

**CAREER TRAJECTORIES OF DEPUTY AND ASSISTANT
HEADTEACHERS AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF SECONDARY
HEADSHIP**

BY

JUDITH BRUCE-GOLDING

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of**

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EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP**

**School of Education
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT
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Abstract

There is a dearth of literature about the career life courses and voices of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in secondary schools. This thesis examines the career trajectories and the experiences of Headship from 14 Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in secondary schools in Birmingham, England. A two-phase, mixed-method study (survey and semi-structured life history interviews) was employed as part of an explanatory sequential design. This research builds upon previous work in life history studies along with career phases and stages research.

The findings from this study add new insights to the senior leadership role and the perception of Headship in that the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher career stage and socialization experiences can determine whether they stay, leave or climb the career ladder to Headship. This thesis tentatively suggests that Deputy and Assistant Headteachers lean towards displaying mainly Bonder, Bridger or Leaver characteristics that contribute to aspiration and how they utilize their social capital in their career journeys.

A new career stages and phases framework pertaining to Deputy and Assistant Headship in secondary schools has been forwarded which draws on the distinction between bonding and bridging social capital and career transition in school leadership and management.

This thesis is dedicated to:

My parents Austin and Vashti;

who have taught me about the value of education and perseverance during challenge through their life histories and their inimitable approach to life,

and

Robert:

for being my rock and wonderful support.

Life history exploration is a powerful way of walking with and understanding the individual's unique life pathway which informs and guides their values, morals, decisions, attitudes towards justice and personal agency.

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The 14 Senior Leaders

Thank you to the **Deputy and Assistant Headteachers** who shared their life and career histories with me as part of this important research.

Abbreviations

AH – Assistant Headteacher

BAME – Black and Minority Ethnic

DfE - Department for Education

DfES - Department for Education and Schools

DH – Deputy Headteacher

NAHT – National Association for Headteachers

NASUWT – National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers

NCTL – National College of Teaching & Leadership

NPQH – National Professional Qualification for Headship

NPQSL – National Professional Qualification for Senior Leaders

NPQML – National Professional Qualification for Middle Leaders

NUT – National Union of Teachers

OECD - The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OFSTED – Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background information to the study

Over the past 10 years, leadership challenges associated with the retirement of the 'baby boomers' have now become critical within the secondary and primary school leadership structure in England schools. Since 2005, a national increase in vacant Headship roles and a decrease in the number of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers applying for Headship roles has been reported (Rhodes and Brundrett, 2006; Rhodes *et al.*, 2009; Howson, 2011). This lack of essential Headteacher leadership in schools will have an impact upon school effectiveness (Hallinger and Heck, 2010). In addition, there has been an increase in Graduates leaving the teaching profession after 5 years (DfE, 2017), which could result in further significant challenges for school leadership and management.

The national school workforce statistics in England (DfE, 2017) show that there were 437,647 FTE (full time equivalent) classroom teachers and 72,373 teachers in a leadership position (a total of 510,020) of which almost 3 out of 4 school teachers were female (around 380,000 teachers). 22,100 Headteachers and 49,100 Deputy or Assistant Headteachers were employed within these state funded schools and over two-thirds of those senior leaders were female (14,700).

In the West Midlands there were 42,500 FTE teachers and 8,133 were in a leadership position. 25.6% were male and 16.3% were over 50 years of age. In Birmingham secondary schools there were 12,733 FTE teachers of which 1,980 were in a senior leadership position. 26.5% were male and 14.9% of teachers were over 50 years of age. The number of FTE teachers in secondary schools has decreased by 1.3% (2700) between 2015 and 2016. The DfE (2017) state that 140 schools did not supply usable data, so estimates were included.

The current government education reforms, in particular, the White Paper, Educational Excellence Everywhere (2016), aims to raise educational standards in England. School underperformance, additional assistance for the disadvantaged child and support for the effective leadership and management of schools in England through collaborative practices are some of the areas within the educational agenda. There is a strong emphasis on school autonomy, school performance, combined with tighter accountability systems which could constitute for future leadership challenges for existing and aspiring school leaders (DfE, 2016).

Concerns about the state of the school workforce have been raised by the: National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL, 2007; 2009); the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT, 2009), the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT, 2010; 2012); National Union of Teachers (NUT, 2014; 2015) and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL, 2015). These reports indicate nationwide unease concerning workload and accountability

challenges and expectations. These challenges have contributed to what has been called the 'Headship crisis' (Ward, 2004; Shaw, 2006; Brundrett *et al.*, 2006; Rhodes and Brundrett, 2008) in England.

Most Deputy and Assistant Headteachers are expected to continue their journey into Headship within England schools (West, 1992). This expectation rests on strong assumptions about role progression, aspiration and performance development which may no longer hold. Headship appears to be no longer the preferred choice of many Deputy and Assistant Headteachers (Oplatka and Tamir, 2009; Chagger, 2014; Denholm, 2017), hence a national Headship shortage was declared by Professor John Howson. Howson (2011) also reported a rise (28%) in Headteacher roles being re-advertised nationally, along with an increase in the re-advertised Headteacher roles in the West Midlands (37%). This could indicate a regional lack of readiness or desire for Headship when considering Headship as a future career. It is important to ascertain why this is so, with a particular focus in this study on secondary schools in Birmingham.

As an educator and researcher, I am very interested in the career experiences of school leaders and teachers. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to explore and elicit the attitudes of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers about their career experiences, trajectories and their experience of the Headship role in secondary schools in Birmingham, England. The literature on the role of the Assistant Headteacher is sparse, so it is assumed that the Assistant Headship role has some similarities to

the Deputy Headship role, with variations of some of the strategic responsibilities and the deputising of the Headship role when the Headteacher is unavailable. The following questions frame the research:

RQ¹ What are the views of current Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham on

(i) the current role and experience of 'being a Headteacher'?

RQ² (ii) their own career trajectories?

RQ¹ will promote an understanding of the current thoughts and perspectives of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in their current role, along with their perspectives on, and experiences of, being a Headteacher. RQ² will examine the career trajectories of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in relation to their aspirations towards Headship. The significance of this study is that it is a unique study that focuses on the incumbency stage of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham using a biographical life histories approach. Ribbins (1997; 2003) conducted important research into the lives of school leaders using a life histories approach that revealed insightful factors into the lives, growth and the development of leaders. It is now time to examine the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher experience and career trajectories in Birmingham, England.

1.1 Theoretical framework and model

The study uses a mainly quantitative approach, so the events focus on the stories of Deputy and Assistant Headteacher experiences in Birmingham, England, as part of a narrative patchwork of experiences of senior leaders in both the International and the English education system. Birmingham is a large metropolitan area in which schools serve a diverse range of communities. Birmingham was also chosen for the practical management of this research. Using a constructionist worldview (Crotty, 1998), this research draws substantially on the approaches developed by Gronn (1999) and by Ribbins (1997; 2003) to investigate the lives of Headteachers. It is now time to examine the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher experience.

Biographical studies encompass a range of approaches when studying lives. Gronn (1993) used a psychobiographical approach to examine the leadership character of the life of Sir James Darling (Headteacher) over a 13- year period. That study included interviews, diary accounts, continued reflection along with interviews with family members. Pascal and Ribbins (1998) refer to English (1995) and draw on the different depths and types of biographical research that can be used, e.g. autobiography and prosopography, diaries, sketches, portraits and portrayals, when studying the lives of individuals.

International and national literature pertaining to the role of the Headteacher and the Deputy Headship role through a biographical lens has provided valuable knowledge

in understanding leadership experiences within different contexts (Pascal and Ribbins, 1998; Oplatka and Tamir, 2009; Smith, 2012). This closer focus on the lived experience within the leadership role has contributed to identifying influences, nuances, barriers and critical life situations within the role, which could affect the aspiration and decisions made within a structured leadership framework (Gronn, 1999; Day and Bakioğlu, 1996; Pascal and Ribbins, 1998). This study draws on narrative frameworks to propose a new framework when examining the career trajectories of senior leaders. This study has employed semi-structured life history interviews to gain an understanding of the career trajectories and the personal experiences of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers within their role.

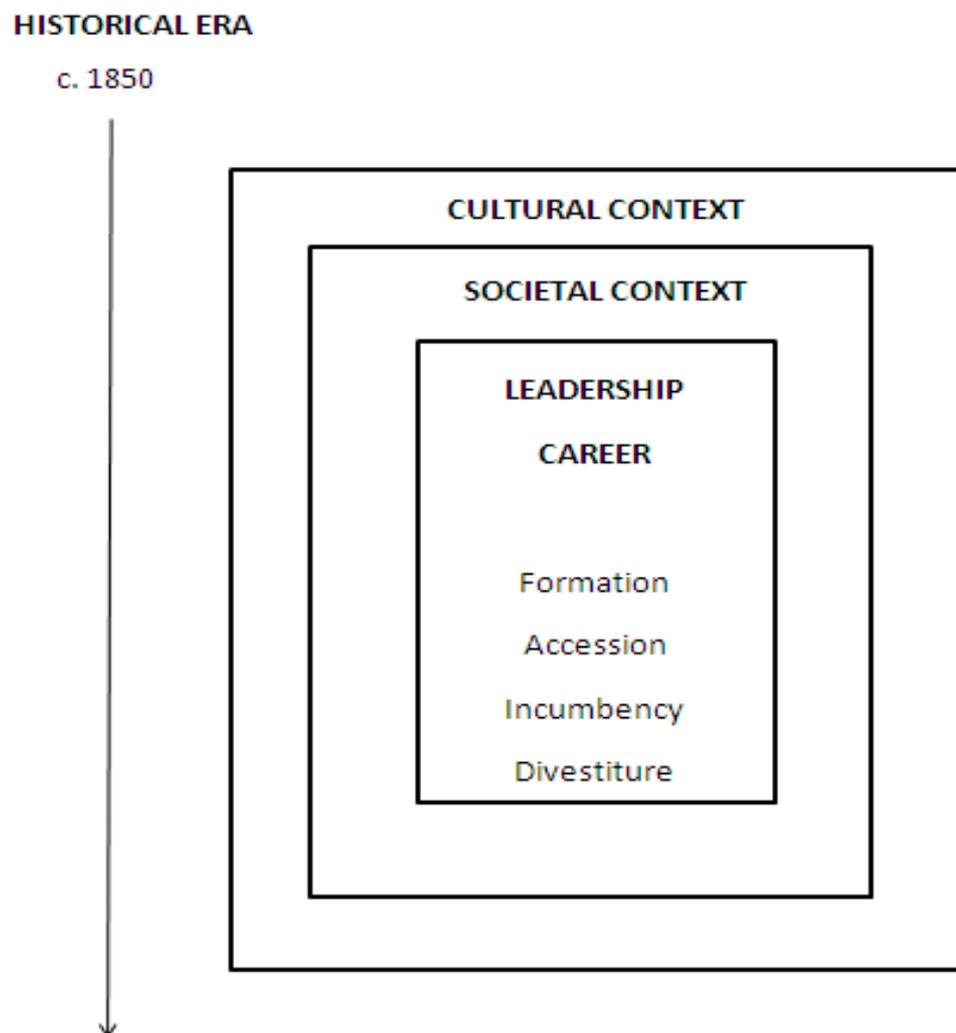
This type of research approach does have its challenges, especially in terms of the level of subjectivity applied when presenting the data, as well as the position of the researcher. Furthermore, bias and reliability issues could also arise from the tendency for the actor or the participant to not give an honest account of themselves or to fall into self-justification. However, a constructionist approach aims to present 'useful interpretations' (Crotty, 1998, p. 47) as the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers engage with their educational contexts and forward their stories and experiences within their roles. The study uses in-depth interviews since a survey would not have been able to generate such a rich depth of data that could articulate and represent the personal experiences of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers with reference to the research questions.

1.2 Career journey frameworks of school leaders

Gronn (1999) proposed a four-stage model of the careers of educational leaders (see Figure 1). The model considers the life experiences, influences and perspectives that could impact on the career journey stages of school leaders to Headship. With a focus on biographic narrative, Gronn (1999) is able to ascertain the experiences and perspectives of school leaders at different stages in their career journey.

Figure 1 *A career model of leadership*

(Adapted from Gronn, 1999)



This framework for educational leaders was, and is, still significant because it considered the historical, cultural and societal contexts that could impact upon the career of school leaders. Day and Bakioğlu model (1996) put forward their career journey framework of senior leaders. Pascal and Ribbins (1998) built on this and developed the Alternative Leadership Pathways model (see Table 1). Gronn (1999) then put forward a comprehensive framework of the leadership journey drawing on the previous models.

Table 1 Alternative leadership pathways model

(Adapted from Day and Bakioğlu and Pascal and Ribbins, 1998)

Previous model	Alternative Model
1. Formation	1. Formation
2. Accession	2. Accession
3. Incumbency (initiation, development, autonomy) disenchantment	3. Incumbency (initiation, development, autonomy, advancement) enchantment
4. Moving on (divestiture)	4. moving on (reinvention)
Day and Bakioğlu (1996)	Pascal and Ribbins (1998)

The incumbency stage (refer to Table 1) will be the main area investigated for the purpose of this study, encompassing elements from social capital and career stages and phases frameworks in order to elicit the views and experiences of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers. The incumbency stage will be discussed further in the literature review section. The models and frameworks will be applied to the lives and experiences of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham, with the aim of contributing to the body of knowledge and understanding of the career trajectories of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers and their experiences of Headship.

1.3 Research Design

The research questions aim to find out how Deputy and Assistant Headteachers understand their careers and the opportunities that are open to them. The foundation of this approach is linked to the belief that there is a reality for each individual, which has meaning and value to their world (Crotty, 1998). Crotty's knowledge framework will be used reflecting a constructionist epistemological worldview. This worldview accepts that there will be multiple realities combined with the subjective perspectives of the individuals when an interaction occurs within their contexts. The research will, therefore, be interpretative; however, this leaves open the question of how to uncover Deputy and Assistant Headteachers' thinking.

This study uses a mixed method design consisting of two phases. A short survey (Phase 1) was followed by semi-structured life history interviews within an explanatory sequential design (Phase 2). The first methods phase consisted of a questionnaire that had eight questions, which were designed to ascertain some background information about the role (duration within the role, ethnicity, NPQH completion) as well as to establish whether the Deputy or Assistant Headteacher wanted to participate in the study. Once the interest to participate in the study had been established, the second phase using semi-structured life history interviews was implemented.

1.4 Wider framework

As part of presenting a biographical overview of the lives of senior leaders, I have utilized the topology of five key knowledge domains (Gunter and Ribbins, 2002). Gunter and Ribbins (2002) proposed these typologies as alternative approaches to researching educational leadership, leading to the adoption of different research methods. Following the terminology used by Gunter and Ribbins, this thesis lies within the humanistic knowledge domain, which seeks to gather experiences and biographical accounts from educational leaders. The constructionist epistemological stance (Crotty, 1998) has been utilized for this study because it will allow us to learn and understand the realities constructed and experienced within the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher role. This is an alternative approach to using statistics to inform us of the lived experience. The aim is not to present an absolute truth, but valuable interpretations of the lived experience within a specific context.

Constructionism as a philosophical stance asserts that meaning is continually being constructed by its social actors as they interact with their world or phenomenon. Knowledge is not clear-cut or definite but a representation and portrayal of how the researcher and the participants understand and see their world. The interpretivist theoretical tradition that has been applied to this study attempts to 'understand and explain human and social reality' (Crotty, 1998, p. 67). Variations in the term interpretivism also exist within social research. However, Crotty's (1998) interpretation will be applied. Interpretivism and constructionism have their groundings in discovering social perspectives and examining how meaning is created when social actors interact with their social context. Whereas an objectivist approach asserts that 'social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors (Bryman, 2016, p. 29). The social phenomena would therefore be separate from the social actors whereas constructionism has a focus on the interaction of social actors with their social reality.

1.5 Structure of this thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter Two introduces the educational landscape with regards to senior leadership and provides an overview of the literature used in the study. The chapter explores school leadership and the role of Deputy and Assistant Headship in English schools and the challenges they face. Chapter Three explains the research design along with the ontological and methodological approaches utilized. Chapter Four presents the findings from the

research. Chapter Five discusses the findings in relation to previous research, whilst Chapter Six concludes the study with strategies and recommendations drawn from the findings of the career trajectories of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers and their perception of secondary Headship.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

This chapter provides a critical evaluation of current and past literature on leadership roles in schools and the career journeys towards leadership. Theoretical models and frameworks based on career 'life histories', combined with empirically based literature, will be utilized when examining the experiences of senior leaders within the secondary education system. There is a vast amount of literature about Headteachers' personal and professional experiences (e.g. Bookbinder, 1992; Ribbins and Marland, 1994; Rayner and Ribbins, 1999; Percival and Tranter, 2004; Earley and Weindling, 2007). However, 'little is known about the personal experiences of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers and the way in which individual careers are constructed are seldom explored' (James and Whiting, 1998, p. 353). Their research was conducted over 15 years ago indicating that the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher role continues to be an under represented area of study in educational research.

Nationally, Headteacher appointments continue to be re-advertised signifying grave concerns pertaining to the current leadership crisis in England (Howson, 2011; Denholm, 2017). Both national and international studies highlight the challenges facing the process of preparing successful Headteachers. The main aim of this study is to explore the lives of Deputy and Assistant Headteacher career trajectories in Birmingham, England. This review of research used the key words: Headship and career journey, life history and educational leaders, Deputy Headship and career perspectives, and career perspectives of Deputy Headteachers. Papers were retrieved

using Sage Journal Publication searches to build a comprehensive study into the area of Headship life history, career trajectories of senior leaders and Deputy and Assistant Headship.

The journals within the last 15-20 years on the above research areas were reviewed in terms of the research focus and methods used, as well as its relevance to the changing education system in England. Many of the studies into life history and the career trajectories of senior leaders used narrative studies for the methodology to obtain accounts of the lived experiences within the role which influenced my decisions when considering the epistemological stance and the methods of data collection. It was also understood that, although the focus of the study was on the experiences of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham, England, wider searches, both nationally and internationally, would provide further insights into the educational systems and experiences of educational leaders in different countries and regions in England. Other databases were accessed, however Sage Publications offered a vast database of useful relevant peer-reviewed national and international journals about leadership and education issues.

Research papers pertaining to school leadership highlighted in lectures at the University of Birmingham served as a starting point in reviewing previous research on Headship role and senior leadership. After examining the corpus, biographical and life history authors were then selected based on the education system of the country and school type. Authors that had carried out research in English schools or inter-

national schools that shared commonalities with the English education system were examined first, then international studies were reviewed. Online and internet search databases were accessed from selected journals using the University of Birmingham library services link. In order to draw upon wider research by a range of authors, unpublished work was also reviewed for this study. Published and unpublished academic research using the E-Theses Online Service (ETHOS) and the University of Birmingham Institutional Research Archive (ETHESES) to review theses within the last five years, along with government and national school leadership publications, such as the DfE and Skills (DfES) and The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) which has now been repurposed and moved to the Department for Education.

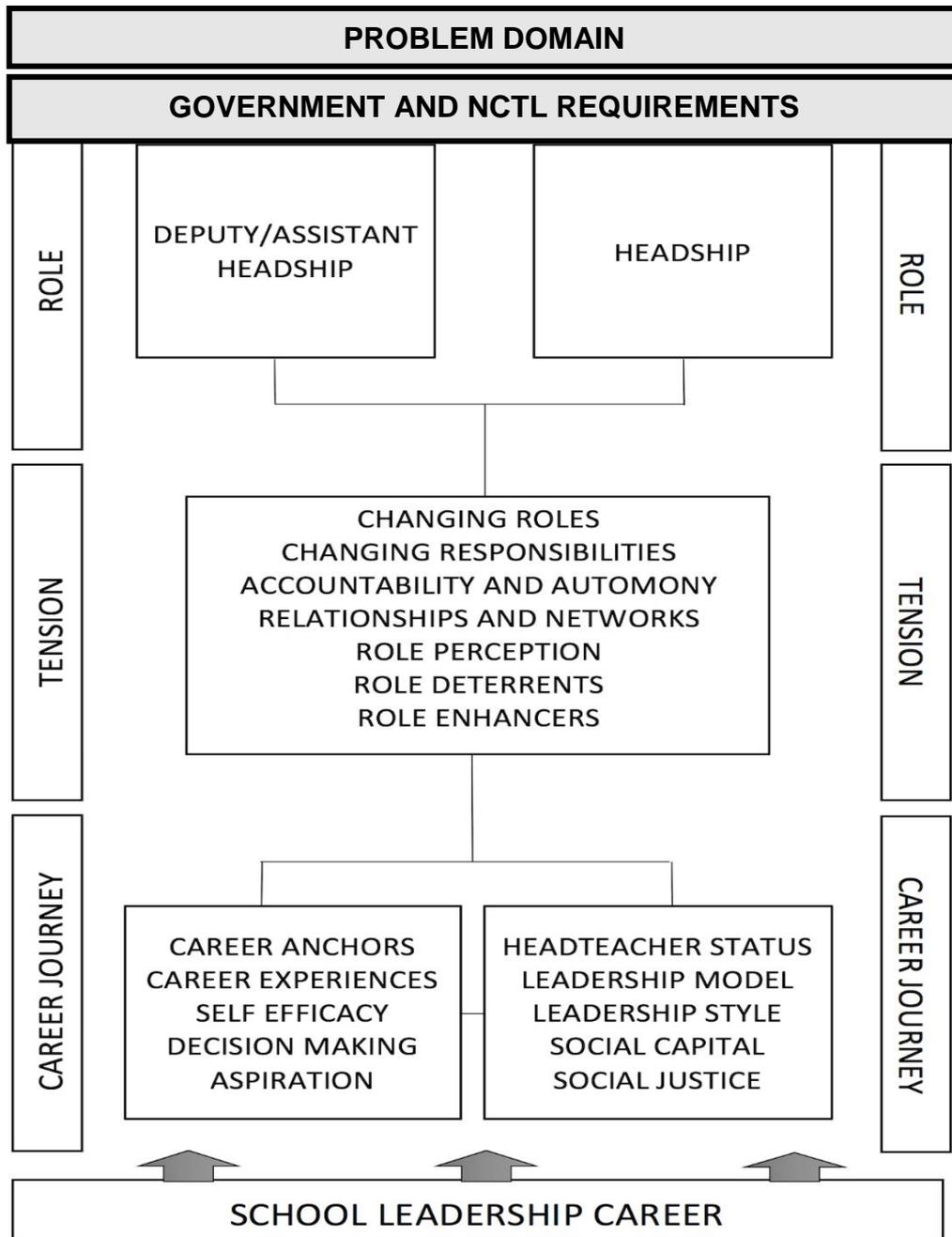
Books about the role of Deputy Headship were used, but only a few specific books about the role of the Assistant Headteacher in England were found. The National College for Teaching and Leadership website has a substantial amount of past and current studies carried out with Headteachers and senior leaders. The range of literature reviewed allowed for a thematic approach to be developed which informed my conceptual framework. The first part of this chapter will examine the changing responsibilities of school leaders and the implications for Headteachers. Secondly, Deputy and Assistant Headteacher career trajectories and barriers to progression will be discussed and the third section will review school leadership in Birmingham and programmes for aspiring leaders.

