior teachers (or equivalent) within all kindergarten associations in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The aim of this study is to provide an opportunity for senior teachers to describe their leadership experiences and the nature and scope of their role. I am specifically interested in finding out what leadership work senior teachers are involved in, what leadership functions they value and the characteristics they see as important in a leader.

I am emailing to let you know that senior teachers in your organisation are on the list I have compiled to be invited to participate in my research. I will send an email invitation to all senior teachers to participate in an anonymous online survey which will include a link to the survey. The email will include a full information sheet about the study. The senior teachers are under no obligation to accept the invitation. If a senior teacher does decide to participate, responding to the survey will imply consent. No identifying information about persons or associations will be collected or used in the study. It is expected to take senior teachers no more than 30 minutes to complete. The survey will be open from November 29th 2017 to January 31st 2018.

I have included a copy of the teacher invitation email and information sheet for your reference. If you have any questions regarding the study or survey, please feel free to contact,

Researcher:

Gaylyn Campbell, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Supervisors:

Dr Tara McLaughlin, 06 356 9099 ext: 84312
T.W.McLaughlin@massey.ac.nz

Dr. Karyn Aspden, 06 356 9099 ext: 84389
K.M.Aspen@massey.ac.nz.

Kia ora rawa atu

Gaylyn Campbell

“This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the university’s Human Ethics Committees. The researcher named above is responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 356 9099, ext. 86015, email: humanethics@massey.ac.nz “

Appendix B: Letter of Information to Participants



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
TE KURA O TE MATĀURANGA

Survey Information Sheet

Leadership within Kindergartens in Aotearoa New Zealand

Kia ora

My name is Gaylyn Campbell and I am currently working towards my Master of Education (Early Years) at Massey University. As part of my research thesis, I am seeking to gather senior teachers' (or equivalent) views on their leadership role; specifically, how leadership is defined, understood and enacted by senior teachers (or equivalent) within all kindergarten associations/organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand.

What is the study about?

The aim of this study is to provide an opportunity for you to describe your leadership experiences and the nature and scope of your role. I am specifically interested in finding out what leadership work you are involved in, what leadership functions you value and the characteristics you see as important in a leader.

Why am I interested in this topic?

In addition to being a student, my current professional role is senior teacher within a kindergarten association and as such I am interested in exploring how senior teachers describe and understand their leadership role. I am keen to better understand the range of leadership functions and values within the kindergarten context and hope to be able to inform potential directions for growth and development of the leadership work undertaken by senior teachers.

Who are the intended participants?

I am inviting all senior teachers (or equivalent position) as defined by the Kindergarten Teachers, Head Teachers and Senior Teachers' Collective Agreement (KTCA 2017-2019) who are employed by regional kindergarten associations/organisations within Aotearoa New Zealand to be participants in this research. Senior teachers within my own organisation will not be eligible to be participants in this study.

Details about the survey

The survey comprises of 24 questions in total with a mix of open and closed questions. It begins with a demographic section to gain an overall profile of participant characteristics. This is followed by a section which gathers information about the context in which you are enacting your leadership, how you define your role and what you consider the key responsibilities are within this. Additional questions explore your beliefs about leadership and what you value within your role and ask you to note your involvement in various leadership functions. There is opportunity for you to share what you believe are the most and least important task you undertake and what you find most challenging and rewarding. You will also be asked about the skills and attributes you believe have helped you succeed as a leader. There is also an opportunity to describe what your leadership would look like in an ideal world. It is anticipated that the survey will take between 20 – 30 minutes to complete.

Participant Rights

There is no obligation to accept this invitation. If you *are* interested in taking part in the study, please continue with the survey link provided in the email. Your responses to survey questions will be taken as your consent to participate. You have the right to discontinue the survey at any point. You may contact me to ask questions about the study at any point, and you have the right to see a summary of the research findings at its conclusion if you request so. This request can be via email to the researcher.

The survey is completed anonymously. All reasonable precautions will be taken to protect confidentiality of responses and avoid disclosures of identities. Anonymity will be upheld by ensuring that neither participants nor the organisations to which they belong can be identified through any of the information published.

Data Management

Responses from the survey will be stored securely and will only be accessible by the researcher and the research supervisors for the sole purpose of completing this thesis and as the basis for national or international publications/presentations. Data will be destroyed after 5 years.

Further information

If you have any questions regarding the study or survey, please feel free to contact,

Researcher:

Gaylyn Campbell [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Research Supervisors:

Dr Tara McLaughlin 06 3569099 ext: 84312

T.W.McLaughlin@massey.ac.nz

Dr Karyn Aspden 06 3569099 ext: 84389

K.M.Aspden@massey.ac.nz

I would be very grateful for your contribution to this study as it has potential to add to the information known about the leadership roles and functions of positional leaders within kindergartens.

Kia ora rawa atu

Gaylyn Campbell.

Ethics

“This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the university’s Human Ethics Committees. The researcher named above is responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 356 9099, ext. 86015, email: humanethics@massey.ac.nz “

Appendix C: Ethics Approval

HoU Review Group

Ethics Notification Number: 4000018719

Title: Leadership within Kindergartens in Aotearoa New Zealand

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our system which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

If situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your ethical analysis, please log on to <http://rims.massey.ac.nz> and register the changes in order that they be assessed as safe to proceed.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz. "

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish require evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again answering yes to the publication question to provide more information to go before one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

You are reminded that staff researchers and supervisors are fully responsible for ensuring that the information in the low risk notification has met the requirements and guidelines for submission of a low risk notification.