2.1 The changing responsibilities of school leaders

The policy agenda in England places school leadership in the context of autonomy and accountability. Government expectations of what schools will achieve in society seem to grow inexorably (DfE, 2003; 2010; 2016). The expanding agenda for schools has been accompanying by increasing autonomy on the grounds that schools know best how to organise themselves. Educational performance and school standards overseen by OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) and local agencies will be the key indicators to ensure educational success.

However, caution should be applied to the term accountability due to the varying interpretations of it and the following questions asked: Will accountability measures really make a difference to the educational destination of the student? And how will the Headteacher manage these continued demands of accountability on the school community? The combination of accountability and autonomy has created substantial challenges for school leadership (Ouston, *et al.*, 1998; Glatter, 2012; Greany, 2016).

Figure 2 Conceptual Framework: Career trajectories and experiences of Headship
 (J.Bruce-Golding, 2017)



2.1.1 Accountability and Autonomy

This section refers to the timeline of change when considering how autonomy and accountability have changed over the last 35 years. The 1980's seemed to be a time where school performance and government expectations started to influence the direction of the school and experience of the Headship role. The Headteacher's management of internal and external demands are reflected in studies conducted by Ouston, *et al.*, (1998). They discuss how education had become a marketplace for parents and governing bodies whilst at the same time the Headteacher would have to manage national expectations with regards to raising standards and school performance. The diversification of the Headship role came with its challenges of additional role pressures, financial and time demands.

This view is supported by Fink and Brayman (2006) who discuss how Government changes have impacted upon the autonomy of the Headteacher and the tick box and agenda approach that is so often evident in school leadership. Challenging or unyielding Government expectations in education had been an area of concern over the last 30 years (Gillborn, 1989; Cooley and Shen, 2003; Glatter, 2012). Gillborn (1989) refers to the qualitative (high performance) and the quantitative approaches that defined Headship role under a Conservative political government and the strategic and operational pressures that were put on the Headteachers. The main sources of concern were associated with resources and staffing, especially in areas of deprivation and in managing change in response to government directives. Gill-

born's (1989) findings from eight Northern Ireland Headteachers described how increased accountability levels for performance resulted in pressures placed on the role. A lack of funding to realise objectives, low staff morale and challenges with implementing change were additional pressures experienced in the role. Likewise, Jones (1999) reported on how imposed legislation had impacted on the Primary Headteacher role and the challenges with fulfilling all school duties.

Hall and Southworth (1997) examined the changing roles of Primary and Secondary Headship from the 1970s to the 1990s and concluded that the Headship role made a difference to how the school was managed, and that this role is pivotal to ensuring school effectiveness. However, more understanding was needed as to how the Headship role makes a difference. They also acknowledge how political change and accountability measures impact upon Headship in that alongside the external management of the school the Headteacher would have to consider how to manage staffing efficiently and effectively.

A broader perspective has been adopted by Townsend (2011) who suggests that the style and type of leadership of a twenty-first-century school will require forward thinking, effective planning in school leadership and management. Headteachers will therefore need to apply a strategic approach when dealing with the uniqueness of their community, staff and students to maintain high educational and academic outcomes.

The OECD (The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2012) have identified a positive association between higher performing schools and schools that have higher levels of autonomy. In other countries, high accountability expectations have resulted in positive effects for lower-achieving schools minority and disadvantaged children (Lauen and Gaddis, 2012). However, Mintrop and Trujillo (2007) question how school quality pressures and the lack of robust statistics in some California schools could skew accountability results. The white paper, Educational Excellence Everywhere (DfE, 2016), refers to further accountability reforms that have been introduced into all schools and colleges in England. These reforms will focus on pupil progress and their destinations, MAT (Multi-Academy Trusts) performance tables, inspection data, Regional Schools Commissioners and Headteacher Boards. According to DfE (2016, p. 104):

‘Our reforms are designed to give school and system leaders freedom to raise standards. But because autonomy is not the same as abdication, that freedom makes it more important that we have fair, robust and ambitious accountability measures to hold those leaders to account for the way in which they use their freedoms. A more autonomous, school-led system depends even more on an effective accountability system.’

The policy, (DfE, 2016, p. 90) indicates that schools might benefit greatly by being able to have more control over their curriculum and steering away from a one size fits all approach if they are academies. This move from relying on a centralised Local Education Authority has meant that schools are now required to make the transition to self-management and self-improvement (Caldwell, 2008; Hargreaves, 2010). The concept of a self-managing school implies that the Headteacher is expected to be able to manage all aspects of the school, including the school budget, staff salaries, building maintenance, administration, hiring and dismissing staff, curriculum design and assessment, community and parent links, etc. Advocates of school self-management (e.g. Caldwell, 2008) have argued that Headteachers will be able to address the uniqueness of the students, staff and the community that the school is based in. This flexibility is expected to yield positive outcomes in the long term.

In the same vein, the DfE (2016, p. 104), refer to 'ambitious accountability' and introduces new reforms along with more autonomy to schools. Student performance and data at individual school levels will be closely monitored and published; schools will be working closely with OFSTED, the regulatory body, with a focus on the inspection of learning, assessment and school underperformance. In order to maintain educational excellence, the government has proposed that high-performing schools are to work with the lower-performing schools, sharing expertise in the process. Regional school commissioners will be part of the support framework to assist underperforming schools. Government policies on school accountability, working with school governors and autonomy continue to present new challenges for school leaders (MacBeath, 2011; Townsend, 2011; MacBeath *et al.*, 2012; Earley and

Bubb, 2013) indicating that the wider perspective of school leadership needs to be considered. It is important to consider how accountability is measured and monitored, especially with regards to who is in the position to monitor the auditors of schools.

2.1.2 Changing leadership structure

Expectations of school leaders have also changed through the reorganization of school structures and associated changes in responsibilities particularly in the way that school leaders are expected to take on along with the responsibilities that they are expected to share with others. This section examines ways in which the responsibilities of school leaders have been shaped by the development of school networks including the growth of multi-academy trusts and by exhortations that school leaders should distribute responsibilities and power to teachers in their school (NCTL, 2009). A developing body of research on school leadership has espoused the benefits of distributed leadership: in which school leaders share power and responsibility with teachers. Distributed leadership contrasts with the charismatic and heroic approach to Headship that was once prevalent in school leadership and management processes in England.

Important contributions to distributed leadership theory have come from Gronn (2002) and Spillane (2006). Gronn (2002), after examining the traditional approaches of leadership and perspectives of distributed leadership. He put forward his tax-

onomy of distributed leadership, which included spontaneous collaboration and intuitive working relationships as ways of perceiving and understanding leadership. Spillane (2006) argues that the focus of distributed leadership should not just be on the actions of the leader, but on the interactions between the staff combined with the recognition that all stakeholders in different positions play a part in influencing the direction of the school, e.g. senior leadership team, teachers, parents and students that have responsibilities in the school.

Leithwood *et al.* (2008) assert from their examination of leadership research that distributed leadership is associated with high levels of student achievement, building staff capacity by influencing staff motivation, commitment and work conditions. The NCTL (2009) refer to distributed leadership as a preferred model of leadership in schools. Bush and Glover (2013; 2014) also note the transition from the individual perspective of school leadership and the normative and preferred move towards the distributed leadership model that is now prevalent in the UK education system. The distributed model approach should allow expertise to be drawn on informally and formally, as well as others being able to develop their own skills and expertise. Taking a broader view Parker (2015) holds the understanding that the distributed leadership model is one that well-matched to primary school leadership. Whilst the first of these changes looks beyond the individual school and the second looks within, they share a belief in the benefits of collaborative structures (Simon, 2015).

School networks require Headteachers to work with other schools and to share best practice with staff and school leaders in those schools. In line with the DfE (2016) requirements, there is a call for schools to be active in developing leadership capacity in the school and the community through system and distributed leadership models.

2.1.3 Social Capital

Social capital concepts were introduced mainly by Bourdieu during the 1970s and 1980s, and Putnam during the 1990's (Putnam *et al.*, 1994). Bourdieu's perspectives on social capital are related to class, the economy and the impact of these networks in the community. These studies along with other social capital research have become the foundation in understanding types of social capital and the different contexts in which it is utilized. Putnam (2000) described two forms of social capital when considering social relationships in the community. *Bonding* social capital is developed in tight-knit social groups where there is an emphasis on reciprocity and trust. This is important for individuals who see their future as lying within that group, for example, family, church and community groups. *Bridging* social capital is developed when individuals belong to different social groups and they draw their value from their ability to make connections between these groups. These individuals are more likely to see their future as lying beyond any one particular social group of which they are a member.

Social networks within the school and community can build trust and support, leading to further benefits and the positive reciprocity of actions. However, the value of relationships depends on power relationships in society. Relationships that give access to the dominant class have more value in society as a whole. Bourdieu's (1977a) framework also recognised the value and position of cultural capital in society. This included the background, skills and values that had been passed down through the generations. However, cultural capital and its acceptance vary depending on the social class that one is born into compared to the dominant class. Regarding the important role that teachers play, Monkman *et al.* (2005, p. 29) assert that:

'Teachers, as potential agents, determine the value just as the dominant segments of society determine the value of, or what counts in, the resources and actions of others. Schools and teachers determine the value through their expectations.'

Minckler (2013) supports these findings and suggests that, through transformational leadership, teacher social capital can be developed by providing opportunities for staff to work with each other in a positive and nurturing environment. These themes lead us to the necessary equitable practices for social justice and models that support equality in education in that all children, regardless of background, class, race and gender, should be given the opportunity to access a quality of education that is

equal to other children from wealthier backgrounds. Unfortunately, studies continue to show the underachievement of children from minority and deprived backgrounds.

This division of wealth and the dominance of a social class therefore impacts upon whether cultural capital is valued and respected in society. Additionally, Headteachers, school leaders and governing bodies need to address the realities of discriminatory practices and biases in whole school policies and the recruitment of external staff. These biases could be overt or covert and have been discussed in many studies about gender, disability and race in education where equal opportunities have not been exercised (Jacullo-Noto, 1991; Coleman, 1996; Pritchard, 2010; Coleman, 2012; Wyatt and Silvester, 2015). Studies about leadership and diversity in school management enlighten us with proactive approaches and programmes that have been developed to support diversity in educational leadership, which is essential for twenty-first-century teaching (Johnson and Campbell-Stephens, 2010; 2013).

The application of social capital and social justice approaches can benefit school leaders and the community by providing opportunities to understand, learn from new cultures and utilize the skills and experiences of others. Conversely social capital could be used to close doors and socially exclude others if norms and values are not shared. This understanding should allow educators to work positively with different community groups and staff. For example, reflective, inquiry-based practices that help future school leaders to address their biases and shortcomings as part of social justice leadership training could help leaders to broaden their understanding

of different cultures and world views, thus breaking down cultural biases and encouraging strategies for personal agency (Ciabattari *et al.*, 2010).

This knowledge and understanding of the importance of social justice could guide Headteachers and school leaders in building cultural capacity in the school workforce and reducing oppressive and destructive working practices. Recruitment and selection processes have been areas of concern, where processes such as homogeneity (where employing someone that has the same characteristics, class background or race, etc., as the employer is more favourable than the candidate's qualifications, work and employment history) have been evident (Blackmore *et al.*, 2006). To move towards equitable selection, recruitment and retention standards, school leaders could also decide on career nurturing approaches afforded to all staff as part of a long-term investment in keeping their staff and developing a sense of belonging. School leaders can then 'tap the pipeline' (Fink, 2011) in order to nurture, sustain and grow their future leaders through supportive and motivational approaches within their setting.

2.1.4 Relationship bonder and builder

Studies (Gronn, 1999; Oplatka and Tamir 2009; Smith 2010) assert that the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher role is deemed as a social role, which is constantly engaged with internal student, staff and professional relationships. These include the relationships with staff members, parents, students and the Headteach-

er, along with external professionals relating to the development and support of the student. Deputy Headteachers spend a considerable amount of time managing the day-to-day responsibilities and internal relationships in the school, as well as teaching (Oplatka and Tamir, 2009), whilst focusing on supporting the Headteacher (Chagger, 2014).

Deputy Headteachers are encouraged to develop bonding social capital by providing staff support, the building of relationships whilst taking care of administrative duties. The Headteacher, however, seems to focus greatly on the strategic processes, including the external relationships with the community, Governors and the media being of primary concern. These roles and responsibilities reflect differences to how the senior leadership roles are experienced within the school context. Lawley (1988, p. 32) acknowledges that the Deputy Headship role is not charismatic and constantly 'in the limelight' and encourages Deputy Headteachers to remain school and relationship focused:

'A Deputy attempting to gain individual glory in pursuit of ambition could only achieve it at the expense of wasting opportunities to learn about and contribute to group activity in the school. The teamwork really needed to create good schools is built up as part of a common commitment to improving the school as an educational environment and this is only achieved within an atmosphere of sincerity and trust.'

Ryan *et al.* (1994) suggested that learner academic motivation and self-esteem can be greatly improved upon through having positive relationships with staff members reflecting bonding social capital characteristics. Research about teacher-student relationships has shown that senior leadership roles are essential for building the school community particularly in the areas of building cohesion and providing family support. These partnerships have helped teachers to develop positive relationships, especially in diverse school contexts where minority learners are the majority student group (Flynn and Nolan, 2008; Schechter and Sherri, 2008; Murray, 2009).

2.1.5 Personal attributes

The characteristics and leadership approaches of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers seem to be at times in contrast to the Headteacher role, which is perceived as strategic and externally accountable, whereas the Deputy and Assistant Headship role is one of school maintenance and support. Different management and leadership skills are therefore needed in school leadership and management roles (Smith, 2011). Bush (2011) refers to studies in school leadership preparation and highlights the management skills and leadership preparation needed for a teacher to enter into school management. The research reflects how the skills and attributes acquired by leaders change as new leadership roles (e.g. Assistant, Deputy Headship and Headship) are undertaken. Therefore, the role status, how the role is enacted and perceived indicates that the attributes and experience needed for Headship are different to that of Deputy Headship (Oplatka and Tamir, 2009).

As well as the Deputy Headteacher having to deal with a range of roles and responsibilities in different school settings, the question is then asked about the type of character needed to manage the multiple responsibilities in different schools. Owen *et al.* (1983) undertook an interesting study into the roles that were given to Deputy Headteachers and the different 'types' of Deputy Headship teachers needed to fill those roles (see Table 2). An investigation of 30 secondary Deputy Headship posts revealed that specific and non-specific duties were advertised, with some that leaned towards a particular person or school concern. Owen *et al.* (1983) refer to a Deputy Headteacher 'identikit' and outline a variety of Deputy Headteacher types that might be required for specific roles in the school.

A role breakdown of the Deputy Headteacher types, which potential Deputy Headteachers might be recruited for, is presented and reflects the various school responsibilities and roles. Although the Deputy Headteacher might be recruited to address a specific need in the school (e.g. to maintain services and systems and timetabling – OILER), the Deputy Headteacher might find themselves going in and out of these role types to manage different school situations at different times. Previously, Owen *et al.* (1983, p. 56) asked the following question with regards to the Deputy Headteacher role:

'Who is the Deputy Head serving and what freedom does he have to negotiate and develop... and what is he negotiating and developing? Is he task orientated; is that the source of his feelings of esteem and

worth, or is he the setting of the ethos through an infectious enthusiasm that others cannot but fail to respond to – a juggler who constantly keeps the plates spinning, who inspires and pushes colleagues through their current boundaries?’

Table 2 Deputy Headteacher Characteristics

(Adapted from Owen et al., 1983)

Deputy Headteacher Type	Characteristics
Oiler	The nuts and bolts Deputy
Linker	Is the Deputy who liaises with outside agencies
Ewo	The Deputy who has the staff and pupil welfare at heart
Auntie or Uncle	Who has broad shoulders and an open door (probationers, girls' welfare)
The Front Man or Front Woman	Responds to the tone and environment of the school
Chameleon	Responds to the tone and environment of the school
Teamster	Operates as part of a team and believes totally in the exclusive brethren of senior management
Action Man	The innovator, the ideas person initiating change
Buffer	Who acts as a shield for "the boss" and is a secondary target for the staff
Knight	In white satin and a shining example to all

Owen *et al.* (1983) highlight elements of the professional limitations that Deputy Headteachers experience with regards to the freedom to exercise key decisions within the Deputy Headship role. The role could be perceived as linear, restrictive and without a clear career structure which could forward problems if the desire is to move up the hierarchical ladder to Headship. Deputy Headteachers would have to accept that their position is to carry out the Headteacher's vision and to apply a flexible approach to the role, thus highlighting the high level of interpersonal, negotiating and bonding skills required in Deputy Headship. Concerns, however still exist with regards to the professional identity and limitations within the Deputy Headship role (Harvey, 1994).

A recent study into the careers of female Deputy Headteachers has shed interesting light on the lived experiences of Deputy Headteachers and their perspectives of Headship. Guihen (2017) suggests three types of Deputy Headteachers after undertaking an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis study using Archer's Theory of Reflexivity with female Deputy Headteachers:

1. The autonomous potential aspirant or the strategic and decisive
2. The meta-reflexive potential aspirant or values-oriented professional
3. The communicative potential aspirant or person-centred educator

Guihen's (2017) study builds on previous studies (Oplata and Tamir, 2009; Smith, 2010) and reflects the different ways that agency is used and the multifaceted perspectives and experiences within the female teaching career which can impact upon the way the Headship role is perceived and the decision to aspire to Headship.

2.1.6 A changing focus of leadership in schools: from transactional to transformational leadership?

Transactional leadership is also referred to as instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2003). It is a top-down leadership model which involves forwarding directives and monitoring them over time during the transaction. Individuals are then rewarded or reprimanded depending on the performance or result of the task (Bass, 1990; Bass and Avolio, 1994; Bass, 1997). The Headteacher, mostly charismatic in nature and approach, would have the responsibility of ensuring that staff are aware of the mission and goals of the school, and student progress would be tightly managed under a climate that reflected the school mission (Hallinger, 2003).

Transformational leadership is a model that has been associated with building capacity in the organisation by using 'bottom up' practices. It has been likened to distributed leadership (Hallinger, 2003), which focuses on establishing and building on a shared vision through encouraging, supportive and motivational approaches. This leadership model is designed to move away from instructional and controlling practices, but is based on role modelling, support, rewards and building a positive school

climate (Leithwood *et al.*, 1998). In the long term, transformational leadership aims to help the followers to develop their own meaningfulness in their role, which would then build trust, intrinsic motivation and value in the work that is undertaken.

The reality of implementing transformative practices will undoubtedly cause tensions and role conflict. For example, performance related pay (PRP) is a reward-based directive based on the overall performance and achievement of the school. The Headteacher would be appraised by the school governing body and an external school advisor. Focusing on school performance may encourage use of a transactional approach. This approach endorses the tight monitoring of outcomes during the transaction and Headteachers and senior management are either rewarded or reprimanded on their performance. This approach can result in a breakdown in school relationships and hostility within the workplace if the school results do not meet expectations and targets (Karakitapoglu-Aygun and Gumusluoglu, 2013). The school performances are then publicly displayed in the form of league tables and OFSTED results.

Unfortunately, school performance results omit the transformational practices that could be positively impacting on the school community. The challenge of the Headteacher is to decide upon which leadership approach is appropriate to use when considering Government expectations, external pressures, their own personality traits and the context of the school (Smith and Bell, 2011). Furthermore, there are realistic limitations on how the Headteacher can manage the day-to-day running

of the school as well as maintaining internal and external relationships. Therefore, a high level of trust and commitment is needed from the senior leadership team. Also, a shift towards reflecting a moral purpose through equity focused models based on empathy and understanding could make the difference to student outcomes' professional and community relationships (Leithwood, 1994). Transformative, distributed and system leadership approaches, with embedded social justice and social capital practices, are collaborative and bonding models which require the Headteacher to demonstrate a high commitment to staff and stakeholder relationships (West-Burnham, 2010).

2.2 Implications for Headteachers

2.2.1 Workload

Workload autonomy and accountability are continued areas of concern for school leadership (ATL, 2015, DfE, 2017). The Headship role is one of high status in the education system and admired by many (Smith, 2011). It signifies the pinnacle of an educator's career journey and reflects the skills, experience and resilience to lead and govern the direction of a school. This incentivised role (increased salary, national recognition on league tables and OFSTED ratings, opportunities to become a leading school) is one that is driven by school and staff performance and has been deemed as an attractor of the role (Webb and Vulliamy, 1996; Wilson *et al.*, 2006).

The perception of the Headship role seems to have evolved from being deemed as a very special and admired role (Ribbins and Marland, 1994; Ribbins, 1997) to the importance of being in a position of making a difference to the lives of children and young people (Oplatka and Tamir, 2009; Smith, 2010; Smith, 2011). Alternately, the portrayal of Headship and the expectations that are attached to it could be deemed as unattractive. The Headteacher's role is one that is associated with constant pressures and is a role that is not becoming any easier (Smith, 2011; Earley and Bubb, 2013). After conducting a small-scale qualitative study of Headteacher days derived from observation, Earley and Bubb (2013) refer to the Headship role as being fast paced and unyielding with continued pressures to raise standards. The Headteacher would have to develop the skills to manage both the professional, personal demands of school and home life.

Continued changes in role and school expectations could also result in professional and personal tensions pertaining to how the Headteacher is expected to manage the internal, external and personal workloads as they face expanding government and local expectations. Some Headteachers accounts have expressed loneliness, a lack of leadership knowledge and role direction, combined with a top down approach (Tahir *et al.*, 2015; 2017). Relentless demands could also impact upon the work-life balance and introduce stress-related illnesses and top down leadership processes (Brackenbliry, 1983; Chaplain, 1995; 2001; Borg *et al.*, 2006).

Chaplain (1995; 2001) referred to the national study of occupational stress among Headteachers in the UK carried out by Cooper and Kelly (1993). The study included 36 schools and the perspectives in terms of job satisfaction and stress were examined. The report identified areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction “stressors” within the Primary Headship role. The personal feelings of the Primary Headteachers were also incorporated to reflect the emotional experiences within the role. The study concluded that the main stress sources for Headteachers at that time were associated with school structures and interpersonal relationships. Similarly, Borg *et al.* (2006) studied the factors contributing to occupational stress amongst primary school teachers in 81 state primary schools. They concluded that three sources of stress were linked to: large class sizes, pupils’ poor attitudes towards work, and experiencing difficult classes. Other factors included poor career structure and poor relationships. Teacher stress is a profound problem that must be attended to if the quality and productivity of education is not to be undermined.

Further studies into work-related stress associated to Headteachers (Phillips *et al.*, 2007) found that the level of stress varies from school to school and the studies of Headteachers reflected a work commitment that was above average. Work-life balance and role overload were key contributors to stress amongst most of the 290 Headteacher and Principals that were surveyed. These studies also highlighted that, although the Headteacher role can be extremely stressful, it can also be experienced as being very exciting, stimulating and fulfilling (Ribbins and Marland, 1994). Furthermore, it reflects the complexities associated with perceptions of stress, and personal experiences of stress, within the workplace.

Policy changes for schools will undoubtedly introduce relational, cultural and personal tensions, and Headteachers may regularly find themselves in a position where choice is not an option concerning some policies and reforms. To be prepared to lead schools into the twenty-first century, the Headteacher will need to be equipped with the appropriate leadership, social and cultural skills, and be attuned to changing communities and societal changes. Blasé (1989, p. 398) refers to the concept of 'conformity' (adhering to working conditions and policies, even if they are not in agreement with them) to diplomacy (being honest, straightforward and avoiding covert and manipulative actions), and concluded that Headteacher characteristics and the approach that they use can impact greatly on the 'political orientation' of the school and the teaching staff. New policy changes, reforms and expectations will, therefore, affect how the educational setting is managed in terms of accountability, decision-making processes and leadership approaches used, combined with social and cultural practices.

2.2.2 Implications for the desirable attributes of school leaders

Leadership personality traits and attributes are aspects that should be reflected upon when considering what characteristics make a school leader (Southworth, 1990; Schyns *et al.*, 2011). Contextual constraints mean that, in addition to adhering to Government directives, Headteachers are faced with juggling daily critical events and managing a range of internal and external relationships (Haigh, 1981, Earley and Bubb, 2013). Headteachers should have the character, personality and experi-

ence to manage the foreseen and unforeseen challenges, as well as being both strategic and operational in their thinking and approach in order to lead the school. With regards to the profile of Headship, it has been a role that has been associated with male, white, middle-aged men (Fuller, 2009). The personality traits of these leaders have been linked to strong male leadership characteristics, whereas female attributes have been allocated to more pastoral and caring roles in some cases (Coleman, 2002; Smith, 2011). The portrayal of leadership within education will be constantly challenged in order to secure new future leaders for 21st century teaching.

Social cognitive theory plays an important part when considering the leadership styles, approaches and personality traits of leaders (Bandura (1986). Self-efficacy is an attribute that is essential within leadership. According to Bandura (1997, p. 3), self-efficacy is defined as:

'Beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments.'

Leadership experiences can affect the belief in one's own capabilities, resulting in fragile or strong perceptions of self. Knock-backs or perceived failures in the role could impact on whether leaders forward themselves for more challenging roles due to their previous experiences. Bandura (1997, p. 385) defined these individuals as

having 'shaky efficacy beliefs' instead of 'resilient self-efficacy beliefs' which will allow the leader to thrive and survive during times of adversity. Drawing on these concepts, Machida and Schaubroeck (2011) advocate the importance of professional mentoring and regular career support as a way of building leadership capacity and performance in the workplace. This allows potential leaders to gain the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and to build different aspects of self-efficacy during their careers. Machida and Schaubroeck (2011) refer to how coping with career experiences and self-efficacy impact upon how the career is perceived. They refer to:

- Preparatory self-efficacy (being ready for and being able to rehearse situational responses)
- Efficacy spirals (understanding links between increasing and decreasing variables, for example the impact of performance and self-efficacy)
- Learning self-efficacy (mastery of tasks through previous experience) and resilient self-efficacy (self-regulation and development of resilience through challenges)

Studies into leadership and career development in the form of mentoring and coaching have highlighted how they can impact on the confidence of the individual in the role and also when they are climbing the career ladder (Jones, 1999; Rhodes and Brundrett, 2008; Tahir et. al., 2015).

2.2.3 Factors affecting applications for Headship

The NCTL (2009) conducted studies with NPQH graduates about intrinsic motivation and attractors for aspirant Headteachers, with succession planning being a significant government focus. A range of key attractors and key deterrents were collated from the candidates that had crossed the career bridge into the “heads in waiting” stage, characterised by Hayes (2005) as being in the “ambitious Deputy” cohort. The findings from the NCTL (2009) revealed that the character of the NPQH graduates enjoyed non-routine and dynamism within the role along with autonomy, vocation and vision fostering. Administration, policies, school standards, managing relationships and stress were amongst the key de-motivating factors (see Table 3).

The Head would serve to be a leader and a support system for the senior leaders, as well as having the responsibility of selecting the appropriate team, thus growing, nurturing and developing potential future leaders. This means that the Headteacher must have the skills to identify talent and commit the time, finances and resources to supporting senior leaders in their own leadership journey.

*Table 3 Factors that motivate and de-motivate NPQH Graduates
(Adapted from the NCTL, 2009)*

Most significant motivating factors (in rank order)	Most significant de-motivating factors (in rank order)
Role is dynamic and not routine	Administrative demands
Building shared values	Inspection and measures of accountability e.g. OFSTED
Collegiality and teamwork	Low status and negative media image of the profession
Job satisfaction and sense of personal achievement	Changes in policy
Changing social culture	External interferences (e.g. local authorities, DCSF)
Maintaining high standards	Problems with recruitment and retention
Sense of vocation	Stress
Professional autonomy and implementing own vision	Financial responsibilities
Passionate belief in the role	Less contact with pupils

The de-motivating factors in Table 3 reflect the administration challenges and lack of contact with the students. The NCTL (2009) also identified further deterrents relating to the recruitment process, as set out below:

- Uncertainty about the type of interview questions used at Headship interview
- A perception that a lack of budget and finance experience was holding them back
- A lack of confidence that affected their overall performance

From the survey regarding the potential barriers to Headship, many females expressed concerns experienced after a career break along with the arrangement of childcare responsibilities. The NCTL studies have highlighted the National, Local Education Authority, School Governors and Headship responsibilities towards succession planning in order to address the:

- Lack of Deputy and Assistant Headship confidence (which could also be perceived as a lack of ambition)
- Lack of experience of different school structures and cultures (when applying for Headship roles in other schools)
- Lack of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) investment along with a clear career structure

This research reflects the challenges experienced within the 'Heads in waiting stage' and the personal and career issues that could affect the aspirations to Headship.

2.3 Deputy and Assistant Headship: The Context

The Deputy Headship role has experienced many changes over the years under different political parties. With reference to the Education Act (No 2) 1986, Lawley (1988) refers to Section 39, which outlines some of the key responsibilities assigned to the Deputy Headship role which are mainly associated to school performance and relationships. Due to the continual extensive changes within the Headship role, the Assistant Headteacher role was created in September 2000 to support the growing demands placed upon both the Deputy and Headteacher within secondary schools. These roles and responsibilities continue to evolve in line with the changes made to the Headship role and the societal and governmental demands that have been placed on schools. These changes have resulted in role tensions, role ambiguity and a high level of administrative tasks with limited opportunities for training (Muji and Harris, 2003).

Matthews and Tong (1982) acknowledged the ultimate power that the Headteacher has over the decisions made by the Deputy Headteacher. Therefore, decision-making between the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher could also become problematic, depending on the Headteacher's objectives and plans. They also highlight the lack of role clarity, once again, which could cloud the aspirations, and per-

sonal goals of Deputy Headteachers. Political influences, therefore, continue to play a significant part in how the senior leader roles are actualised, especially concerning changes in legislation which are non-negotiable.

According to Cranston *et al.* (2004, p. 228):

'The Assistant Headship role has been described as encompassing traditional and restricted sets of administrative, managerial and custodial responsibilities.'

The Deputy and Assistant Headteacher roles have therefore become essential roles that 'bridge the gap' of the leadership hierarchy within the secondary school structure. Unfortunately, there is still a dearth of research into Deputy and Assistant Headship pertaining to the role and the impact within the school context.

2.3.1 Supporting the Headteacher

Matthews and Tong (1982) provided an in-depth account of the evolution of the Deputy Headship role and refer to the Deputy Headship as the closest and most trusted position to the Headteacher. In the same vein, Stone (1986) refers to this role as an all-round genius one due to the range of responsibilities that encompass

it. Likewise, Lawley, (1988) and Hughes, (1999) referred to this complementary role as one that must match the Headteacher's attributes, traits and vision in order to successfully meet the school's objectives. However, (Ribbins, 1997) described the Deputy Headship role as 'invisible' in comparison to the Headship role, which is constantly in the limelight or perceived as the pinnacle of a teacher's career. When considering the relationship between the Deputy Headteacher and the Headteacher, Doring (1993, p. 19) reflected on the importance of them having a strong relationship and building strong mutual relationships at senior management level:

'The relationship between the Deputy and the Principal is crucial. If a good working relationship exists between the two, tasks will be completed with little interpersonal tension. If one of the duo rejects or is unaccepting of the other, then tension and stress are likely.'

According to Jayne (1996), a strong relationship between the Deputy, Assistant Headteacher and the Headteacher will support the Headteacher to effectively manage the high level of responsibilities and pressures within the school. The challenge, however, exists when a supporting Deputy or Assistant Headteacher wants to aspire to Headship. One would have to question how the Headteacher would manage supporting the aspiring senior leader whilst expecting the Deputy Headship role to be maintained. The focus on meeting the day-to-day demands of the role, supporting the Headteacher and investing time into becoming a prospective Head, are three important strands that need to be considered by the Headteacher (West, 1992).

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher roles and responsibilities sometimes overlap, which can result in a lack of role clarity and tensions within the role (Paisey and Spackman, 1982; Lawley, 1988; Harvey, 1994; Cranston *et al.*, 2004; Cranston, 2007). It could also be argued that the terms 'Assistant' and 'Deputy' imply a subordinate, relational and dependent role to another individual, and may not fully acknowledge the qualifications, expertise and experience held by those in such positions (Cranston *et al.*, 2004, p. 230).

2.3.2 Heads in waiting

The Deputy and Assistant Headteachers may not reach Headship due to a lack of Headship opportunities in the locality, a lack of experience and other circumstances. Therefore, it is important for the aspiring Headteacher to self-manage their career steps to Headship. Lawley (1988) addresses the 'Heads in waiting stage' and encourages Deputy Headteachers to be responsible for their personal development towards Headship by:

- Implementing carefully considered new initiatives
- Secondments with particular foci
- Observations and visits to other schools
- Joining another school's senior management team to gain experience of different Headship styles

These collaborative approaches are useful and beneficial only if the school has the resources to manage the personal development of the senior leader, otherwise an unstructured career pathway can affect career progress (Harvey, 1994). Harvey (1994) proposed an emancipatory approach in creating ten strategy steps for Deputy Headteachers in New Zealand after highlighting the lack of Primary Deputy Headteachers applying for the Headship post. These strategies were designed to empower and build self-confidence and self-belief alongside the practical day-to-day responsibilities of Deputy Headteachers:

- The Deputy Headteacher defining and having a high awareness of their role
- The Deputy Headteacher being responsible for their own professional development within their career journey
- The building and maintaining of positive relationships
- Developing forums or networks to share experiences within the role

On the journey to becoming a Headteacher, Donnelly (1999, p. 170) acknowledged the importance of self-development for a Deputy Headteacher within a five-year period and discusses some of the realities concerning Headship. Donnelly (1999) claimed:

‘As a classroom teacher, a Head of department or a Deputy Head, you can be supported to do your job; as a Head you are sometimes in the front line on your own, and any shortcomings you have will be

apparent to everyone (including yourself). To step back from Headship because you feel you are not up to the job is still not culturally accepted.'

Donnelly (1999, p. 171) also examined the Deputy Headship role and the decision-making process regarding Headship:

'It is important that you consider your decision to be a Deputy Head to be a conscious one rather than a failure to get a Headship. In any case, if some schools have two or even three deputies, there is a logic that suggests that fewer than half may become Heads.'

Hayes (2005) conducted a small-scale study about Deputy and Assistant Headteachers and their interest in Headship. The study took place in the borough of Bromley, England, over a 12-week period and interviews with 11 primary Headteachers were undertaken, along with a short survey followed by two case studies. The findings revealed that 25% of the 87 Deputy and Assistant Headteachers interviewed were actively considering the Headship role and 37% had made the decision that Headship was not in their career plan. Hayes (2005) identified a range of reasons why Headship was not a choice at the time, including age, family commitments and a negative perception of the Headship role. The categorisation of the ambitious and career Deputy was concluded from the study. Additional career support, improving the perception and portrayal of Headship, meaningful role responsi-

bility and a commitment to supporting the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in their careers were some of the recommendations forwarded by Hayes (2005). Other studies (Ivor, 2001; Oplatka and Tamir, 2009; Smith, 2010; Smith, 2011; Chard, 2013; Chagger, 2014; Guihen, 2017) have discussed how the impact of family life, personal commitments and age have affected the decisions made in their career journeys.

The challenges that Deputy Headteachers experience in their role is also reflected in studies conducted by Kerry (2000; 2005), where Deputy Headteachers have had to deal with critical issues that they were not always prepared for. These issues included dealing with violence and child abuse cases without the relevant training. Likewise, Barnett *et al.* (2012) reported on workload pressures, time management of a variety of unexpected tasks, and relationships with staff and parents as being challenges within the role which could also halt the professional development of the senior leader. However, some studies have identified the positive aspects of Deputy Headship and the benefits of staying in the role, which far outweigh the decision to aspire to Headship, albeit there being frustrations within the role (Hayes, 2005; Oplatka and Tamir, 2009; Smith, 2010; 2011). With regards to the lack of experience concerning Headship, Simkins *et al.* (2009, p. 243) assert that:

'However, many deputies often feel they lack strategic experience and the role destination of Headship can seem to promise only work intensification that might outweigh advantages of enhanced power and autonomy.'

Draper and McMichael (1998) explored the challenges associated with the road to Headship and commonly refer to the role as an isolated and highly accountable position of the head (Buckley, 1985, p. 161). Their study focused on the Lothian Region in Scotland and examines Deputy Headteacher perceptions of the Headship role. The following four areas were explored and would be needed to prepare the future Headteacher for their next steps:

- Opportunities for the familiarisation with the Headteacher role
- Responsibility and role comparison with the Headship role
- Career plan and the application for Headship
- Compelling motives and greatest deterrents

Opportunities for Deputy Headteachers to work alongside their Headteachers were not available and many were used to distributing leadership tasks for the Head (Draper and McMichael, 1998). Informal career planning meetings were more regular than formal career planning meetings and 89.2% were reported to have attended

management courses. With regards to the Deputy Headteacher's salary, the Headteacher's salary was not a motivator or a major attractor for Deputy Headteachers to aspire to Headship (Jayne, 1996; Draper and McMichael, 1998). Evidence suggests that it is also beneficial for new Headteachers to reflect on their Headship and role and to be aware of the potential challenges associated with the perception and experience of the Headship role. This will enable Headteachers to empathise and support the Deputy Headteacher as they aspire to Headship. In reflection, Headship has been described as a sometimes lonely role, especially at the beginning of a Headteacher's career (Tahir *et al.*, 2015).

2.4 Career trajectories of school leaders

2.4.1 Life history and career stages

For the purpose of this study, career models reflecting the stages within the career life course will be drawn upon. Within education, there have been important studies about the career stages of Headteachers, which have given insights into the personal, lived and professional experiences encountered within their roles (Day and Bakioğlu', 1996; Gronn, 1999; and Ribbins, 2003). These studies have proved to be vital when learning and understanding the lives of school leaders.

Gronn (1986) carried out a 13-year study of the life of the Australian Headteacher, the late Sir James Darling. This study included an in-depth sociocultural and historical examination of his life; the methods included numerous interviews with family members and friends, the use of diary notes, speeches, private archives, etc. The research methods allowed Gronn (1986; 1993; 1999) to identify family influences as well as to monitor and make comparisons of the feelings of Sir James Darling over the 13 years. This study heavily informed Gronn's framework for educational leaders (see Figure 1), which included an identification of the macro and the micro influences within an educational leader's life, as well as the character of leaders. Gronn's biographical and psychobiographic studies resulted in a longitudinal framework career model pertaining to the experiences of educational leaders.

With reference to biographical studies in education, Gronn (1999, p. 21) states:

'The most powerful reason why biographies of leaders are worthy of consideration is that they take students of leadership right to the very heart of an argument at the centre of social theory which has undergone a resurgence of interest over the last 15 years or so.'

Ribbins (1997, 2003) conducted some crucial narrative studies into the life journeys, perspectives and views of Headteachers mainly linked to the Headship role in England. According to Ribbins (1997), the Deputy Headship has been 'virtually ignored' (Ribbins, 1997, p. 295) as he explored literature about Deputy Headship from 1964. Ribbins (1997) draws on previous life histories and biographical studies with 34 Headteachers discussing their Deputy Headship experiences in England before their Headship role. Perceptions of the Deputy Headteacher role were also examined, which provided insight into how the Deputy Headteacher role was viewed by the Headteachers. Ribbins (1997) also refers to the lack of autobiographical accounts and journals written about the Deputy Headteacher role over a 25-year period in comparison with what has been written about Headship and encourages further study and analysis into this role.

Several authors have tried to provide a general model of the life histories of educational leaders. However, when utilising general models, it is important for the researcher to continually consider their ethical responsibility in terms of their role and place within the research from a personal, emotional and, in some cases, a political point of view (Goodson *et al.*, 2001). Goodson (1995) also reminds the researcher to adopt an approach that acknowledges the changing contexts (political, social, cultural and historical) within the lives of the educator when utilising these models.

Using Gronn's (1999) framework as a platform for career histories, Ribbins (2003) combined elements from Day and Bakioğlu's model (1996) and presents a comprehensive framework of the leadership journey, defining four alternative career stages and leadership pathways (see Table 4).

Table 4 Career Phases and Stages

(Adapted from Day and Bakioğlu, 1996; Gronn, 1999 and Ribbins, 2003)

A Headteachers Career	A Headteachers Life	A Headteachers life and Career	Headteacher Career Stages
Day and Bakioğlu (1996)	Gronn (1999)	Ribbins (2003)	Earley and Weindling (2007)
	Formation	Formation	Stage 0. Preparation prior to Headship
	Accession	Accession	Stage 1. Entry and encounter (first months) Stage 2. Taking hold (3-12 months) Stage 3. Reshaping (year 2)
Initiation Development Autonomy Disenchantment	Incumbency Initiation Development Autonomy Disenchantment	Incumbency Initiation Development Autonomy Advancement/ Disenchantment	Stage 4. Refinement (years 3-4) Stage 5. Consolidation
	Divestiture	Moving On	Stage 6. Plateau (years 8 and onwards)

Unlike Gronn (1999), Ribbins (2003) redefined incumbency and combines the initiation, development, autonomy and disenchantment or enchantment phases within the incumbency stage. Ribbins (2003) then includes the fourth stage, moving on (divestiture or reinvention) in the development stages. Through a biographical and life histories approach, Ribbins (2003) found that some Headteachers were satisfied with their Headship post and looked forward to moving on with a positive view to continuing their career in education in a different role or moving on to an exciting venture. However, the Headteachers that had encountered stressful and negative experiences had worked reluctantly during the incumbency stage, resulting in a more negative perspective of the role. Ribbins (2003) argued that divestiture does not have to be linked to a negative experience as Gronn (1999) described it. Ribbins (2003, p. 68) states that:

'The disenchanted face the prospect of divestiture while the enchanted can look forward to reinvention.'

Earley and Weindling (2007) presented a six career stages of Headship model (see Table 4) after examining research and a longitudinal study of 220 secondary school Headteachers in England and Wales. The model reflects the key stages and experiences that can happen during the career of the Headteachers. It also assigns approximate timings linked to performance during these stages, inferring that the Headteacher is most effective during the first seven years. During Stage 4 and 5 of the career stages of Headship, the Headteacher shows mastery and confidence in

the role after being accustomed to leading on internal change, implementing government changes, dealing with a range of critical incidents and overseeing a cohort of students (Earley & Weindling, 2007). After this period of time (Year 7), the Headteacher would enter into the Stage 6, where they experience the plateau stage. Earley and Weindling (2007) do mention that these timings are approximate, and variations will exist due to differences in school size and hierarchical structure. They asked whether Headteachers should be appointed under a short-term 5-year contract in order to get the highest performance of school effectiveness. Professional refreshment in terms of giving Headteachers the opportunity to mentor and coach others and working outside the Headship role was also forwarded, as well as a recognition that there is a limited period where schools are deemed as effective under the Headteacher's leadership.

2.4.2 Career Stages and Career Anchors

Research on careers, career anchors and socialisation processes in organisations are significant when reflecting on career journeys and life courses (Hall, 1987; Barth, 1993). Schein (1971) suggested an individual, organisation and career framework highlighting the structures and socialisation processes that occur within organisations. Schein (1971) examined the organisation structures, career stages and transition within the career journeys in American organisations (see Table 5). Concepts referring to how the nature of the individual, the nature of the organisation and the nature of the career interrelate at different stages are also discussed.

Schein (1971) also referred to the individual experiences and socialisation experiences that contribute to someone remaining or leaving an organisation, the influence of the organisation on the individual (acculturation or adult socialisation), and the influence of the individual (innovation), all of which form part of a cyclical process. Schein (1971, p. 404–405) refers to the organisational boundaries and filters in place which allow, or limit, employee movements within the organisation, depending on whether the values of the individual fit into the organisation's needs:

1. Hierarchical boundaries – separate the hierarchical levels from one another (including rank within the organisation, importance, personal characteristics, and attitudes held etc.)
2. Inclusion boundaries – which separate individuals or groups who differ in their degree of centrality (Schein (1971) refers to an 'inner circle' where the filtering mechanism is hard to specify)
3. Functional or departmental boundaries which separate departments, divisions or different functional groupings from one another (individual competencies and the need to develop experiences/skills)

Table 5 Career Phases and Stages Schein (1971)

(Adapted from Schein, 1971)

Basic Stages and Transitions	Statuses or Positions	Psychological and Organizational Processes: Transactions Between Individual and Organization
1. Pre-entry	Aspirant, applicant, rushee	Preparation, education, anticipatory, socialization
Entry (transition)	Entrant, postulant, recruit	Recruitment, rushing, testing, screening, selection, acceptance ("hiring passage through external inclusion boundary, rites of entry; induction and orientation)
2. Basic training, novitiate	Trainee, novice, pledge	Training, indoctrination, socialization, testing of the man by the organization, tentative acceptance into group.
Initiation, first vows (transition)	Initiate, graduate	Passage through first inner inclusion boundary, acceptance as a member and conferring of organizational status, rite of passage and acceptance.
3. First regular assignment	New member	First testing by the man of his own capacity to function; granting of real responsibility (playing for keeps); passage through functional boundary with assignment to specific job or department
Substages		Indoctrination and testing of man by immediate workgroup leading to acceptance or rejection; if accepted, further education and socializing (learning the ropes); preparation for higher status through coaching, seeking visibility, finding sponsors
3a. Learning the job		
3b. Maximum performance		
3c. Becoming obsolete		
3d. Learning new skills etc.		
Promotion or leveling off (transition)		Preparation, testing, passage through hierarchical boundary, rite of passage; may involve passage through functional boundary as well (rotation)
4. Second assignment	Legitimate member (fully accepted)	Processes under No. 3 repeat
Substages	Permanent member	Passage through another inner inclusion boundary
5. Granting of tenure		
Termination and exit (transition)	Old timer, senior citizen	Preparation for exit, cooling the mark out, rites of exit (testimonial dinners, and so on)
6. Post-exit	Alumnus, emeritus, retired	Granting of peripheral status, consultant or senior advisor

The career stage model (Schein, 1971) shares similarities during the incumbency stage or the second assignment, where mastery of the role has been achieved and a levelling-off period occurs within the role (Ribbins, 2003). Schein (1971) refers to the 'granting of tenure' stage, towards the end of the career which involves the entry into another inner inclusion boundary.