If you wish to print an official copy of this letter, please login to the RIMS system, and under the Reporting section, View Reports you will find a link to run the LR Report.

Yours sincerely

Dr Brian Finch

Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and Director (Research Ethics)

Appendix D: Survey Questions

How is leadership defined, understood and enacted

Kia ora Senior Teacher (or equivalent)

As part of my research thesis, I am seeking to gather senior teachers' (or equivalent) views on their leadership role. In addition to being a student, my current professional role is senior teacher within a kindergarten association and as such I am interested in the role as it is enacted within kindergarten association contexts.

The aim of this study is to provide an opportunity for you to describe your leadership experiences and the nature and scope of your role. I am specifically interested in finding out what leadership work you are involved in, what leadership functions you value and the characteristics you see as important in a leader. The survey comprises of 23 questions in total with a mix of open and closed questions. It is expected to take no more than 20 minutes to complete. The survey is completely anonymous and no identifying information will be used in the study. Your participation is voluntary.

I am very grateful for your contribution to this study as it has the potential to add to the information known about the leadership roles and functions of positional leaders within kindergarten organisations.

Thank you for contributing to my research.

Kia ora rawa atu

Gaylyn Campbell

1. Please indicate your age

20 - 29 years

40 - 49 years

30 - 39 years

50 - 59 years

a Over 60

2. Please indicate your gender

Female

Male

3. Please indicate your qualifications (click on all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood Education) | <input type="checkbox"/> No teaching qualification |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor of Teaching (Early Years) | <input type="checkbox"/> Post Graduate Certificate (Education) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Diploma (Early Childhood Education) | <input type="checkbox"/> Post Graduate Diploma (Education) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood Education) | <input type="checkbox"/> Masters (Education) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primary Teaching Qualification | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

4. Please state below any specific leadership training you have had in addition to any of the qualifications already noted.

5. What is your job title?

6. How long have you been in this position? (years and months)

7. Describe your role within the organisation.

8. What are the key responsibilities within your role

9. How does your role differ from the role of the Head Teacher within a kindergarten or the Supervisor/Manager of an Early Learning centre?

10. The following is a list of a variety of leadership functions that you may engage in. Rate each item in terms of their importance to your role as senior teacher.

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Advocate for all children and families	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop and sustain relationships with teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop and maintain own professional knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Create and adapt resources to share knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promote inquiry and reflection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sustain partnerships and networks in the wider community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Think and plan strategically	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop individual and collective capacity of teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Share and shape pedagogy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support teachers to enable effective delivery of the curriculum for children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ensure the organisation achieves its strategic plans/aims/goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Manage staff and budgets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marketing the organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hold self and others to account	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop a positive team culture within kindergartens and centres	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Align resources with desired outcomes for children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Align actions with shared values	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support professional development of teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deliver professional development for teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Please complete the following sentence in your own words. An effective leader is...

12. In terms of your current role please rate your **involvement** in the following leadership functions.

	Not Involved	Somewhat Involved	Involved	Very Involved
Establishment of goals and expectations at the organisational level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning and evaluating teaching and curriculum within individual kindergartens/centres	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promoting and participating in professional development and learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Constructive 'problem talk' with teachers and teaching teams	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategically resourcing individual kindergartens/centres	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategically resourcing the overall organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment for children, whanau and teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating connections with outside agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. In terms of your current role please rate the **value** that you place on your involvement in the following leadership functions.

	Not Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Valuable	Very Valuable
Establishment of goals and expectations within individual kindergartens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Establishment of goals and expectations at the organisational level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Planning and evaluating teaching and curriculum within individual kindergartens/centres	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promoting and participating in professional development and learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Constructive 'problem talk' with teachers and teaching teams	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategically resourcing individual kindergartens/centres	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Strategically resourcing the overall organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment for children, whanau and teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>

14. From your perspective what are the most important tasks/activities you engage in, within your leadership role?

15. From your perspective what are the least important tasks/activities you engage in, within your leadership role?

16. Which aspects of your leadership role do you find challenging? Why?

17. Are there any leadership tasks/activities that you feel you do not have time to complete?

18. Which aspects of your leadership role do you find most rewarding?

19. What skills and attributes do you believe have helped you in your leadership role?

20. In your experience, how important are the following characteristics for your leadership role?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Proactive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professionally confident	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empowering (of others)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowledgeable (about teaching and learning)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visionary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kind, warm, friendly and nurturing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rational, logical, analytical	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Systematic planner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goal oriented	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Courageous	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Influential	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assertive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reflective	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Business oriented	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Calculated risk taker	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. Which statement is most aligned with your views/values of leadership within your role?

- I am in a position of authority
- I am a promoter of change, provide vision and persuade others to follow
- I am focused on actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- I am collaborative and endeavour to provide opportunities for all to influence and lead

Comment

22. Indicate which statement most reflects your actions as a leader within your role?

- I perform management and administrative tasks
- I promote change and future focused tasks
- I ensure effective implementation of curriculum and teaching occurs
- I promote interdependence, collaboration and cooperation within and across teaching teams

Comment

23. Please complete the following statement: In an ideal world my leadership work would involve...

24. Are there any other comments you would like to make about this topic?

Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this survey. Your contribution is very much appreciated.
Kia ora rawa atu