The concept of career anchors was first developed by Schein (1978) from a longitudinal study of middle managers and their career decisions over a 10 to 12-year period. According to Schein (1978, p. 128), the individual's self-concept along with how they perceive their personal skills, abilities, values and motivations, in accordance with their career, forms the career anchor. Also, a key principle of a career anchor is the concern or value which the person would not give up, if a choice had to be made. After continued studies in career development and management, Schein suggested eight career anchors that were associated with the behaviours of the individuals examined in 1996 (see Table 6). The identification of career anchors would involve the candidates completing a carefully constructed Career Anchor Survey. However, through discussion and career history interviews, individual preferences can be further investigated.

Table 6 Career Anchors

(Adapted from Schein, 1978; 1996)

Career Anchor	Behaviour	Career Anchor	Behaviour
Technical/ Functional Competence (TF)	The individual takes great pleasure in the work content. Likes to develop skills and expertise.	Autonomy and Independence (AI)	This individual enjoys controlling their own schedule, work pace and tasks.
Managerial Competence (MC)	The individual enjoys using his/her interpersonal skills to lead others in working towards goals. Desire for power and achievement.	Service and Dedication to a cause (SD)	The individual desires to find a balance between their personal values and beliefs and work.
Security and Stability (SS)	Job security is a primary concern along with having a long-term relationship with the organisation. Stability is key	Pure Challenge (PC)	The individual enjoys focusing on and overcoming challenges.
Entrepreneurial Creativity (EC)	The individual has an innate desire to create something that is inspired by them.	Lifestyle (LS)	The individual seeks to achieve a balance between the job and the desired lifestyle.

Understanding career anchor concepts within career theory is just one way of learning about and understanding the motivations within the career trajectories of individuals. However, there are still questions about how many career anchors exist (Feldman and Bolino, 1996), along with the complexities between career anchors and career trajectories (Gubler *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, for the purpose of this study it is assumed that individuals may lean towards a particular or dominant career anchor compared to others, which may then inform their chosen career path (Schein, 1978; 1996). These concepts are often used in career counselling and guidance for organisations as an aide in understanding career patterns and the behaviours of individuals.

Tan and Quek (2001) refer to intrinsic satisfaction (values, autonomy and service within the role) and extrinsic satisfaction (job security) within the role when examining the career anchors of 160 educators in Singapore. These findings contrast with Schein's (1978) assertion that individuals hold one main career anchor; however, the differences in career anchors might reflect the impact of societal, lifestyle changes and organisational factors, which could have changed the prioritisation of career anchors at that time. Tan and Quek (2001) report that over 30% of the respondents held more than one career anchor, reflecting Feldman and Bolino's (1996) assertions and the main three dominant career anchors were orientated towards lifestyle, service and security. For future studies, it might also be important to consider the importance of personality within the role and whether there is an association with career anchors.

When we consider the personality type of a Headteacher in comparison to a Deputy Headteacher, differences might be evidenced due to the attitudes towards risk, job security, drive and personal ambition. The Deputy Headteacher's role is not in the limelight and is mainly concerned with the internal relationships within the school. James and Whiting (1998) categorised Deputy Headteachers depending on where they were in their career journey. Drawing on Tausky and Dubin's (1965, p. 10) 'career anchorage perspective', James and Whiting (1998, p. 356) created a typology of 'five distinct career anchorage categories' based on a study of 366 Deputy Headteachers (see Table 7).

Table 7 Career anchorage categories

(Adapted from James and Whiting, 1998)

Active aspirants:	Deputy Head teachers who are currently actively seeking Headship posts.
Potential aspirants:	Deputy Head teachers who have not yet applied for Headship but envisage doing so in the future.
Unpredictable:	Deputy Head teachers who have applied for Headship in the past but are unsure if they will continue to do so.
Settlers:	Deputy Head teachers who have never applied for Headship and do not envisage doing so in the future.
Unavailed aspirants:	Deputy Head teachers who have applied for Headship in the past and will not do so in the future.

Tauskey and Dublin's (1965) tentative study proposed two main career anchorage perspectives that are based on the internal personal views and perception of success. These views were associated with the family upbringing (including cultural, social and educational influences) and their impact on the career aspirations of the participants. Tausky and Dubin (1965) assert that, if the worker has spent a lengthy period of time in education, then upward career advancement and aspiration will be evident, whereas if the worker has spent a minimum amount of time in college education, then they are less likely to aspire and move to a higher rank or position in the work place.

Tausky and Dubin (1965) offered a perspective towards some aspects of career perceptions and influences. However, they acknowledged that further study would be needed with reference to the 'ambivalent group' (the group who were unsure about their career). Also, this study was conducted with only males in an occupation setting, which limits other genders and cultural experiences. Nevertheless, insights can be drawn from this study in the search for a deeper understanding of individual influences and drivers within the career journey. James and Whiting (1998) revealed that less than half of the respondents desired Headship at that time due to the role demands of Headship, the changing role of Headship, personal commitments and management development issues. Studies undertaken into the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher role continue to reveal interesting and problematic elements within the career journeys of leaders. The findings from Oplatka and Tamir (2009) and Smith (2010) are aligned to this study.

2.4.3 Career Plateauing

Career plateauing is a state of stress or distress in the role due to an inability to change a situation. This could be associated with not being able to move up the hierarchical ladder, the lack of job opportunities within the organisation, and the lack of ability or personal skills to carry out a high-level role (Elsass and Ralston, 1989). Stoner *et al.* (1980) identified two types of plateauing: organisational plateauing (the person is able, but there are no higher-level positions available), and personal plateauing (the person lacks the ability or aspiration for higher level jobs).

Tremblay *et al.* (1995) referred to the objective plateau stage (measured by the amount of years in the same role, or since the last promotion) and the subjective career plateau stage (measured by the expected time before the next career move or promotion) and infer that, if the individual has been in the career plateau stage (beyond five years in a senior position), then their intention to quit the role decreases, indicating levels of role satisfaction. These findings provide an alternative view of why some employees want to stay in their role instead of going up the career ladder. In recognising how stress can contribute to career plateauing, Elsass and Ralston (1989) forward a stress cycle model that addresses the impact of stress and the levels of difficulties experienced in the role, including depression and guilt, when trying to cope with a situation over time. It is, therefore, important to consider how the life history, career stage, experiences or phase of the Deputy or Assistant

Headteacher, combined with political and societal changes, could potentially introduce signs of career plateauing.

2.5 Career and whole life contexts

Considering the increase in responsibilities and government demands, senior leaders will experience stress at distinct phases in their careers, which could impact upon the personal lives and any hope of an adequate work-life balance. According to (Sorenson, 2007, p.12):

'Stress is a condition of twenty-first-century education that continues to increase as more accountability standards and new policy initiatives are introduced.'

Research by Draper and McMichael (2003) and Oplatka and Tamir (2009) confirmed that having a sound quality of life was one of the considerations that took precedence over seeking the Headship position. Gender differences have been identified with regards to the personal sacrifices and family considerations when considering advancement within the role (Jayne, 1995; Oplatka and Tamir, 2009; Smith, 2010; Chagger, 2014). Furthermore, family considerations, especially for female senior leaders, reflect both the emotional and physical decisions that many female senior leaders must make, whereas significantly fewer considerations were

identified in male senior leaders when considering their personal lives and advancement (Chard, 2013).

Smith (2010), drawing on her own experiences within secondary education, examined the factors affecting the career decisions made within the career journeys of 40 female teachers at various levels. This study identified factors that affect the decision-making process in an educator's career journey, as well highlighting personal and external barriers experienced in careers. Although the study focused only on the views and perspectives of female teachers, it revealed that the personal issues regarding children and the family, along with the perspectives on the culture of the management structure, had a direct impact on the career decisions made for some of the participants, including the rejection of Headship. Smith (2010, p. 533) challenges the way that Headship is portrayed and calls for a more nurturing and sensitive representation of Headship:

'It is reasonable to assume that were the caring, agentic view of Headship, as conveyed in the Headteachers' narratives, to replace more predominant images of school leadership, more women might be encouraged to aspire to Headship.'

Smith (2010) concluded that 28 out of the 30 female teachers interviewed did not see Headship as an option, although their perspectives were of optimism and determination. Driven by their beliefs and values, the Headteachers interviewed in the study saw themselves as agents of change, responsible for implementing improvements to the students and the school community. These findings once again raise the question about the type of character needed for Deputy and Assistant Headteachers to enter the Headship role.

2.5.1 Barriers to progression

Motivators and barriers to career success or moving up the hierarchical ladder are different for all individuals. However, there are some physical barriers that have affected the progression for some potential educational leaders, who display difference through class, race, gender, ethnicity and sexuality. Regional variations have shown that slow trends of improvement are being made with, and the recruitment of, minority groups into more senior positions (Lumby and Coleman, 2007; Fuller, 2009).

Discrimination is defined as *'the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex'* (Oxford Dictionary).

Both narrative and controlled studies into perceived discrimination have been able to identify some of the physical, emotional and 'unseen' effects that discrimination can have on the individual and how they view their role. Within the education system, discrimination seems to manifest itself in many ways; however, it is normally a court of law that would openly confirm whether discrimination has taken place. Groups that do not fit into the normal stereotype of being senior leader or Headteacher might experience a form of discrimination within the career journey (Powney *et al.*, 2003). According to Bush (2011, p. 789):

'Such features combine to create an 'identity' and may lead certain leaders not to pursue promotion to the Principalship because their identity does not 'fit' the perceived requirements in the relevant context.'

Gender studies within education have now become a relevant voice, that continues to serve as a platform in providing valuable perspectives and insight into the complexities associated with gender and unfair treatment in the workplace (Powney *et al.*, 2003; Smith 2011). Life history approaches have proved to be beneficial when portraying and representing the overlooked and unheard voices in society when conducting sociological studies and minority group perspectives (Goodson *et al.*, 2001).

According to Blackmore and Kenway, (1993, p. 27):

'Historically, the consolidation of male hegemony in administration is also connected to the coincidence of the expansion of bureaucratic organizations in education, the feminization of the occupation, and the emergence of teaching as a 'semi profession'. Gender, therefore, cannot be separated from the ways in which children are taught, schools have been organised, and curricula have been shaped.'

Research identifying the factors influencing the career choices and development of women teachers in the UK (Moreau *et al.*, 2005) identified the following gender discriminatory experiences within education that were being reflected directly or indirectly (age, religion and marital status):

- Work-life balance
- Marital breakdown
- Pay gap between men and women
- Under-representation of females in school management positions
- Lack of family support with regards to working practices and benefits to aide career development
- Lack of interview panel confidence

Coleman (2002) refers to previous studies where references to the glass ceiling glass walls and sticky walls are used to describe how females are being prevented from moving up the career ladder. These studies were further supported by studies undertaken by Moreau *et al.* (2005) and Lumby and Coleman (2007) who referred to the challenges of role progression for certain groups. In recent studies, Fuller (2009) investigated the experiences of male and female Headteachers in Birmingham and discovered a thriving pool of women Headteachers. With reference to the barriers to Headship, Fuller (2009) stated that women Headteachers interviewed in Birmingham had experienced direct and indirect forms of discrimination during the selection process and amongst their peers in the workplace.

Fuller (2009, p. 30) further stated that:

'Women and men Headteachers in Birmingham have very different experiences of balancing their private and professional lives.'

However, Colman (2002) refers to the lifestyle challenges that many female school leaders must manage, especially after a divorce or being the main caregiver for a child or elderly parent, which indicates the immensity of the decisions that female school leaders must make within their career. This study concurs with Chard (2013), who concluded in the study of three male school leaders that there was a minimal negative impact on the male career journeys with regards to aspiring for promotion, and that their wives or partners played a significant part in caring for the children

and/or sacrificing their careers for the sake of their partners. These studies highlight the cultural and regional differences concerning family and personal commitments with regards to Headship, female leadership roles and the aspiration to Headship. The commonality of these issues is also drawn from international studies (Wilson *et al.*, 2006; Oplatka and Tamir, 2009; Butt *et al.*, 2010; Smith, 2011).

Ethnic minority recruitment in the England education system is a significant area that has attracted concern and further research (Bush *et al.*, 2006; Campbell-Stephens, 2009; Boyle and Charles, 2010). Wilkins and Lall (2011, p. 368) remind us of the continued challenges faced by Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) teachers and minimal reform in addressing the shortage of senior leaders from these backgrounds:

'A large number of studies of the careers of BAME teachers in England have been carried out in recent decades, and despite the widespread attention to race equality issues in education, and the significant legislative changes seen in this period, in practice it appears that change has been minimal.'

Past and current research confirms a range of discriminatory situations within education, confirming the findings of examples of institutional racist practices. The findings cause concern because of the many examples of BAME employees experiencing a block in their career paths (Bush *et al.*, 2006; Marley, 2010; Howson, 2011).

There is an important need now for customised educational leadership programmes to nurture and develop future BAME leaders for twenty-first-century teaching (Ogunbawo, 2012). The Investing in Diversity Program is an example of a tailored leadership programme in London for BAME future leaders that has yielded successful results, in that a high percentage of BAME course candidates had secured employment in a senior leadership role after the programme.

Ageism can be exercised within the workplace, manifesting itself within the management structure unconsciously (Malinen and Johnston, 2013). It is, therefore, essential for managers to reflect on their own perceptions and values about how they perceive their staff. For example, managers can harbour negative stereotypical thoughts about older workers that are subtle or unconscious, yet these thoughts could affect how they think and communicate with their workers. The result can lead to discrimination against older workers during the selection and recruitment process, as well as older staff not being selected for training, or are targeted for layoffs. Thus, although the influence may be subtle, the cause may be age stereotypes, while the effect will be discrimination (Posthuma and Campion, 2009).

Age can be a factor that has disadvantaged some teachers within their educational career progression (Wilson, *et al.*, 2006; Earley *et al.*, 2009) and evidence of age discrimination and the lack of the retention of older teachers remains to be a source of concern (Redman and Snape, 2002). Nelson (2005, p. 214) discusses the negative stereotypes linked to age and refers to societal negative attitudes, which can

then infiltrate into the workplace. Therefore, older teachers may feel alienated within the role as well as experience 'strained' relationships:

'As we grow up, we learn that being good means being protected (parental approval and protection). Therefore, self-esteem becomes an anxiety buffer in that it helps people deny their mortality. Because older people tend to be associated with death, younger persons may adopt ageist attitudes and behaviours to distance themselves from older people.'

An article by Coughlan (2010) reported Chris Keates' (NASUWT) findings that support Nelson's (2005) assertions and referred to older teachers feeling and being marginalised and discriminated against because of their age. However, drawing on an alternative perspective, Posthuma and Campion (2009) refuted many of the negative stereotypes associated with older staff members and argue that older staff members are dependable, highly skilled with transferable life experiences and have other positive factors linked to old age. Drawing on data from psychological therapists, literature and previous research, Nelson (2005, p. 218) further warns of the importance of age-sensitivity and prejudice that can take place in all walks of life:

'As the boomers become "senior citizens," society must be prepared to accommodate the enormous transformation of its complexion.'

The research shows that ageism is very difficult to prove, but has been evidenced through statistical evidence, case studies and discussion, and continued literature in this area.

Research on the politics of fit has identified challenges that could affect the aspirational chances of potential leaders. These include the construct of what a school leader is in reflection to the identity and physical characteristics of the candidate along with the values and character traits of the individual. Furthermore, the recruiter's perception and construct of what a school leader is also poses an important consideration that needs to be challenged and reflected on, especially when recruiting new leaders (Tooms *et al.*, 2010). Issues concerning similarity-attraction perspectives (Addi-Raccah, 2006) and homosociability (Blackmore, *et al.*, 2006) in the selection and recruitment stages are of concern when addressing diversity and employing marginalised identities within education.

However, alternate approaches to recruitment and identifying 'best fit' within an organisation that do not involve an identification of the physical person could be a useful and impartial process in the selection and recruitment stages. Testing could have the potential to address the leadership style and leadership outcomes of future

leaders (Grunes *et al.*, 2013). It could also identify personality traits that will contribute to the role, fit in with the organisational needs and enhance the educational environment with the use of psychological testing (Goffin and Rothstien, 1996; McEntire and Greene-Shortridge, 2011).

2.5.2 Career choice and lifestyle

Lifestyle, role duration and career choice can sometimes be the main drivers when deciding whether to go up the hierarchical ladder. Wilson *et al.* (2006) researched the attributes and external factors that were perceived to affect the decision-making processes and, ultimately, the career journey of teachers. Headteacher perspectives were obtained in the study and an extensive postal study was undertaken (2,158 teachers from 62 Local Education Authorities) combined with case studies which revealed that teachers over the age of 45 were not interested in promotion. Other findings referred to career progression being linked to younger teachers along with the teaching career having a 'shelf life'.

Oplatka and Tamir (2009) conducted a research study into Israeli Deputy Headteachers about why they did not want to become Headteachers, albeit that they were viewed as potential aspirants of Headship by their Headteachers. The focus of the study was aimed at examining women Deputy Headteachers' construction of career advancement and retention, as well as promoting the 'female voice' in a traditional society where family life is central to one's identity. The study involved

open interviews with 25 female Deputy Headteachers that refused the Headship preparation programme and any appointment to Headship from their supervisors. The Deputy Headteachers were aged between 40 and 55 years and had been in their roles for 10 to 15 years. They were selected from advantaged and underprivileged schools from different sized schools.

Oplatka and Tamir's (2009) findings revealed that a positive role perception, high job satisfaction and images of Headship contrary to their self-perception ranked highly in their study. This small-scale study provided a 'snapshot' account of the lives and experiences of some of the Deputy Headteachers in Israel. The findings can be used to draw correlations and emerging themes, linked to the experiences and perceptions of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in England. Using only female participants, however, has limited the holistic view of the Deputy Headship experiences in Israel, therefore omitting different influences linked to the reasons why male Deputy Headteachers may not want to enter into Headship. Further study into the male experience of Deputy Headship in Israel could add insights into how the Deputy Headship role is perceived in other countries.

2.5.3 Managing change and emotion in leadership

Change is endemic within education and this has had profound implications for the role of the Headteacher and the nature of Headship in primary schools (Jones, 1999, p. 1). The concept of change could be perceived as a factor that could moti-

vate or demotivate a person's career choice. A change of school setting due to advancement or a new role could also mean adapting to a change of culture, accepting new management 'politics', managing new relationships within a new setting and additional responsibilities which can sometimes be a stressful experience. Some Deputy Headteachers might want to stay in their role for a multiple of reasons. Jones (1999, p. 448) in her interviews with Headteachers reported that:

'It is significant that the heads perceive their deputies as shunning Headship and wishing to remain in their role of Deputy Head.'

Brennan (1987) referred to how the day-to-day demands and the long-term accountability pressures impact upon how the Headteacher can meet the emotional requirements of a school. These demands can ultimately affect staff relationships, the emotional life of the Headteacher on a professional and personal level and which, in turn, impacts upon how the school is led and managed. Donnelly (1999) acknowledged the emotional challenges experienced within the Deputy Headship role. Issues linked to having a lack of confidence, fear of failure and being unable to cope and manage the obstacles presented during the 'Heads in waiting stage' are some of the challenges discussed. There is also a realistic indication that Headship might not be attainable for all Deputy Headteachers within their career journey. Further emotional challenges within the role might be associated to role ambiguity and workload challenges (Muijs and Harris, 2003). In proposing a solution for stress management, Dunham (1994) posits that school teachers and non-teachers can

learn from each other about how to deal with workload pressure within a whole school stress management policy.

Proposing an alternate view, French (1985) drew on the interactional model (Ellis, 1978) which suggests that situations can be viewed in different ways. Therefore, stressful situations might only be perceived as stressful from individuals that experience it that way. French (1985) also referred to how personal belief systems, values and the expectations that one places on oneself can affect the perception of different events. When considering the career journey of educational leaders, it would be important to consider the factors that have shaped the progression of the individual along with the internal expectations of what a leader 'should' and 'ought' to be doing.

The French (1985) study is important because it highlights another side to the decision-making process within the career journey. Personal experiences within the educational role can be associated with positive or negative experiences and, if a Deputy Headteacher has experienced or witnessed more negative experiences within the Headship role, it would seem more likely to deter or affect the aspiration for Headship. Although this study was carried out with Headteacher experiences within the role, similar experiences of role pressures and barriers could be related to Deputy and Assistant Headship roles in an educational context, e.g. work-related stress, emotion-based career decisions, managing complex relationship.

With regards to workload challenges, Gronn and Rawlings-Sanaei (2003) discuss factors that can contribute to leadership disengagement, including the intensification of working experiences and the perception of career and professional identities. Crawford (2007, p. 525) considered the concept of emotional labour, which can affect the way that a role is perceived and experienced. Emotional labour occurs when a person is to be required to stimulate or suppress feelings. In this way, a specific outward appearance is portrayed to produce the required emotional state in others. Crawford (2007) argued that:

‘Without self-regulation, work-related stress is more likely to occur.’

Crawford (2007) referred to emotional labour and examined the effects that emotion can have on leadership and how emotional labour is perceived. Crawford (2007) asserted that Primary Headteachers are emotional beings with the capacity to express and display negative or positive emotion within the school setting. Crawford (2007) highlighted the importance of self-reflection in engaging with personal feelings and emotions as part of professional growth. These roles demand high levels of emotional intelligence to manage a range of expected and unexpected situations (Cliffe, 2011).

2.6 School leadership in Birmingham

2.6.1 Leadership Strategy

Birmingham is a unique city reflecting a cultural and diverse population. The secondary school types in Birmingham range from Voluntary, Community, Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Independent, Faith and Free Schools, to name a few. Each school will be driven by an individual or joint ethos in the case of faith schools, along with a hierarchical leadership structure. The schools range from small-sized schools (295 pupils) to large schools catering for up to 2,300 pupils. Under the current hierarchical structure, all schools will have at least one Deputy and Assistant Headteacher, depending on the size of the school; however, regional variations do exist. Due to the expanding nature of the Headteacher's role, some schools may have up to ten Assistant Headteachers.

The National College for Teaching & Leadership (NCTL) are funding and supporting OFSTED-rated outstanding schools nationally in order to improve school performance and to build partnership alliances with other schools and the local authorities. With this initiative, schools are able to apply to become Teaching Schools, which will then form Teaching School Alliances, where they will be able to work with other schools as a strategic partner. These schools will be able to conduct research, develop, and train new entrants into the teaching profession, support the teaching workforce through CPD courses, and identifying and developing leadership potential

at a local level. These teaching school alliances would then aim to work with other schools to share their knowledge and expertise as a teaching school network. There are currently 686 national teaching schools in England, 80 in the West Midlands and 23 in Birmingham. There are currently 19 Teaching Alliances in Birmingham. The above data were obtained from the Freedom of Information Act, 2016.

2.6.2 Succession Planning

Headteachers are responsible for the strategic planning and development of future leaders. Succession planning within the England education system has been a source of concern (Rhodes and Brundrett, 2005; Rhodes and Brundrett, 2006; Brundrett *et al.*, 2006; Bush, 2011). The main concerns identified have been linked to how the Headship role is perceived, the retirement of the 'baby boomers', and the duration of the Headship journey. These concerns have prompted studies into how the leadership succession strategy should be managed along with the implementation of structured leadership programmes to address the current Headship situation. It is important, therefore, for the Headteacher to build leadership capacity with diversity and leadership development in mind (Fink, 2011; Coleman, 2012).

Currently, a Deputy Headteacher would have to serve around five years before applying for Headship (NCTL, 2006). However, regional variations of the Deputy Headship duration within the role would be expected. Simkins *et al.* (2009) suggest that Headteachers should provide practical opportunities for school leaders, includ-

ing work shadowing for potential Deputy and Assistant Headteachers, as valuable experience for role progression and self-confidence in their career journey. The NSCL have recently incorporated elements of work shadowing into their leadership and development programmes to support the practical understanding and application of senior leadership roles.

Collins (2013) referred to the challenges of succession planning and calls for localised objectives, tailored support, coaching and mentoring for specific leaders to address the national succession planning objectives at a local level. These approaches will encourage Headteachers and Governors to consider their unique educational contexts, along with gaining a cultural understanding of the future leaders that they are supporting (Rhodes and Brundrett, 2009).

2.6.3 Leadership Development Programmes

In 2010 Jackie Hughes (Director of Education at Diocese of Birmingham) had a key role in supporting the succession planning and school effectiveness programme for Catholic Schools. This involved leading the participation of experienced Headteachers and 21 aspiring leaders with the NCTL leadership succession-planning pilot programme. The pilot group explored 'New Models of Headship' with a view to addressing some of the issues associated with the Headship crisis. The study drew upon and involved the experiences of Headteachers in Birmingham, along with the perceptions of aspirant leaders – which, contrary to some studies,

seemed to be positive. This study was then superseded by another national programme from the NCTL. The Succession Planning pilot study concluded that a systematic approach towards school improvement and effectiveness through leadership development is essential for the future of Birmingham schools, along with strong partnership developments with the local authority, diocesan boards and stakeholders.

Faith schools represent a religious character and the teachers, staff and senior leadership should ideally be associated to that faith. However, faith schools are obliged to admit students and staff from different backgrounds but the criteria of belonging to the same faith is a priority. With regards to Catholic leadership there are career limitations for non-practicing Assistant Headteachers in becoming a Deputy or a Headteacher. Within the Catholic diocese the criteria for becoming a Headteacher is aligned with practicing the Catholic faith. According to the Education Commission (2013, p. 2):

'As well as being a person of strong personal faith and practice the Headteacher must show her/himself to be an exemplary leader of a Catholic school demonstrating an understanding of education based on Gospel values.'

The religious criteria are therefore an important element within the career trajectories of future Catholic senior leaders which involves combining faith and educational philosophy.

Deputy and Assistant Headteacher succession planning in Birmingham is very important in developing the school workforce and diversity of age, background and ethnicity in leadership could contribute greatly to school leadership and management. Table 8 shows a breakdown of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in secondary schools in Birmingham schools in 2013 (DfES, 2013), while Table 9 reflects the updated figures (2016). This was obtained from Birmingham City Council under the Freedom of Information Act.

*Table 8 Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham
(February 2013)*

Ethnicity	Deputy and Assistant Headteachers
Asian or Asian British	23
Black or Black British	5
Mixed	2
Other	3
Unknown	40
White	189
Grand Total	262
Gender	Deputy and Assistant Headteachers
Female	140
Male	122
Grand Total	262
Age range	Deputy and Assistant Headteachers
20-29	10
30-39	74
40-49	97
50-59	74
60-70	7
Grand Total	262

Please note these figures are accurate as at

26 February 2013 and do not include academies:

- Al-Furqan Primary School;
- Handsworth Grammar School;
- Manor Park Primary School;
- Queensbridge School;
- Small Heath School; and
- St Francis Church of England Aided Primary

School and Nursery

We are not able to include figures for the above because they do not purchase the Local Authority's HR or payroll services.

Table 9 shows that there was an increase of 36 senior leaders in secondary schools in Birmingham over a three-year period. This growth indicates that development and training in leadership roles is taking place. There has been an increase in all ethnicities, particularly in the Mixed, Asian and Black British senior leaders during the three-year period. The 30–39-year age group is now the higher age group of senior leaders compared to the 2013 data and the 60–70-year age group shows eight senior leaders compared to seven in 2013.

Table 9 Deputy and Assistant Headteacher in Birmingham, Feb 2016

Ethnicity	Assistant Headteacher	Deputy Headteacher	Grand Total
Asian or Asian British	25	10	35
Black or Black British	5	3	8
Mixed	5	0	5
Other	2	0	2
Unknown	53	9	62
White	126	60	186
Grand Total	216	82	298
Gender	Assistant Headteacher	Deputy Headteacher	Grand Total
Female	115	40	155
Male	101	42	143
Grand Total	216	82	298
Age range	Assistant Headteacher	Deputy Headteacher	Grand Total
20-29	8	0	8
30-39	98	16	114
40-49	68	41	109
50-59	36	23	59
60-70	6	2	8
Grand Total	216	82	298

2.6.4 National Professional Qualification for Headship

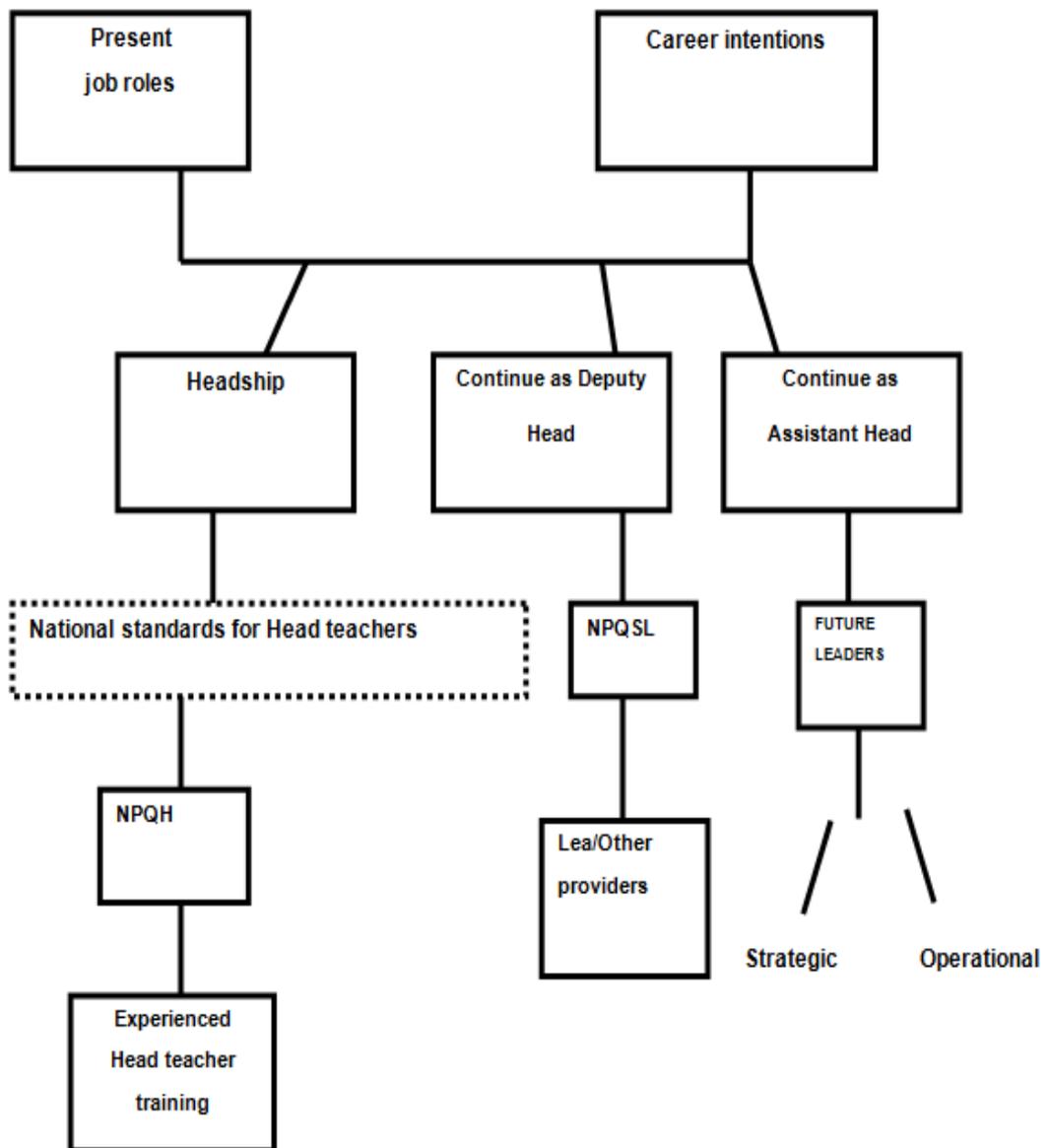
The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) was introduced in 1997 and has been designed to aid the transition stage to Headship primarily for Deputy and Assistant Headteachers. Until February 2012 it was mandatory for all Deputy and Assistant Headteachers to complete this leadership course. This would allow aspiring Headteachers to be prepared for the Headship role when a national or regional position became available. The course duration is now between 6 and 18 months depending on the experience, skills and motivation of the applicants. The current NPQH has now been restructured, therefore offering a new model that includes a placement (minimum of 9 days), the opportunity to work with 'Outstanding' Headteachers and optional coaching. The NPQH has been designed for aspiring Headteachers who want to become a Headteacher within a 12 to 18-month period. Concerns still remain over the true effectiveness of the NPQH equipping future or aspiring leaders for Headship (Howson, 2011).

Rhodes *et al.* (2009) explored the effectiveness of the NPQH in preparing and even influencing the career decision-making process needed for Headship. Their research recounts the many revisions to the NPQH programme from 2000 and questions whether this leadership course can truly equip candidates for Headship. Amongst their findings, Rhodes *et al.* (2009) identified a range of transition enhancers and barriers identified by their participants, including: role conceptualisation, a lack of self-confidence, and the need for a better understanding of leadership devel-

opment from entry to the profession through to the NPQH. This research also supports previous studies in leadership development including Bush (1998), Lodge (1998), and Garrett (1999). Rhodes and Brundrett (2008) drew upon the importance of 'socialization' and 'role identity transformation' (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003) for preparation into the Headship role. Garrett (1999) provides an overview of some of the career options available for senior leaders (see Figure 3). Their studies not only emphasised the complexities associated with the Headship role, but also addressed the emotional and social personal changes that would need to be considered at the pre-Headship stage. Although these revisions could be viewed as a positive aspect to the NCTL responding to the external requirements of government and educational bodies, the continuous revisions could also be perceived as unstable, only addressing current issues but not providing a firm foundation for developing the core strategic and management skill sets needed to manage small and large school settings.

There are other programmes providing 'fast track' career opportunities for aspiring individuals into Headship. The NPQH aims to provide potential Headteachers with the necessary skills and tool set for future leaders entering Headship. Singh (2010), undertaking a comparison of the NPQH in Malaysia and the UK, concluded that the NPQH did have some very positive features but it did not necessarily prepare the pre-Headship candidates for all aspects of Headship. Singh (2010) suggested that the focus should be placed on allowing more candidates to experience direct, hands-on opportunities through training, along with ongoing career development for aspiring leaders.

Figure 3 Roles, career intentions and training routes
 (Adapted from Garratt, 1999)



National Succession Consultants (NSCs) could also play a key part in bridging the leadership succession gap (Bush, 2011), especially when collaborating with Headteachers and Local Authorities on local succession planning initiatives. Bush (2011) examines the NCTL's plans to develop new models of leadership, additional funding for development courses as well as further involvement from Governors, once again reflecting the evolving leadership models and changing roles within educational leadership.

2.6.5 National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership

Through continued research into the experiences of school leaders (Simkins *et al.*, 2009; NCTL, 2008; NCTL, 2009) the NCTL seem to be taking steps in acknowledging and accrediting the different stages of the decision-making process within the career journey of a senior leader. The NPQSL is a new leadership qualification, which was introduced in January 2013. This qualification aims to recognise leadership progress and achievement within the senior leadership role, through a modular course design. Examples of the course modules include: strategy and improvement, teaching and curriculum excellence, leading with impact, working in partnership, managing resources and risks increasing capability. Senior leaders and those who aspiring for senior leadership are invited to apply, allowing for further opportunities for personal development within the role.

2.6.6 Future Leaders Programme

The Future Leaders programme is another route into Headship, which takes two years. This programme has been specifically designed as a fast track option for aspiring Headteachers and is supported by the NCTL, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCFS), Absolute Return for Kids (ARK) and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT). It provides a comprehensive focus on building leadership capacity, as well as a one-year residency in a secondary school, mentoring by current heads and residential coaching support throughout the course. The aspirants should be then ready for a Headship leadership role at the end of the programme.

The course provides aspirants with the opportunities to tap into direct Headship support. This opportunity could help candidates in the way that Headship is conceptualised by the aspirants. The programme draws on leadership development from three core experience levels within the education structure: Middle Leadership (NPQML), Senior Leadership (NPQSL) and Headship (NPQH). Following an evaluation of two Future Leaders cohort programmes over a two-year period, Earley *et al.* (2009) purported that Headteachers, especially in the first year, thought that 14 out of the 19 candidates had either high or medium impact on their placement, while one candidate had no impact. Although the benefits of the programme were expressed, the candidates were asked about the factors that could have impacted on

their progress within their schools. Below are some of the factors (Earley *et al.*, 2009, p. 302) that could have hindered the progress of the aspiring leaders:

- Not being given enough responsibility during the residency
- Distraction with job applications
- The managerial leadership style of the Head who did not delegate or build capacity
- Not feeling fully accepted by the SLT or other teachers
- Allocated teaching in areas where they had no experience
- SLT who did not share the same vision/goals as the Future Leaders mission
- Lack of self-confidence

This study has highlighted important areas for consideration, especially when schools and organisations collaborate with each other and how they are to be managed, including working with different leadership styles and perspectives, the joint monitoring and auditing of skills, accessing social groups and networks and sharing visions and goals. Over the past four years, the Future Leaders Programme has shown an increase in female participants; however, BAME participants have remained consistently low.

Table 10 shows the number of Future Leaders participants who reached Headship posts in each academic year, split by region, gender and ethnicity. Table 11 shows the regional breakdown of the candidates. The main window for Headship recruitment is from January to April. Please note that Headships are counted in the academic year in which the appointment was made, which is not necessarily the academic year in which the Headship started. Table 10 does not include instances where participants have since moved into a second Headship position.

Table 10 Gender and Ethnicity breakdown of Future Leaders participants (2008-2016)

Gender and Ethnicity Breakdown (from 2008-2016)

Gender	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Female	1	1	3	2	12	17	20	3
Male	3	6	4	13	13	17	14	3
Ethnicity	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
BAME (Yes)	1	3	1	4	3	1	4	2
BAME (No)	3	4	6	11	22	33	30	4

Table 11 Regional breakdown of Future Leaders participants (2008-2016)

	Yorkshire & the Humber	London	North East	East Midlands	North West	West Midlands	South East	South West
2008/09	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
2009/10	2	2	0	0	1	0	1	1
2010/11	1	4	1	0	0	0	1	0
2011/12	2	6	0	1	4	1	0	1
2012/13	1	8	1	0	6	6	3	0
2013/14	1	16	0	1	7	2	6	1
2014/15	9	10	5	5	3	1	0	1
2015/16	1	2	0	0	1	0	2	0

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the literature pertaining to the careers, lives and experiences of school leaders. The conceptual framework will be referred to throughout this thesis (see Figure 2). I have an interest in the career trajectories, life courses and the decisions made by school leaders or future school leaders, so the examination into the various professional life and career phases and stages of Headteachers has served to give some insight into the key phases of the Headship role. Research by Day and Bakioğlu (1996), Gronn (1999), Ribbins (2003), Earley and Weindling (2007), Oplatka and Tamir (2009) and Smith (2011) have provided insight into the career journeys and stages of educators and leaders. It is without doubt that the career decisions made with regards to career progression will ultimately impact upon the personal lives, psychological well-being and general life decisions of the individual; therefore, career anchors, career choices, the concept of career plateauing, the motivators and barriers to progression are factors that have been considered in the literature review. Headship and the senior leadership roles continue to evolve and develop in response to government reforms and societal change. Schools now are able to exercise their freedom to create professional courses in partnership with the NCTL to develop future leaders. Therefore, an overview of some of the main professional school leadership courses and programmes has been included in the literature, as well as an overview of the status of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham, England, which paints a regional picture of leadership.

Government legislation continues to shape and change the role of the Headteacher and the senior leader in schools, which can result in a decrease in power as more control and accountability is introduced. There is now a focus on distributed and system leadership, the reorganisation of school governance, the initial teaching qualification accreditation which means that schools and Headteachers in particular will have to carefully consider how change will be implemented (DfE, 2016). The potential challenges of working collaboratively across schools, with different cultures and communities, need to be considered. This chapter has provided a base for understanding the lives, challenges and experiences of the school leadership and management in England. Chapter Three will present the research design employed in the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes and justifies the research design adopted for this empirical study. The research design will be placed in a life history context as discussed in Chapter 2. The design relates to the careers and lives of educational leaders at the incumbent stage of their career (Ribbins, 2003), followed by a clarification of the philosophical approach used within the study. This will be followed by a justification of the research strategy applied and an overview of the management of the project. Due to the biographic nature and focus of the research, a mainly qualitative approach was adopted using a survey and semi-structured life history interviews for the methods (Kvale, 1996; Pascal and Ribbins, 1998; Gronn, 1999; Oplatka and Tamir, 2009; Smith, 2010).

The brief survey, which formed the Phase 1 stage of the research, aimed to establish the role status of the senior leaders and to obtain some background information about where the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers were in their career stage. The survey collected numerical evidence which gave insights into the career choices made at that time with regards to their career stage.

3.1 Research Design

Given my research questions I based my research design on Gunter and Ribbins' (2002) characterisation of a humanistic knowledge domain in school leadership research. Their classification of knowledge domains is reproduced in Table 12.

Table 12 The Five Knowledge Domains

(Adapted from Gunter and Ribbins, 2002, p. 378)

Knowledge domain	Meaning
Conceptual	Concerns with issues of ontology and epistemology and conceptual clarification
Critical	Concerned to reveal and emancipate leaders and followers from social injustice.
Humanistic	Gathers and theorises from the experiences and biographies of those who are leaders and managers.
Evaluative	Abstracts and measures the impact of leadership effectiveness on organisational outcomes.
Instrumental	Provides leaders with effective leadership strategies to deliver organisational outcomes

Gunter and Ribbins (2002) developed this classification through a systematic review of educational leadership and management research in primary, secondary and special schools. The humanistic domain places the research into an educational setting, which acknowledges the characteristics or approaches that are associated with

that domain, e.g. strategy development, measuring impact, and addressing social injustice. The humanistic knowledge domain aims to reveal the world as it is experienced by the participants. This study explores the meanings and perceptions associated with the human experience (Denscombe, 2003) of a sample population of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham, England. As such, the emphasis is on the participants' construction of their own knowledge and the possible implications of these constructions on subsequent experiences. That is, the perspective takes an interpretivist perspective on epistemology: the question focuses on what participants think they know and how they have constructed their view of the world. My interest in ontology follows on from this: how have participants' knowledge constructions shaped the way they have responded to situations and how have these responses helped to shape the personal world they have subsequently experienced? In the words of Crotty (1998, p. 10), '*Ontological issues and epistemological issues tend to emerge together.*'

I have found Crotty's (1998) exposition of ontology and epistemology in research design more helpful than the accounts provided others (e.g. Blaikie, 2000; Grix, 2004; Creswell, 2014). Therefore, I have based my justification for my approach largely on his work. Crotty (1998) focuses on the researcher establishing the epistemological stance within their research. This, then, determines the theoretical and methodological approaches utilized. For the purpose of this study, Crotty's (1998) framework will be applied using constructionism as the epistemological stance. Constructionism, as the word implies, is associated with how meaning is constructed from the world that we live in. According to Crotty (1998, p. 4), this theoretical

stance attempts to ‘understand and explain human and social reality.’ The interpretivist theoretical stance is based on interpreting social interactions against a cultural and historical backdrop. The confines of predictability and regularity take second place within the interpretivist stance. The methodology for this study employed a mixed methods approach (see Table 13) which allowed for a descriptive overview of the career aspirations of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham secondary schools as well as the process to obtain multiple individual experiences and perspectives in the role. Surveys and semi-structured life history interviews were the methods used for this study within an explanatory sequential design.

Table 13 The Four Elements

(Adapted from Crotty, 1998, p. 4)

Epistemology	Theoretical perspective	Methodology	Methods
Constructionism	Interpretivism	Mixed Methods	Survey (Phase 1) Semi-structured life history interviews (Phase 2)

This study takes the stance that teachers decide whether to apply for Headship depending on how they regard the job. It assumes that we can get a better picture of the factors affecting the application for Headship through exploring the way in which

teachers understand the options open to them using a narrative approach (Bullough, 2008). The study also assumes that, in order to understand teachers' accounts, we need to place them in the context of the narrative they have developed to explain their own trajectories in teaching. The study aimed to achieve this understanding through a survey, Phase 1 to establish a broad picture of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in the region followed by biographical research in the Phase 2 stage using semi-structured life history interviews.

3.2 The social, cultural and historical context

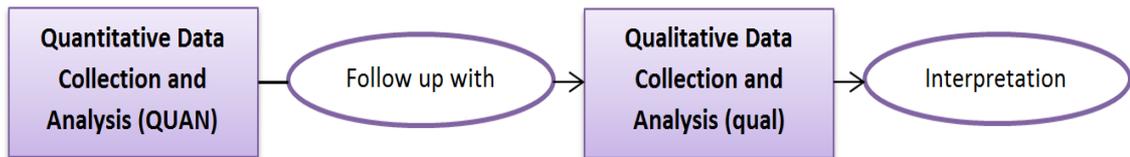
The approach adopted emphasises the importance of social, cultural and historical contexts: in framing participants' knowledge construction and understanding the consequences of the ways in which participants have constructed their beliefs about their life-worlds. Therefore, it is necessary to provide some indication of the breadth of context acknowledged in this study. First, the study focuses on one urban region. This region has considerable ethnic diversity and, like many large urban areas, has faced some substantial challenges in providing schooling. But there is also a national context for the framing of school leadership. National policy has framed expectations of schools and senior leaders and has also framed expectations of what leaders should do to meet these expectations.

3.3 The two-phase, mixed method design

I concluded that a mixed methods approach (mainly qualitative) was most suitable for this research (Maxwell, 2012; Creswell, 2014). An explanatory sequential design was utilized for this study. This design uses a mixed methods approach, which involves collecting and analysing quantitative data as part of a primary phase (see Table 13). After the data has been analysed, it is then followed up with qualitative data collection and analysis, which forms part of the secondary phase. The data collected during both phases is then interpreted as part of the one study. Using explanatory sequential mixed methods (Creswell, 2014) allowed methodological triangulation to be applied during both phases. The Phase 1 stage (see Appendix 1) was a *quantitative* method. Surveys were sent out to 100 Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham with regards to their current career stage and their aspirations for Headship. The surveys were analysed and the participants that were interested in taking part in the Phase 2 (see Appendix 2) stage of the study, were contacted.

Figure 4 The explanatory sequential design
(Adapted from Creswell, 2014, p. 220)

The explanatory sequential design



The Phase 2 stage was *qualitative*, (semi-structured life history interviews) in that the generation of rich data collected on the perceptions and experiences within the Deputy and Assistant Headship role allowed for emerging themes to be unearthed. The Phase 2 stage of the research was undertaken during 2012 and 2014. The benefits of using the mixed methods approach in this study (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Creswell, 2014) have enabled me to identify the relevant participants from the population sample using a straightforward and time-efficient survey for the Phase 1 stage (see Appendix 1) of the study. This stage was crucial for the data collection process for the Phase 2 stage of the study (see Appendix 2).

The combination of the two methods allowed me to identify the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers at different career stages. The data from the Phase 1 stage reflected where the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers were in their career journey in

relation to Headship (interested, possibility, not interested) as well as providing further background information about their role (e.g. duration in the role, years as a classroom teacher). These data were used to develop the study further, which then provided a richer dataset to analyse (Greene *et al.*, 1989). According to Robson (2011, p. 87):

‘Similar patterns of findings from very different methods of gathering data increase confidence in the validity of the findings.’

3.4 The survey

This section discusses survey research and the reasons for using this approach in the study. Survey research is a very popular and flexible method of obtaining the data from both large and small populations and samples (Robson, 2011; Andres, 2012). A survey was used for the Phase 1 stage (see Appendix 1), which involved the participants completing a brief survey to obtain an overview of their career aspirations at that time. The questions for the survey were drawn from Pascal and Ribbins (1998), Hayes (2005) and Oplatka and Tamir (2009), with the latter study being more pertinent to the semi-structured interviews relating to the career journey of Deputy Headteachers.

Further questions about the gender and ethnicity of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers were added to obtain a snapshot profile of the participants. This background information was also useful to see if there were correlations with the gender and race research in education pertaining to the aspiration and career life courses of teachers (Powney *et al.*, 2003; McNamara *et al.*, 2009). The number of years served as a Deputy or Assistant Headteacher, along with the number of years serving as a classroom teacher, also provided useful profile information about the respondents.

3.5 Life history interviews: Biography Research and the Narrative Approach

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of biographical approaches within narrative research. Biographical approaches in education have been important in allowing the voice of educators to be heard (Osler, 1997; Hayes, 2005; Popescu and Gunter, 2011). However, challenges still exist when researching the human experience (Chase, 2003). These valuable voices can inform, highlight inequalities and provide stories of lives that might never have been heard. This approach has been able to gather evidence of the experiences of school leaders that can be used to address shortages and difficulties experienced within education (Goodson, 1992; Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996; Goodson *et al.*, 2001; Chagger, 2014). These exposed voices also serve as a tangible way of highlighting how political and social changes affect the working role.

When referring to one's career life course in education, a biographical approach combined with the humanistic knowledge domain (Gunter and Ribbins, 2002) reflects an appropriate approach to this study. Historical events, for example changes in Government leadership and the implementation of new roles and policies, will reflect career changes and decisions that have and will be made over a period of time for that individual. Those individuals within school leadership will have their own stories to tell about their experiences within specific time frames in history.

The participants in this study are referred to as a 'cohort generation' by Miller (2000, p. 30). This is because the participants fit into two categories of being born during a set period and sharing historical experiences during that time. The participants are aged between 45 and 60 years of age and have been in the education system for over six years. This is an interesting sample because their experiences will be different to the new generation of school leaders, who have experienced mandatory Government changes in their career life courses, e.g. changes to the National Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH), developments in technology and role description/expectations and role accountability. This assertion is also supported by Pilcher (1995, p. 23) who refers to baby boomers as a cohort generation and states that:

'As a result of differential exposure and exclusion due to location in historical time, there exist different social [cohort] generations, each having distinctive world views. This in turn, leads people of different ages to experience the same social and cultural events differently.'

It is also understood that, when using biographical approaches, methodological issues could be mentioned; for example, concerning the lack of generalisability of the data due to having a sample of 14 participants, along with an understanding that the participant accounts are a construction of their own reality within their role, which represents their own 'truth' (Gray, 2004).

3.6 Sampling

Below is an overview of the sample population used for the study.

3.6.1 Phase 1 - Survey

For the Phase 1 stage (see Appendix 1), random sampling was employed using Edubase, a Department for Education public database which keeps a record of educational establishments in the United Kingdom and Wales. Advanced search options were used to locate local authority secondary schools in Birmingham. Below are the criteria used:

Town, locality or postcode: Birmingham; LA subset: England; LA name: Birmingham; Phase of Education: Secondary; Type of Establishment group: Academies, Free Schools, LA maintained schools, Special schools; Open/closed: Open

The search retrieved 79 secondary schools that were then used as the sample for the Phase 1 Survey (see Appendix 1) based on the assumption that there would be at least one Deputy Headteacher and at least two Assistant Headteachers working in those schools. This would have meant focusing on collating data for a minimum of 237 Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham. It was important for me to consider the administration and financial constraints that were part of this study. Therefore, to manage a full-time teaching career combined with doctoral studies, it was decided that every fourth school from the 79 schools was to be selected from the database to be part of the survey.

Once the schools were identified, information about the school staffing system was obtained from the school website; the surveys were then coded using digits and letters relating to the Deputy and the Assistant Headteachers named at the school. The codes were placed at the top right-hand corner of the survey. These codes were then cut off once they were received for anonymity to be maintained, except for the participants that wanted to take part in the semi-structured interviews (Phase 2). The surveys were collected weekly from the University of Birmingham Student Office. Although all the surveys were sent out in the same week, they were returned over a period of several weeks. Variation in the return of the surveys may have reflected the onset of exams, or busy workloads or holidays.

A total of 57 surveys were returned from the 100 that were sent. As part of the contingency plan, five additional schools were selected (every 10th school on the list) for

the survey to ensure a response from over 50 senior leaders. This aimed to take into consideration staff resignations, illness and other school issues that could affect the completion of the survey. The contingency plan was not needed in this case. On reflection, electronic surveys would be a future consideration with regards to tracking and monitoring data.

If I had more time and the feasibility of the resources to finance, collect and analyse the data, I would have applied a stratified sample approach that reflected a truly representative sample for the first phase of the study. This would have involved me using national data relating to the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers within secondary schools in the UK to define the population. I would have determined the sample size and identified key variables from the population (e.g. gender, ethnicity and years in the role). Once I had access to the lists of the school leader names and school information, I would have then randomly selected individuals from the subgroups (e.g. gender, years as Deputy Headteacher, etc.). This approach would have allowed the sample to be generalizable. However, when using the explanatory sequential design approach for this study, I decided to give priority to the qualitative data collection used in the study. This was because I wanted to explore the lives and career trajectories of senior leaders further. Therefore, the qualitative phase of the study allowed me to investigate and interpret the survey results from the first phase.

3.6.2 Phase 2 - Interview sample

The Phase 2 stage of the study involved a purposive sampling approach once the prospective Deputy and Assistant Headteachers indicated their agreement to be interviewed for this study (see Table 14). Fourteen senior leaders (both Deputy and Assistant Headteachers) that were based in Birmingham, England, agreed to take part in the semi-structured interviews. The participants that agreed to take part in the semi-structured life history interviews had categorised themselves on the survey as being interested or not interested in Headship at the time the survey was completed. The participants that expressed their interest in taking part in the life history interviews circled the section of the survey that indicated they would be interested in discussing their views about the role. They were then contacted by email with regards to the Phase 2 stage of the study.

Table 14 Role profile of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers

Participant	Assistant Headteacher	Years in the role	Gender	Ethnicity
AH 1	Assistant Headteacher	2 years	Female	White
AH 2	Assistant Headteacher	6 years	Male	White
AH 3	Assistant Headteacher	2 years	Male	White Irish
AH 4	Assistant Headteacher	5 years	Female	White
AH 5	Assistant Headteacher	4 years	Female	White
AH 6	Assistant Headteacher	9 years	Female	Asian/British Asian
Participant	Deputy Headteacher	Years in the role	Gender	Ethnicity
DH 1	Deputy Headteacher	9 years	Male	White
DH 2	Deputy Headteacher	10 years	Female	White
DH 3	Deputy Headteacher	17 years	Female	White
DH 4	Deputy Headteacher	1 year	Female	White Irish
DH 5	Deputy Headteacher	6½ years	Female	White
DH 6	Deputy Headteacher	1 year	Female	White
DH 7	Deputy Headteacher	6 years	Female	White
DH 8	Deputy Headteacher	6 years	Female	Asian/British Asian

3.7 Data collection and analysis

This section reviews the design and analysis approaches used with the methods adopted for this study.

3.7.1 The design and analysis of the survey

A draft survey was sent to five selected individuals from different backgrounds (family, friends and work colleagues, including a teacher and mentor) to ensure that the questions were not offensive or difficult to understand. I developed a simple question framework for both phases drawing on research from previous studies into the career journeys of school leaders (Pascal and Ribbins, 1998; Hayes, 2005; Oplatka and Tamir, 2009). The questions focused on the background of the senior leaders and their aspirations regarding Headship. Feedback on the format and content of the survey was obtained. A question was asked relating to why the gender was important, and whether the number of years spent as a classroom teacher was needed for the study. I was able to justify and state the relevance and format of the questions. The Phase 1 stage survey questions (see Table 15) aimed to give a snapshot of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers, their backgrounds and aspirations.

Table 15 Phase 1 Survey Questions – Section 1

The current role	<i>(In order to establish whether they were in a Deputy or Assistant Headteacher role and highlight a distinction in the role mainly with regards to deputising for the Headteacher and sometimes additional responsibilities)</i>
Gender	<i>(In order to investigate whether or not there could be issues associated with gender – e.g. male/female predominance within the senior leadership roles)</i>
Years as a classroom teacher	<i>(To explore whether or not years as a classroom teacher had any influence within the career life course with regards to aspiration)</i>
Years as a Deputy Headteacher	<i>(To explore whether or not years as a Deputy Headteacher had any influence within the career life course with regards to aspiration)</i>
Ethnic origin	<i>(To investigate whether or not race had any influence within the career life course with regards to aspiration)</i>
Section 2 comprised of questions relating to the senior leaders' career journey:	
Three statements which described the respondents' interest in applying for Headship	<i>(The statements would allow the senior leader to select an interest, non-interest or possibility allowing me to explore the choices made against the selected answers in the section 1)</i>
NPQH	A question relating to whether or not the senior leader had completed his/her NPQH <i>(as well as an option to state their current progress).</i>
	A question relating to whether or not the senior leader had plans to complete their NPQH <i>(The NPQH is currently a pre-requisite to becoming a Headteacher with 12-18 months. The two questions about the NPQH gave insight to the senior leaders career life course and the importance of the NPQH).</i>
	The last question asked the respondent whether they would be interested in taking part in the life history interviews.

The survey questions contained questions that would inform the second phase of the explanatory sequential design. In this case, only a brief overview of the career decisions with regards to Headship and aspiration was required, and some surveys were sent out again if there had not been a response within four weeks. For communication to be established with regards to the Phase 2 stage, a section at the bottom of the survey allowed the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers to forward their email details if they wanted to take part in the second Phase of the research. It was at this point that anonymity would cease so that further communication and preparation for the Phase 2 stage could commence.

Surveys, however, do have their disadvantages due to the rigidity of set questions, which can restrict participant responses, especially if there are limited options available for the participant to add further, expanded responses to the study. Also, if a survey is sent to the participant via the post or online, the response rate may be considerably lower due to the lack of the researchers' presence (Kumar, 1996; Robson, 2002; Gillham, 2007). SPSS was used to process and analyse the data from the surveys. This software was very useful in sorting and categorising the data fields and producing descriptive statistics and tables to reflect the findings. With regards to missing data, number coding was used which reflected the data that was missing. In this case, the number -9 was used if the Deputy or Assistant Headteacher did not complete the section of the form. Table 16 shows the questions that were either missed, an alternative written answer was given, or was left blank.

Table 16 Missing data

Question	Missing data
Years as a classroom teacher?	8.8% of the responses were missing from the survey. These responses were later updated from the life history Stage 2 interviews.
Are you planning to complete your NPQH?	7% of the responses were missing 4 participants wrote the words unsure. With regards to this question, a yes or no answer was expected so the 'unsure' answers were coded with -9 which was equivalent to being unanswered.
How long ago did you take your NPQH?	3 responses were missing

For the purpose of this study the Fisher's exact test of independence was used due to the small sample group. This test was used to establish whether there was a significant association or independence between two categories from the survey. The data were analysed to obtain statistical insights about:

- Gender
- Years within the role
- Years as a classroom teacher

A very small sample was used for this study, so it is impossible to reflect a generalisable and representative set of results about all Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in the UK. This also was not my aim. The data gave me tentative insights into the decisions made by the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham in relation to the first research question. Furthermore, this study could reflect useful insights for future research into the lives of senior leaders in Birmingham, England.

According to Andres (2012, p. 121):

‘Good research always engages in some form of transferability. Through a rigorous review of the literature, each of the components of existing related studies is assessed for its relevance to the new study being considered.’

Therefore, this study aims to reflect the current experiences and perspectives of the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher sample in Birmingham with concepts of transferability.

3.7.2 The design and analysis of the semi-structured interviews

The Phase 2 stage involved those Deputy and Assistant Headteachers who wanted to share their experiences of their role by taking part in a semi-structured interview. The questions for the semi-structured interviews were carefully considered using previous research literature. They were reviewed to ensure that bias was not hidden in the questions. Questions from Ribbins (1997), Hayes (2005) and Oplatka and Tamir (2009) were drawn on when considering my survey questions, resulting in a combination of the three question frameworks which are reflected in the Interview Schedule (see Appendix 2).

The main questioning framework was utilized with both male and female experiences in mind. Flexibility and further elaboration into questions can be achieved when using semi-structured surveys (May, 2001). The Deputy and Assistant Headteachers were given a Participant Pack, which included the consent form and the interview schedule (see Appendix 3). The participants interviewed in the study were not known to me socially, but only on a professional working basis. This factor also supported the maintenance of a professional and ethically focused study.

The interviews took place either in the secondary school where the Deputy or Assistant Headteacher worked, or at the University of Birmingham. In both cases, a neutral setting was achieved; a power imbalance was not present, mainly due to my role position which was not 'higher' than the senior leaders, along with an ease within

their own school setting. The semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to discuss issues that were pertinent to their own personal experiences and perceptions, which proved to be very valuable when obtaining rich data (Gillham, 2007). Interviewing only one participant at a time might have contributed to the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher feeling that they could be more open and honest about their experiences knowing that their interview was confidential and anonymous. This method was the most suitable when considering the time and cost constraints, especially with regards to the transcription and analysis of substantial amounts of data.

Emerging themes and new patterns were generated which gave more depth to the study (Denscombe, 2003). There were also opportunities for myself as the researcher to follow up further and probe into the responses given by having a visual presence in the interview process (Robson, 2011). I found that, in one of the interviews, the Deputy Headteacher had to attend another meeting after our meeting. I then had to be mindful about not using suggestive and leading questions, which could have influenced the study due to the restriction of time (Robson, 2002; Denscombe, 2003; Grix, 2004).

The interviews ranged from 24 minutes to 2 hours and 20 minutes. Although the time specified on the interview schedule was for 45 minutes, I had to take into consideration the real-life critical events that occurred before the interviews took place, e.g. critical meetings that had to take place with parents and staff members. Therefore, two Deputy Headteachers had unexpected meetings that they had to attend.

However, the time that they did have provided rich data for the study. The Deputy and Assistant Headteacher interviews were recorded and then sent off to an audio typist to be transcribed (see Appendix 4 for a participant transcript) into a text format. The audio typist was not from an education background and was not involved in the study. Once returned, the transcripts were repeatedly checked against the audio interviews, which allowed for any misspellings, incorrect abbreviations and unknown words to be completed. Being able to proof read the text with the audio interviews more than twice over a period of time allowed me to identify the meanings and interpretations drawn from the interviews and ensure accuracy.

The Phase 2 semi-structured life history interviews employed inductive reasoning through the identification of patterns and themes in the semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview data (see Appendix 4 for a participant transcript) was collated and analysed using both manual and electronic methods. Nvivo analytical software was used which allowed me to manage and sort my data efficiently (Bazeley, 2007). Nvivo was a helpful tool when working through the semi-structured life history interviews and establishing themes. Using a thematic approach, I linked text to broader categories or nodes, which allowed patterns to be established. The electronic data coding applied to the interviews enabled important statements to be separated electronically rather than manually cut and then categorised, which could have been more time consuming (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013). The process of data analysis was more manageable, especially when comparing common features and establishing links between the career trajectories of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers.

3.7.3 Analysis and use of Schein's (1971) and Putnam's (2000) framework

Key emerging themes from the career trajectories of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers and their experiences of Headship helped me to form original ideas that were developed from existing frameworks and concepts used in career and social capital theory (Schein, 1971; Putnam, 2000). A cyclical process of using inductive and deductive approaches (Trochim, 2006) was applied. This involved reflecting on the emerging themes from the findings and looking for links and associations with current literature. New literature was also explored and was integrated when synthesising and analysing the relevant concepts and models. This process contributed to the development of a tentative new career framework for Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in secondary education using Schein's (1971) and Putnam's (2000) models.

Schein's (1971) career stages and phases model provided a framework in understanding the structural organisational processes that take place within the career trajectories of employees. This framework also reflects the psychological and relational processes such as socialization and transition that could impact upon the individual's career direction. Schein's (1971) framework also highlights the importance of group and individual relationships that can be both drivers and barriers to career progress and satisfaction. I aligned Schein's (1971) framework with the findings from the experiences of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers and their perspectives of Headship within an educational context. These experiences reflected the

complex tangible and intangible organisational barriers and enhancers that the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers had experienced.

The Career Stages and phases of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers framework (2018) highlights the lateral, upward and downward or sideways career directions that can be experienced. These career directions were evidenced in the Bondar, Bridger and Leaver senior leaders. whose perspectives on agency and their professional impact within the role influenced their career decisions and their position in the career phase and stage.

Putnam's (2000) concept of social capital was also placed within the new career stages and phases framework pertaining to how senior leaders utilize their social capital within their role. In so doing we gain insights into the multi-faceted relational structures (Bridging, Bonding and Leaver) and how the Headteacher utilized their social capital to enable career movement through consistent support, introduction to 'vertical' leadership networks and entry into the 'inner boundaries' of leadership. Social capital elements were also reflected in the professional behaviours and the reciprocal actions of the senior leader through their role commitment and building of collegial relationships. The combination of the two frameworks proposed a functional way to structure and present the data about the career trajectories of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in this thesis.

3.8 Combining data from various sources

Triangulation is a process where more than one method is used to reflect a convergence of results and findings (Morse, 1991). Robson (2011) refers to Denzin and Lincoln (1998, p. 6), who identify four types of triangulation (see Table 17):

Table 17 Types of Triangulation
(Adapted from Denzin and Lincoln, 1998)

Data triangulation:	using one or more data source (e.g. interviews, diaries, documents)
Observer triangulation:	the use of one or more observer in the study
Methodological triangulation:	the combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches
Theory triangulation:	the use of multiple perspectives or theories

For this study, data source, methodological and theory triangulation were utilized (Merriam, 1997; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998 and Creswell, 2014), incorporating surveys, semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis pertaining to the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher role, both internationally and in England. Data source triangulation was used when examining the different life history and narrative stud-

ies conducted at different points in time and comparing the findings. Methodological triangulation (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998) was used in the form of surveys combined with semi-structured life history interviews, while Theory triangulation was utilized during the literature research stage, where national and international biographical studies were reviewed on teachers and senior leaders within educational leadership. Different theories regarding biographical approaches and life history were also examined, which enabled me to explore different perspectives within educational settings.

3.9 Ethics

Ethical considerations must always be regarded highly for any research study involving other social beings, mainly due to the openness and sensitivity to some of the areas discussed. My Ethical Review Form was submitted and approved (ERN_12-0021) which allowed me to continue with the research. Therefore, in keeping with the BERA (2011) guidelines:

- All participants gave verbal consent to take part in the research
- Any form of deception was avoided
- All participants had the right to withdraw within a given time
- Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity were promised to all participants.

There will be obvious disadvantages primarily linked to the interviewees being located in the Birmingham area, which could cause some anxiety to some if they have disclosed confidential and sensitive information where other Deputy and Assistant Headteachers could identify them. So, as a teacher and social researcher, I have ensured that elements of potential bias and concern to all participants have been identified and appropriate measures put in place beforehand to ensure that a fair discovery of perspectives and experiences are portrayed in this thesis.

Sikes (2010) refers to the importance of researchers presenting their positionality in terms of their epistemological stance and values when conducting narrative or story-telling research. There is also a call for 'authorial honesty' (p. 18), which reflects ethical thought when conducting this method of research. Such authorial honesty will inevitably present research bias if the study is looked at from different epistemological stances.

3.9.1 Confidentiality and Right to withdraw

The willing participants for the Phase 2 stage were contacted via email and telephone and spoken to detailing the process of the study. An interview schedule (see Appendix 2) was sent to the participants for them to be aware of the themes and sub-themes to be discussed in the interview. The Deputy and Assistant Headteachers were given more than one opportunity to withdraw from the study in the semi-structured interviews. The Deputy and Assistant Headteachers were given written

and verbal assurances regarding anonymity throughout the study and that they would not be named in the final text. Only reference to their role and years within their role would be mentioned.

3.9.2 Data protection

Consideration about handling data sensitively and professionally when working with people was employed and the following procedures were applied:

- Written and verbal confirmation that the data would be kept in a safe storage and would not be made available to others
- The names of the participants would remain anonymous in the study and only the role and the years within the role would be mentioned
- A hard copy of the data would be kept, along with data files on the computer, and a third back-up of the interviews on a memory stick
- The coding system that was used in the initial surveys ensured that anonymity of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers was maintained until they responded back indicating their willingness to participate in the semi-structured interviews

3.9.3 The role of the researcher

The position and role of the researcher can impact upon the sense of place and feel within the research (Sikes, 2010). In this study, there was not a power imbalance due to the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers being in a higher role than myself. Lincoln and Guba (1985) identify threats that can affect the validity of qualitative studies (see Table 18). Lincoln and Guba's typology (1985) focuses on:

*Table 18 Threats to internal validity
(Adapted from Lincoln and Guba, 1985)*

Reactivity	The ways in which the presence of the researcher can affect the behaviour of those involved in the study as well as encourage or cause any interference.
Respondent biases	The respondent may be placed in a situation where they are trying to please the interviewer with their responses. This may mean that they may withhold information to appear in a "good" light especially if the respondent is intimidated in any way.
Researcher biases	The researcher may already have pre-conceived ideas and assumptions which could affect the way that the researcher conducts the interview. These pre-conceived views could affect the selection of the interviewees, the questions asked and the data selected for the analysis.

These threats were addressed throughout the study to support a consistent approach to validity. In terms of *reliability*, surveys would be deemed to be more reliable due to the format and structure of the survey and each person in the study being asked the same questions, while semi-structured interviews could be more problematic due to the depth of the interview (Kvale, 1996). Regarding the *reactivity* and *respondent biases*, there seemed to be an elimination of threat or intimidation mainly because the participants had a higher educational role status than myself and did not have to appease me with their answers. I had to also reflect on how my preconceived ideas and experiences in education, along with my role as a researcher and educator, were situated in relation to *researcher biases* and maintaining an unbiased approach when analysing and discussing the data.

3.9.4 Authenticity

This study considers a critical stage and time in educational leadership in England and focuses on the career trajectories of the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher, including those that might not perceive Headship as a career step. This research aims to depict an honest portrayal of Deputy and Assistant Headteacher career trajectories, including career motivators and barriers to aspiration. Since the study, three Deputy Headteachers went on to accept a Headship position and one Assistant Headteacher decided to resign from the role. These changes in the career trajectories reveal the continued changes in the personal career considerations and the decision-making processes when considering Headship and their current role as a

Deputy or Assistant Headteacher. A major strength of the study is that it has explored the lives of both Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham, England, which is amongst the first of these studies. The study will also provide educators and researchers with valuable insights about the life courses of some senior leaders in secondary education.

3.10 Limitations

Limitations of this research are chiefly attributable to time and cost constraints. Arranging and re-arranging suitable meeting times to fit around both my work schedule and the schedules of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers was challenging at times, especially when unforeseen meetings occurred with the participants. The sample size interviewed (14) was small and the selection of only one local authority (Birmingham) clearly has limitations. This would mean that readers would have to judge for themselves how typical the career trajectories of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers across England were to the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher in the study. The major advantage of concentrating on one local authority and using this sampling method was that the interviewing process was done more efficiently, and the travelling was manageable during the school term. Due to the method of sampling used, a statistical generalisation could not be made regarding Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in England.

On reflection, utilising a different sampling approach, e.g. stratified sampling (as mentioned in paragraph §3.6.1), would have yielded results that could have been more representative of the wider population of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in England. However, this study has allowed me to ascertain how 14 secondary Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham experienced their role within their secondary school contexts. To enhance the depth, richness and validity of this study, a longitudinal approach (Ruspini, 2002) that recorded change (circumstances, professional life, personal life, attitudes) over a series of time could have been adopted. However, this would involve more than one life history interview during the process. With regards to my time constraints, major concerns would be associated with the management of a large amount of data over a period, especially when gathering the results, managing interviews and dealing with participants if they dropped out of the study. A large sample size would also be needed in terms of representativeness.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has given an overview of the research design that was applied to the study. My epistemological, ontological and methodological approaches have been explained and justified in terms of the context of the study. I have explained the research strategy that was applied, along with an explanation of the methods chosen. The sample has been discussed regarding critical issues within research that need

to be considered, including validity, reliability, ethics and triangulation in relation to working with senior leaders within an educational context.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the data from the surveys and the fourteen Deputy and Assistant life-history interviews. The survey data was compared to previous literature on the aspirations of senior leaders in education and Schein's (1971) Career Phases and Stages framework was used to identify links and associations with the life-history interviews. The structure of the data presentation was based around Schein's (1971) framework with reference to the career aspirations and the career experiences within the career journey.

The first part of this chapter presents the results of the Phase 1 stage of the research (surveys). Detailed findings from the semi-structured interviews, which formed the Phase 2 stage of the research, will then be presented in the second part of this chapter within the life history framework (Ribbins, 2003).

4.1 Findings from the Future Aspirations Survey

Drawing on Hayes' (2005) framework of questions, a survey was constructed to gather the future aspirations of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers with regards to their application for Headship. The survey was sent to 79 schools in Birmingham, and 57 respondents returned their surveys. The findings from the survey provided insights into the career trajectories within the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher role at the incumbency stage in their careers. The career aspirations survey respondent data were processed using SPSS. Frequency tables, cross-tabulation and charts were used to present the findings from the career aspirations survey. The survey was divided into two sections – Section 1: About you and Section 2: Interest in Headship.

Descriptive Data

Table 19 shows the descriptive data. Although the sample is small, the characteristics of participants are fairly similar to the region. For example, regional statistics for Birmingham (2013) show that 53% of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers were female. This is reflected nationally, where there are 5,200 Assistant Headteachers and 2,200 Deputy Headteachers in local authority maintained secondary schools in England, of which 50% are female (DfE, 2013). In terms of ethnicity, 89.9% of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers were from a white British background in local authority maintained secondary schools. However, regional statistics in Birmingham

(2013) show that 78% of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers were of a white British background compared to 22% of ethnic other/unknown backgrounds.

Table 19 Descriptive data from the survey respondents

Variables	%
Gender (1 = female)	66.7
Role (Deputy Head = 1, Assistant Head = 0)	56.1
Categorical Variables	
Ethnicity	
White or White British	80.7
Black or Black British	1.8
Asian or Asian British	12.3
Irish	1.8
Other	3.5
NPQH	
Gained	26.3
Seeking	24.6
Not seeking	42.1
Unsure	3.5
Missing from form	3.5
Headship	
Interested	19.3
Possible	36.8
Not interested	43.9
Years as a classroom teacher	
1–5 years	29.8
6–10 years	36.8
11 + years	24.6
Missing from form	8.8
Years as a Deputy/Assistant Headteacher	
6 months–5 years	61.4
6–10 years	26.3
11 + years	12.3

4.2 Bivariate Data

This section presents eight bivariate comparisons. These represent eight questions that were part of the initial Phase 1 survey (see Appendix 1) that was sent to the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers. The Fisher's exact test of independence was employed to identify independence between nominal categories using a two-tailed test with an alpha level of 0.05.

4.2.1 Deputy/Assistant Headteachers* Gender

Table 20 examines whether the 'Deputy and Assistant Headteacher' categories are independent to the 'Gender' category.

*Table 20 Deputy/Assistant Headship role * gender*

	Gender		Total
	Male	female	
Assistant Head Count	12	13	25
% within Assistant Head	48%	52%	100%
Deputy Head Count	7	25	32
Count	19	38	57
% within Deputy/Assistant Head	33.3%	66.7%	100

The Fisher exact test statistic value is 0.0502. The result is *not* significant at $p < .05$.

4.2.2 Deputy/Assistant Headteachers * Years within the role

Table 21 examines whether the 'Deputy and Assistant Headteacher' category is independent to the 'years in current role' category.

*Table 21 Deputy/Assistant Headteachers * years within the role*

	Years within the role		Total
	1-5 years	6-15 years	
Assistant Head Count	19	6	25
% within Assistant Head	76%	24%	100%
Deputy Head Count	16	16	32
% within Deputy Head	50%	50%	100%
Count	35	22	57
% within Deputy/Assistant Head	61.4%	38.6%	100

The Fisher exact test statistic value is 0.0583. The result is *not* significant at $p < .05$.

4.2.3 Gender * Ethnicity

Table 22 examines whether the 'Gender' category is independent to the 'Ethnicity' category.

*Table 22 Gender * Ethnicity*

	Ethnicity		Total
	White or white British	Race other	
Male Count	15	4	19
% within male count	78.9%	21.1%	100%
Female Count	31	7	38
% within female count	81.6%	18.4%	100%
Count	35	22	57
% within male/female count	80.7%	19.3%	100

The Fisher exact test statistic value is 1. The result is *not* significant at $p < .05$.

4.2.4 Deputy/Assistant Headteachers * Ethnicity

Table 23 examines whether the 'race other' ethnicity category is independent to 'White or White British' category of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers.

Table 23 Deputy/Assistant Headteachers – White/White British * Race Other

	Ethnicity		Total
	White or white British	Race Other	
Assistant Head Count	20	5	25
% within Assistant Head	80%	20%	100%
Deputy Head Count	26	6	32
% within Deputy Head	81.3%	18.3%	100%
Count	46	11	57
% within Deputy/Assistant Head	80.7%	19.3%	100

The Fisher exact test statistic value is 1. The result is *not* significant at $p < .05$.

4.2.5 Deputy/Assistant Headteachers * NPQH

Table 24 examines whether the Deputy and Assistant 'NPQH Gained' category is independent to the NPQH Not Seeking category.

Table 24 Deputy/Assistant Headteachers * NPQH

	NPQH		Total
	Gained	Not seeking	
Assistant Head Count	3	22	25
% within Assistant Head	12%	88%	100%
Deputy Head Count	12	20	32
% within Deputy Head	37.5%	62.5%	100%
Count	15	42	57
% within Deputy/Assistant Head	26.3%	73.7%	100

The Fisher exact test statistic value is 0.0374. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

4.2.6 Deputy/Assistant Headship * Interest in Headship

Table 25 examines whether the 'Deputy and Assistant Headteachers Interest' category is independent to the 'Deputy and Assistant Headteachers Not Interested' category.

*Table 25 Deputy/Assistant Headship * Interest in Headship*

	Interest in Headship		Total
	Interested	Not interested	
Assistant Head Count	4	21	25
% within Assistant Head	16%	84%	100%
Deputy Head Count	7	25	32
% within Deputy Head	21.9%	78.1%	100%
Count	11	46	57
% within Deputy/Assistant Head	19.3%	80.7%	100%

The Fisher exact test statistic value is 0.7391. The result is *not* significant at $p < .05$.

4.2.7 Gender * Interest in Headship

Table 26 examines whether the 'Gender' category is independent of the 'Interest in Headship' category.

Table 26 Gender and Interest in Headship

	Interest in Headship		Total
	Interested	Not interested	
Male Count	2	17	19
% within male count	10.5%	89.5%	100%
Female Count	9	29	38
% within Female count	23.7%	76.3%	100%
Count	11	46	57
% within male/female count	19.3%	80.7%	100%

The Fisher exact test statistic value is 0.3041. The result is *not* significant at $p < .05$.

4.2.8 Deputy/Assistant Headteachers * Years as a classroom teacher

Table 27 examines whether 'Deputy and Assistant Headteacher' categories were independent to the 'Years as a classroom teacher' category.

*Table 27 Deputy/Assistant Headteachers * years as a classroom teacher*

	Years as a classroom teacher			Total
	1-5 years	6-10 years	11 years +	
Assistant Head Count	10	10	5	25
% within Assistant Head	40%	40%	20%	100%
Deputy Head Count	12	11	9	32
% within Deputy Head	37.5%	34.4%	28.1%	100%
Count	22	21	14	57
% within Deputy/Assistant Head	38.6%	38.6%	24.6%	100

The Fisher exact test statistic value is 0.8849. The result is *not* significant at $p < .05$.

4.2.9 Summary of the bivariate comparison

The bivariate data reflected statistical associations between the variables with regards to the career aspirations of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers:

- Years within the role – 76% of the Assistant Headteachers had been in their role for between 1 and 5 years, compared to 50% of the Deputy Headteachers. 39% of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers had been in their role between 6 and 15 years.
- Interest in Headship – 84% of the Assistant Headteachers indicated that they were not interested in Headship compared to 78% of Deputy Headteachers.
- NPQH – 88% of the Assistant Headteachers were not seeking to take their NPQH compared to 62.5% of the Deputy Headteachers.
- Gender – There was a higher female percentage in both the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher roles (66.7%).
- Years as a classroom teacher – 34% of the Deputy Headteachers were classroom teachers for between 6-10 years and 28% had been classroom teachers for over 11 years.

40% of the Assistant Headteachers were classroom teachers for between 6-10 years and 20% had been classroom teachers for over 11 years.

These themes will be examined further in this chapter. These tentative findings reflect only a small population of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham, England. The next section of this chapter presents the findings from the semi-structured interviews with both Deputy and Assistant Headteachers that were not interested in Headship at that time in their career.

4.3 Life History overview: The making of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers

This section presents the findings from the interviews in relation to the current role and career trajectories of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers that were not aspiring for the Headship role at that time in their career. The experiences of being a Headteacher will also be portrayed, along with a brief career overview of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers.

4.3.1 Current career views on the current role: Assistant Headteacher

The purpose of this section is to present a life history synopsis of the lives and experiences of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers that were interviewed. The section aims to present a real face and life to the reader so that further insights can be drawn from the day-to-day professional experiences (challenges and joys), as well as the personal experiences that could contribute to the decision-making process

during the career journey of Senior Leaders at different stages. After the life history synopsis, a thematic analysis will be applied with quotations reflecting the emerging themes throughout the section.

4.3.2 Assistant Headteacher 1 (AH1)

AH1 is from a British background and has been an Assistant Headteacher for six months. She works in a large secondary school in Birmingham (over 1000 students). AH1 has always wanted to become a teacher and started her teaching career when she was 18. When she was younger, she wanted to be a vet and then she thought about becoming a teacher. As a mother, AH1 showed very caring and protective attributes towards the students, almost reflecting a nurturing role. AH1 seemed aware of her 'shortfalls', or lack of confidence, and it seemed like others around her were aware of her lack of confidence, hence the encouragement from friends and family to seek higher promotional roles.

AH1 seemed determined to stress that her focus was to help the students to progress and that this was at the heart of her role. AH1 asserted that she had a lot of drive in her early career and wanted to have an impact in the classroom. She received a lot of support from her Principal, who encouraged her to apply for jobs. After becoming a Head of Year, she was determined to take on other roles to challenge herself. However, AH1 asserted that she was not a career person and she did not plan of where she wanted to be in 10 years. Her main confidence came from

applying for jobs where she believed she could make an impact. Nonetheless, AH1 did say that she had not had the full confidence to apply for the Assistant Headship role due to experiencing mental blocks and doubtful feelings about Assistant Headship. AH1's Headteacher was aware of these challenges and employed a professional coach that specialised in behaviour therapy to work with her for a year. She then secured the Assistant Headship post within the school.

AH1 said that her confidence within her role was partly due to the work that she did with a professional coach. Her Headteacher financed this support throughout the year. Her main concern with regards to Headship was linked to overseeing the management of staff, students and school results. Also, she was concerned about accountability associated with preparing for OFSTED, working with the Governors and managing weak staff in the light of employment law. She believed that the demands of the Headteacher's job were phenomenal compared to her job. The physical demands of Headship had also been witnessed by AH1. She said that her Principal arrived at school at 7.15 am and left the school at 7.15 pm. She also has teaching responsibilities and goes into school during the holiday periods. AH1 did not apply to complete her NPQH. She has two daughters under six years old and uses her weekends to give her children undivided attention; also, her husband works shift patterns, so she is constantly juggling with her home and work situation. She said that she loved her job and has a very understanding Headteacher, which has made a significant difference to her role. She has previously experienced moving to different regions to find employment, so she is aware of the challenges and disruption that comes with this. With regards to hobbies, she said that she did not

have any mainly because most of her time is taken up with looking after her children and her extended family.

4.3.3 Assistant Headteacher 2 (AH2)

AH2 is from a British background. AH2 has been in the role for six years. He works in a small/medium-sized school in Birmingham (between 500 and 900 students). He really enjoys his role as an Assistant Headteacher and has a big remit within the school, overseeing behaviour and learning within the school. The behaviour for learning remit includes helping students and teachers to maintain positive behaviours in lessons and around school. The primary aim of his role is to ensure that student behaviours are conducive to learning. He didn't have anyone that encouraged him to become an Assistant Headteacher, but he felt that he always had an aspiration to gain an Assistant or Deputy Headship role after his first career in banking.

AH2 spent over 15 years in banking, so he regularly draws on his professional and work-life experience when working with students. He gave the indication that he has a varied working background and now he wants to put something back into helping young people in school. He asserted that his working experience has helped him to be a person who is able to deal with people from all backgrounds; therefore, he aims to be fair to staff and students, as well as to model positive behaviours within his role. He feels that he has a positive relationship with the Headteacher. Howev-

er, he does acknowledge the challenges that the Headteacher experiences when implementing government reforms. He indicated that there were too many politics within the Headship role, especially when controlling the school budget, or implementing government policy with regards to exams. AH2 referred to the Headship as being a business, where teaching and learning is not on the agenda.

AH2 believed that the Headteacher must respond to government policy whether he liked it or not, and this can impact greatly on staff and the students. AH2 is over 50 years of age. He said that he had no aspirations for Headship. He did, however, say that, if he had started the role 20 years earlier, then things might have been different. When discussing the NPQH, AH2 felt that it used to be a 'total farce' because it was not catering for the participants that wanted to aspire to Headship. He now feels that the changes made with the NPQH are positive because it is designed specifically for those aspiring to the Headship role. He has no desire to do the NPQH because he is not aspiring to Headship. Work-life balance is quite a challenge for AH2, especially because he travels over 400 miles a week to school. His family and grandchildren are currently his 'hobbies'.

4.3.4 Assistant Headteacher 3 (AH3)

AH3 is from an Irish background and is a practising Catholic. This status qualifies him to aspire to Headship in a Catholic school if he chose to. AH3 has always worked in a caring profession and he indicated that his experiences and transferable

working skills have helped him when supporting the students and working with staff. AH3 has been in the Assistant Headteacher role for two years and has been a classroom teacher for 10 years. He works in a large secondary school in Birmingham (over 1000 students). He previously worked within the health and care services in varying capacities and sees his transition into education as an unexpected door opening for him. AH3 indicated that he had a strong faith and he has relied on prayer as a way of helping him to make professional decisions. At the age of 28, he decided to enter the teaching profession and, after one and a half years, he went from being an unqualified teacher to a qualified one.

AH3 did not always want to be an Assistant Headteacher; however, he felt that his passion for teaching children was a contributing factor to posts being offered to him. He felt that he had a very supportive Headteacher who allowed him to experience leadership at different levels, which has helped him in his own development. AH3 has asserted that his colleagues that he has met at training days and meetings have expressed that he has potential and it was said that he could be one of the next generation of Headteachers. He has also received comments from other Headteachers that he is on the right path.

AH3 is 40 years old and he said that he wants to gain as much experience as possible within his role in terms of leading staff and different aspects of a school. Currently, he is overseeing the behaviours of students and child protection. He is working with staff, vulnerable student groups and regularly leads multi-agency meetings

within the Assistant Headteacher role. He enjoys working with peers from other schools and sharing best practice. With regards to Headship, AH3 said that God has the plans for his life and he will know if the job is right for him. He has a very calm nature and he uses humour when discussing situations that could be perceived as stressful. For example, he talked about the challenge of managing the timetable for over 1000 students and how he would panic, have a heart attack and then get on with the job. It seems like AH3 utilizes the skills that he has learnt from his previous profession in care, especially when approaching challenges. AH3 has not applied to do his NPQH yet, mainly due to the criteria that the participant must be seeking a Headship role within two years. He will be attending an aspiring Headteacher course this year under the encouragement of his Headteacher for him to get an idea about what the Headship role is about if he did choose to pursue Headship as a career. In his spare time, AH3 enjoys playing the guitar.

4.3.5 Assistant Headteacher 4 (AH4)

AH4 is from a British background. AH4 has been in the role for five years and has been a classroom teacher for 25 years. She works in a large secondary school in Birmingham (over 1,500 students) and considers herself as non-ambitious, as she was strongly encouraged by others to go for the Assistant Headteacher role. AH4 said that she really enjoyed her role and, over the years, has found contentment in all the jobs that she has been in. She enjoys the idea of having a varied role; however, she has said that when she gets bored she will start looking around. When she

initially looked at the job description for her current role, she thought that she could not do it. However, she was encouraged by close friends and teachers to apply for the job and she got it. AH4 indicated that she really enjoyed the friendships that she had with staff in the school. She has never seen herself as a good manager of people and this is also one aspect of the role that she finds hard. However, AH4 really enjoys training other staff through CPD and coaching. She enjoys the variety within the role and expressed that she has many hats of responsibility.

AH4 described her career as having had lots of jobs that have followed a non-linear route. This could be attributed to the fact that she has had to care for her family as a single parent. She enjoys experiencing new roles and challenges that she feels capable of doing. AH4 asserted that she has always enjoyed the teaching aspect of the role. She enjoys the sense of camaraderie with the other senior leaders within the role; however, her perception of Headship is that it leaves you in an isolated position. She concluded that she did not think that she had the right skill set when she compared her role to the Headteachers role. She considers herself as a people person, who likes to be liked by others. In her career, she has always tended to be pushed than to push herself to apply for roles. AH4 perceives Headship as a very isolated position, which is away from staff and students. Her Headteacher also does not do any teaching and she would not want that for herself. She enjoys being connected to the curriculum and students through teaching, the staff through training and coaching. AH4 referred to the size of the school and the levels of accountability that the Headteacher carries, for example identifying where the problems are in the school and the staff and having to oversee and manage the interventions to address

the problems. She considers these as pressures from the Government and referred to the Headship job as not being safe anymore, especially when Headteachers have been immediately removed from their posts if the school is considered as inadequate. Therefore, she is happy with her current remit and is happy to line manage her staff.

AH4 stated that Headship was an age-related thing and, if she was going to apply for Headship, she would have done it 10-15 years ago. AH4 enjoys the friendships that she has made within the senior management team. She is a single parent of four children and so has had to ensure that she is there when her children need her. As a result, she tends to maintain a work-life balance by trying not to take work home. She acknowledges that this can be very hard at times. AH4 expressed that she has a good relationship with her Deputy Headteachers and her Headteacher and she is given freedom within her role. She will be thinking about retirement within the next 10 years, which has contributed to her staying in her current position. In her spare time, AH4 enjoys socialising with friends.

4.3.6 Assistant Headteacher 5 (AH5)

AH5 is from a British background. AH5 has been in the role for four years and has been a classroom teacher for nine years. She works in a medium/large-sized secondary Catholic school in Birmingham (over 1000 students). AH5 has a background in Physical Education, which had been a passion of hers since being a child. She referred to having a good PE teacher at school when she was young who inspired her and, at the age of 12, she knew that she wanted to become a PE teacher. AH5 grew up with two main career passions: to teach in a school and to practise sport that she enjoyed. She described herself as a sporty child, so when AH4 went to University and trained as a PE teacher it was an expected career step. She said that she did not have any doubt about what she wanted to do. Education was an important aspect in her family life. Her father was a Headteacher and he also was an inspiration to her in her teaching career.

At the time of the interview, AH5 seemed to be experiencing an emotionally challenging time, mainly because the career that she had always aspired to from the age of 12 was coming to an end or was going through an uncertain change. This was attributed to the pressures that she had experienced within her Assistant Headship role. AH5 has her own perspective on the Headship role, as she has witnessed both positive and negative aspects of Headship being the daughter of a Headteacher. AH5 referred to herself as struggling at this point in her career journey. She was not happy in her role and expressed that she worked with excellent staff; however,

having a remit to manage the behaviour in the school had affected her emotionally and personally. Also, AH5 was not a practising Catholic and, as she was at the highest point with regards to being promoted within her role, this may well have an impact on the outcome. She was at the process of resigning from her school and wanted to pursue an alternative career within education after 13 years, as well as focus on her personal life (e.g. starting a family). AH5 was at the stage where she was keen to do something different due to the intensity of her role; for example, her day included getting to work very early and leaving very late. Sometimes she missed meals, which had led to her feeling very tired and unhappy over a period of time. She expressed that she did not have a lot of training for, and within, the role which was managing the behaviours of students within a pastoral remit, and she went on a one-day Assistant Headteacher course. She enjoyed teaching and working with young people and staff, however she had come to the point that she needed to make some changes in both her professional and personal life.

AH5 felt that she had been experiencing a lot of personal and emotional demands, which had started to take their toll, especially in terms of not managing her personal health and the difficulties in managing the continued stressful experiences with the students and maintaining the expectations within the role. When discussing her role, AH5 said that she was 36 years old and she was expected to continue in this role for another 31 years! She said that it was not going to happen. AH5 describes herself as a perfectionist; she says that, if things are not as they should be, it does affect her self-esteem and self-confidence. AH5 did not apply to do her NPQH. This

could be because she was not a practising Catholic and she had reached the highest role as a non-practising Catholic within the school.

4.3.7 Assistant Headteacher 6 (AH6)

AH6 is from an Asian ethnic background. She works in a school that has a high percentage of Asian students. AH6 has been in her role since 2003; she was previously the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and has had a range of roles within the school. She works in a large school (over 900 students) in Birmingham and has been a classroom teacher for over 15 years. She conveyed a passion for helping the lives and families of the children. She had a desire to go into senior management and wanted to have an influence, especially in decision-making at a higher level within the school. The school has a range of social deprivation and language needs, which might have inspired AH6 to work in the school where she could relate to both students and parents, as well as to reflect a cultural understanding of many Asian students within the school. She referred to the families as her customers.

AH6 said that she had a massive remit which was focused on managing students with special educational needs, English as a second language and behaviour in the school. She leads a pastoral team and feels strongly about inclusion and helping all students to succeed. AH6 believes that she is a teacher at heart, which should be the essence of the Assistant Headteacher role. Her perspective was very much

based on being empathetic with supporting staff and students to help them to develop. By teaching alongside staff, she can relate to their experiences as teachers as well as model good practice in encouraging staff to develop within the role and to teach the students more effectively. AH6 wanted to be in leadership and be part of the teaching process. She also expressed that she came into teaching to teach and that forms the purpose of her being in that role. Conversely, her experiences of her previous and current Headteacher roles were that of being detached from having a practical impact on staff and students. AH6 believed that understanding classroom teaching was essential to being respected within her role, because she is a teacher who understands the challenges of classroom teachers and she is a school leader who can empathise with teachers that are struggling in their roles.

When discussing the Headship role, AH6 asserted that she did not see a lot of teaching or much interaction from the Headteacher with the students. She perceives Headship as more of a strategic and administrative role that is removed from the classroom. AH6 expressed concern about the detached role that the Headteacher can have when trying to influence the teaching culture within the school. She indicated that, if the Headteacher is not teaching in the classroom, the relatability to teachers is minimalised, which could hinder true day-to-day impact with staff. She expressed that the practical approach and relationship with the students had more impact than not having any classroom contact with the students. AH6 is over 50 years old. She has not applied to do her NPQH; however, she has completed her Masters qualification in Education. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her family. She comes from a scientific background and feels that she has a family-

orientated support system in place. In her spare time, she tries to keep fit. She began practising yoga years ago but has not been up to do that on a regular basis.

4.4 Current career views on the current role: Deputy Headteacher

4.4.1 Deputy Headteacher 1 (DH1)

DH1 is from a British background. He has been in his role for over nine years and has been a classroom teacher for over six years. He works in a small school in Birmingham (between 100 and 500 students). Although his mother was a Deputy Headteacher, he always said that he would never become a teacher. His main interests were in travelling when he was younger. He also considered himself a shy person. Due to an unexpected change of mind after his travelling experiences, DH1 decided to train to become a teacher. He was promoted very early on to the Head of Year role and this motivated him to continue to develop his leadership capacity and confidence to become a senior leader. During his teaching experience as a middle lead, he had the opportunity to take part in a school project where he did very well (and the school was highlighted positively). DH1's confidence and vision continued to grow within the role to the point where he started to see his role as one that could 'shape the educational future of his local school as well as the country'.

DH1 is a father of two children and he spoke assertively about the importance of supporting the students and helping to develop their future. He conveyed a sense of

fatherly protection and care about the students in the school. With regards to training within the role, DH1 had previously attended aspiring Headteacher courses. He went on a senior leadership exchange visit, where a colleague told him that he had the potential to become a Headteacher. That comment motivated him and was the start to his self-belief becoming stronger. DH1 commented about his previous schools and the different Headteachers that he had worked for. He seems to have learnt how to work with and manage himself under an autocratic Headteacher, whereas in his current school is totally the opposite, where taking risks and experiential learning is encouraged amongst staff. DH1 discussed Headship as a pinnacle in someone's career and how it would be a privilege to take up a role with such status; however, his main concern would be to make sure that his family life was not disrupted in a negative way by such a change. He said that he was not daunted by Headship, as he felt that the expectations were the same within his current role but on a higher level. DH1 also said that he would try to manage school problems before bringing them to the Headteacher.

DH1 has completed his NPQH. He said that it did not teach him anything, only to be reflective about one's practice. He indicated that, if you know and understand the limitations of the NPQH, then you can be happy with that. DH1, however, has completed some Masters modules in Educational Leadership. He said that he enjoyed the lectures and learning about the topics, but the workload was difficult to manage due to school and family life. The biggest concern now is his work-life balance, in that he has children and an important family life that is a priority to him. DH1 is over 45 years old. In his spare time, he enjoys cooking and spending time with his family.

DH1 can de-stress by taking advantage of his long journey to and from home. He also goes away with his family during the holiday periods.

4.4.2 Deputy Headteacher 2 (DH2)

DH2 is from a British background. She has been in her current role for over 10 years. She works in a small school in Birmingham (between 100 and 500 students). She has had a variety of roles in her teaching career. DH2 had children quite early in her teaching career. As a result, caring for her children was a priority when applying for jobs and seeking promotion. DH2 was encouraged by senior management to apply for higher roles within the school, but did not take the opportunity the first time. However, later (after she started her family) she decided to apply for senior leadership roles. After being successful, she then completed some Masters modules. DH2 said that completing the Masters modules was fantastic as it gave her leadership and management insight and helped her to reflect on her role. She also expressed that she found that the Masters modules were more useful to her work. However, due to family life and the demands of the role, she did not complete the whole course.

As a mother, DH2 conveyed caring and nurturing attributes when talking about supporting the students. She also indicated that her door was always open for staff and the students. It seemed like the pastoral and coaching elements of the job were the things that she enjoyed doing. On discussing Headship, DH2 referred to an inter-

view that she attended. She was asked if she wanted to be a Headteacher, whereupon she said 'no'. She went on to explain that she did not see the Headteachers role as one that would fully engage her. DH2 also asserted that the Headship role takes you out of 'the mix' whereas, in her role, she has the day-to-day opportunities to see the impact in the school by working alongside staff. DH2 expressed that she can attend training days and disseminate that information to staff; she also enjoys the variety within the role and the freedom to make a difference across faculties. She expressed that she is in the 'nitty-gritty' of school life in being able to see more lessons, measure impact, and work with new staff, whereas the Headteacher would not have the time to do that. The Headteacher is expressed as being more administrative and business focused, which does not interest DH2. DH2 is over 50 years of age and she seems very settled within her role. She has been in the school for over 10 years and does not seem to have any impetus to move from a role where she has developed systems, managed others and been the point of contact for many staff and students. In her spare time, she enjoys going on holiday breaks and socialising with friends.

4.4.3 Deputy Headteacher 3 (DH3)

DH3 is from a British background and has been in her role for over 16 years. She works in a medium/large school (over 900 students) in Birmingham. She really enjoys the job and feels that she has a very good relationship with the Headteacher. DH3 is a practising Catholic in a Catholic school. She said that she really loved

working with children and that was the most exciting thing for her. She did have an interest in science and medicine, but it was the thought that she could have an impact on the lives of children that really prompted her to work in education. DH3 had a good school experience and she said that she had good teachers. During her career before working in a school, she worked with youth groups and ran a youth club. She decided that she wanted to work within Catholic education and so went on to train with a Catholic Training College. DH3 said that she had a lot of encouragement from her Governors and the senior leadership within the school to apply for her role. She seemed quiet in nature and indicated a distinction between the Headship role, which could be perceived as the 'face' of the school, and the Deputy Headteacher, who is in the background. She indicated that she was very happy in her position, especially when working with a fabulous Head. DH3 enjoys the aspect of making decisions in the school and currently teaches on a full-time table. She describes herself as a very good number two.

DH3 describes her role as 'big' and recently it has been quite hectic due to OFSTED preparations and changes to the performance management procedure. DH3 has been in the school for over 12 years and has watched her role and the school change. She has also been in a senior leadership position for 17 years and, from her experience, she has been able to experience second-hand some of the issues that the Headteacher must deal with in terms of working to OFSTED standards, the school having to manage a range of Human Resources issues that they are not trained to deal with, and national curriculum changes that will affect the staff and the students. DH3 perceives Headship as a hard role, especially in terms of managing

the finances, dealing with staff, e.g. staff misconduct, and not being able to switch off. She gave an example of a small fire that happened on a weekend a few years ago. DH3 and the Headteacher came into school to make sure that the building was safe, they then had to sort out the repairs and the painting of the building. She mentioned this as one example of crisis management, the priority of the school and managing her personal life at the same time. DH3 does not have her own family; however, she finds that she tends to spend long hours at school. DH3 completed her NPQH about nine years ago and she has also done a range of CPD courses. She said that she picked out what was useful to her in her role and has used what she has learnt with staff, indicating the irrelevance of some resources. Previously,

DH3 applied for some Deputy Headship roles but she did not get them. She said that it was partly due to having to spend time caring for her mother, so she had ensured that she could manage both caring and work responsibilities. This must have been quite a stressful period which would require understanding and some level of flexibility from the leadership team. DH3 is over 50 years old. She indicated that she would be too old to apply for a Headship and seems settled in her mind that she is an excellent number two. In her spare time, she enjoys reading to escape. She has a large extended family and she spends time with them on the weekends and holidays. She also likes gardening, but she doesn't have any big hobbies.

4.4.4 Deputy Headteacher 4 (DH4)

DH4 is from an Irish background and is a practising Catholic. She and has been in her role for just over one year. She works in a large secondary school in Birmingham (over 1000 students). She has been in education in some capacity for over 20 years. She has always had the desire to become a teacher; however, she did not plan to become a Deputy Headteacher. Her first choice was associated with primary teaching. DH4 described a time in her life when she was thinking about her career and she indicated that the career choices were limited for Irish Catholic girls, either teaching or nursing. The historical period indicated how the caring professions were pushed onto girls, combined with the minimum of careers advice at the time. DH4 really enjoyed classroom teaching and describes herself as a people person, quite driven with the tendency to look out for what might be next. She has had various jobs within education, from being the Second in Department to the Head of Department. There was a period in her life when she spent some time out of education for family reasons. When she returned, she continued to take on roles as they came to her.

DH4 wanted to get experiences at different levels of leading the school, which helped her to progress in her career. She seems to be experiencing a steep learning curve after being in the role for a year and she is aware of the differences with regards to the strategic overview that the Deputy Headteacher has within the school in comparison with her Assistant Headship role, which she previously held. The Assis-

tant Head teaching role was concerned with dealing with day-to-day issues and concerns, whereas the Deputy Headship role was concerned with dealing with external issues (Governors, external agencies, parents, etc.). DH4 describes the new role as extremely demanding and less defined, especially in terms of learning new school systems, being visible and being the main point of contact from staff. She also expressed that, as the Deputy Headteacher, she feels that she is expected to know everything, especially when providing advice and guidance to staff, whereas things were different when she was an Assistant Headteacher. She would then look to the Deputy Headteacher for expertise and more senior guidance. She enjoys the role, but is aware of the time constraints with regards to maintaining a positive work-life balance.

DH4 is over 45 years of age and a mother. She has not completed her NPQH. When she discovered that the NPQH was no longer a requirement for an aspiring Headteacher, she thought to herself 'Why put myself through that?' She also mentioned that she had friends that had taken the NPQH and she had received mixed reviews. However, she did express the view that the NPQH was a tool for professional development. She said it would be important to consider how much time would be required to pass the course; on the other hand, it also seemed onerous, especially when trying to manage her role. In her spare time, she enjoys cooking; she subscribes to *Good Housekeeping* magazine (and expressed that she had the previous four editions still to open) and she enjoys spending time with her family.

4.4.5 Deputy Headteacher 5 (DH5)

DH5 is from a British background and has been in the role for over two years. She has been a classroom teacher for six and a half years and she works in a medium/large sized school in Birmingham (between 500 and 1000 students). DH5 has worked within education since she left University. She seems to have an interest in travelling and she lived abroad for a period. When she came back to the UK, she completed a Graduate Teaching Programme and her career progressed from there. She did not plan to become an Assistant/Deputy Headteacher but had an interest in working with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. This has been her main school, which has a high percentage of Asian students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

When discussing her role, she describes it as a role that has evolved especially in terms of accountability and impact. She said that she was accountable for a large remit within the school (pastoral and behaviour) where the education and progress of the students was vital; however, it was important that the staff she was working with could see their part in the bigger picture in helping students to progress within the school. Due to DH5 overseeing the pastoral and behaviour remit, she expressed that it was sometimes hard for staff to see the light at the end of the tunnel, because most of the time her staff are dealing with and managing challenging behaviours. She appeared to have strong motivational skills and a positive team work focus.

DH5 believed that she was growing into her current role and that there was no one set way of doing something or being a Deputy Headteacher. She enjoyed acting at that level and would describe herself as a values-driven Deputy Headteacher who has earned her stripes. DH5 also said that the main reason for her not aspiring for Headship was that she enjoyed the level of responsibility that she currently had and would not want to change that. Headship accountability was her biggest concern, along with the consequences that Headteachers face in terms of health, well-being and personal time. DH5 really enjoys the role and she enjoys the relationships that she has with staff members and students. Her main reason for applying for jobs within education is because these jobs have interested her or make sense to her.

DH5 particularly enjoys working at this school because of the ethos of the school, having an innovative Head who encourages freethinking combined with her desire to support disadvantaged students. DH5 also teaches in the classroom. She said that the classroom teaching experience keeps her within people's reality, as well as keeping her 'grounded'. She believed that this was a crucial part of being in the senior leadership team within the school. She enjoys training staff; however, she is aware of the time demands within the role. DH5 has not completed her NPQH. She referred to the NPQH as a course that is for the status of Headteachers. She spends a lot of time with family and has hobbies. She travels away with the family during holidays so that she completely switches off from work.

4.4.6 Deputy Headteacher 6 (DH6)

DH6 has been in the role for one year and she has been an Assistant Headteacher for six years. DH6 had been a classroom teacher for over five years. She had previously studied psychology and then completed her PGCE. DH6 always had a passion to work with children. She did not have a decisive plan, but she found that she really enjoyed working in education. She currently seems very settled in her school and enjoys the relationships that she has with staff and her students. DH6 joined the school as a Newly Qualified Teacher and she was encouraged by the Senior Leadership Team to go for promotions within the school. She rose through the roles to become Acting Deputy Headteacher, during which time she has become aware of the differences between the Deputy Headship role and the Assistant Headship role.

DH6 expressed that the brief she had as an Assistant Headteacher was more challenging in terms of the level of responsibility. She indicated that, in her previous role, she would deal with the day-to-day issues with students and teachers, whereas within the Deputy Headship role the more serious issues would be discussed directly with the Head. She also referred to there being teams within teams. DH6 said that it can be overwhelming for someone who is just starting the role because there was a requirement to adopt and develop a more strategic overview of the school, instead of being embroiled in the day-to-day issues when she was an Assistant Headteacher. DH6 described the Deputy Headship role as enormous and huge. The biggest challenge currently for DH6 was the pace of change in the role compared to the As-

sistant Headteacher role. She currently is the only teacher in a faculty where she has experienced some pressure in being able to teach the students to the best of her ability, mark work, prepare for exams, manage her pastoral remit, lead a team of staff, meet with parents and manage her personal life. Her work-life balance was described as completely imbalanced, so things could only get worse. She also believed that she has given enough of her life to the role.

When discussing her thoughts about Headship, DH6 said that Headship was not a role that she would want to aspire to, mainly due to the level of responsibility and the fast-paced decisions that the Headteacher sometimes must make; for example, the Headteacher had to decide on whether to enter the Year 11 students for exams with a week's notice. The leadership team had to get together and make this decision due to changes in the examination papers. This decision would affect both staff and their teaching, as well as the student examination results, which would be reflected in the school league tables.

DH6 indicated that she felt strongly about the future of the students that she taught. DH6 currently teaches A level qualifications. DH6 said that she enjoys teaching, however the marking side of teaching can be challenging, in addition to the whole school responsibilities that needed to be addressed. She has not applied to complete her NPQH. She had the opportunity to go on an aspiring Headteacher course, but she declined, mainly because it was not her priority at that time in her life. Her family is the most important thing to her and they are her support network. She said

that she did not have any hobbies and it was her family that kept her going. DH6 was in the role as the Acting Deputy Headteacher, so these experiences have informed her decision of whether to aspire to Headship or not.

4.4.7 Deputy Headteacher 7 (DH7)

DH7 has been in the role for six years and has been a classroom teacher for over six years. She works in a small school in Birmingham (between 100 and 500 students). DH7 did not always want to aspire within her teaching career, but she has been driven by her passion to make a difference to the lives of young people. She was encouraged by senior staff and the Headteacher to apply for jobs to stretch her experience. She expressed that she had a very good relationship with her Headteacher, whom she had known previously from another school. DH7 secured the role as an Assistant Headteacher, which enabled her to develop her skills within the role. It seems like DH7 experienced a form of Headteacher nurturing and protection in her role, where she had the opportunity to be mentored closely by her Headteacher. She considered herself as being lucky and described herself as being 'grown into the role' under the guidance of her Headteacher. She could make mistakes, yet felt protected by her Headteacher.

When DH7 entered the Deputy Headship role, she said that she did not feel daunted and her confidence within the role, combined with her experiences encountered with the Headteacher, helped her. DH7 previously had a 9 am to 5 pm role in industry.

She decided to pursue a career as a teacher when she had her first child. Her intention was to return to her previous role, but she found that she really enjoyed her career as a teacher. DH7's promotions to higher educational roles ensued. DH7 enjoys the staff relationships that she has and regularly trains staff through CPD sessions and coaching. She describes the Headship role as scary and emotionally draining; her main worry would be that she would not be a great Headteacher, and she would not want to affect the lives of young people in a negative way. Although DH7 did not express what she had witnessed (for example, negative situations that resulted in being emotional drained) when being mentored by the Headteacher, she might have been party to some of the problematic decisions that the Headteacher had to make.

DH7 demonstrated prominent levels of care and determination to support the students. At times, she seemed to be comparing herself to her Headteacher and whether she could follow in the same footsteps. She referred to the role as being emotionally draining if you care about the welfare of the staff and the students and she did not want to let them down. This experience might have been associated with the knowledge and an anxiety that she would not always have her Headteacher to guide and support her in the future. She currently feels that she has a good work-life balance and she is receiving a well-paid salary. She also does not feel that she is working too hard or too many long hours.

When discussing her views about the NPQH, DH7 described herself as a serial NPQH avoider, albeit being told to complete it almost 15 years ago! She wondered if it was part of her avoidance of becoming a Headteacher. However, she did mention other learning opportunities that she had been given that involved developing her practice. DH7 is currently working on a Specialist Leader role, which involves working with local schools and sharing best practice. DH7 has a family and she is over 40 years of age. In her spare time, she enjoys keeping fit, running and going to the gym.

4.4.8 Deputy Headteacher 8 (DH8)

DH8 is from an Asian heritage and works in a school with a high percentage of ethnic minority students in a deprived area of Birmingham. She is bilingual and can relate to the parents and the students in school. DH8 expressed a passion about helping the students to progress. It was almost as though she wanted to put something back into the educational community of disadvantaged students, Asian students. DH8 shared passionately about the transition projects for students with English as a second language and the importance of all students succeeding. DH8 was of an Indian background. She expressed that, in some cases, Indian girls are not always encouraged to aspire to high roles and so nothing was expected from her. She received a lot of support from her family throughout her career. However, she wanted to push the boundaries in terms of making a difference to the lives of young

people and not going down the traditional route of getting married early and not having a high-profile job.

DH8 has been a Deputy Headteacher for six years and works in a medium-sized school in Birmingham (between 500 and 1000 students). She had been the Deputy Headteacher for four years in a primary school before in Birmingham. She is currently working with the Headteacher on a behaviour and transition remit within her school and is enjoying the responsibilities working with the staff, students and the local primary schools. Her role also involves overseeing innovative learning, behaviour and language support within the school. DH8 noticed that, earlier on in her career, she demonstrated a drive within her educational roles and could lead others as a middle leader. She continued working hard within her role and was promoted to the Assistant Headship and then she became a Deputy Headteacher. Having the strategic responsibility for the school and the ability to implement change, especially in teaching and learning, were attractive to her.

DH8 describes herself as having a lot of autonomy, which she likes. She said that she is exhausted half of the time, but she enjoys the challenge of the variety within the role. She had previously applied for a Headship role, but she was not successful. However, DH8 also thought that Headship could be a future possibility, but now in her career she was concentrating on building her experiences and skills in working strategically with the Headteacher on delivering the whole school initiatives. DH8 has an educational background in science and she was drawn to education

primarily with the aim to make a difference to the lives of children. DH8 said that she has not reached the best work-life balance for herself yet; she has said that she does not sleep very well currently and finds it hard to switch off due to the many things that she has to do. She said that she keeps a notebook near to her when she goes to sleep, just in case she wakes up and needs to write something down. DH8 has completed her NPQH. In her spare time, she enjoys relaxing in her garden, which she finds to be very peaceful along with spending time with her family. She is also planning to join a gym.

4.4.9 Emerging themes

Table 28 and Table 29 present overviews of the emerging themes associated with the career trajectories of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham based on the descriptive data and the semi-structured interviews. The themes have been linked to the personal characteristics, role, career journey and trajectory and the perception of Headship.

Table 28 Assistant Headteacher personal characteristics, role, career and perception of Headship

	Personal Characteristics	Role	Career Trajectory and Aspiration	Perception of Headship
AH 1	<p>Married Family No hobbies Medium/large secondary school Employed in a large school (over 1000 students)</p>	<p>Role contentment Staff and student support Work life imbalance</p>	<p>Passion to support students Described self as a non-career person No career plan Not completed NPQH</p>	<p>Not interested in Headship Challenging role Staff management challenges High physical and emotional demands Understand media and legislation</p>
AH 2	<p>Father 6 years in the role Small/medium sized school Over 50 years Employed in a medium sized school (500-900 students)</p>	<p>Role contentment Pastoral focus Staff and student support through training and coaching Travels over 40 miles Work life imbalance</p>	<p>Previously worked in banking Planned decision to enter education No desire to be a Headteacher NPQH not completed</p>	<p>Not interested in Headship Challenge to implement Government reforms Internal politics Headship is a business Limited choices in the role</p>
AH 3	<p>Over 40 years old 2 years in the role Classroom teacher for 10 years Religious school Employed in a large school (over 1000 students)</p>	<p>Role contentment Enjoys having a varied role Relationship building Student, staff and parental support Enjoys teaching</p>	<p>Building leadership skills across departments Attending courses for aspiring Headteachers Meeting and networking opportunities NPQH not completed</p>	<p>Headship is a possibility</p>
AH 4	<p>Single parent Teacher for 25 years In current role for 5 years People person Employed in a large school (over 1000 students)</p>	<p>Role contentment Role modelling focus Dealing with external issues Visible role High expectations High expertise Work life imbalance</p>	<p>Describes herself as 'non-ambitious' Encouraged by teachers and friends to apply for higher roles Tended to be pushed in her career Does not have the skill set for Headship No desire for Headship</p>	<p>Isolated position No teaching opportunities High levels of accountability Age related Not a safe role</p>

<p>AH 5</p>	<p><i>In role for 4 years Classroom teacher for over 9 years Medium sized religious school Father was a Headteacher Employed in a large school (over 1000 students)</i></p>	<p><i>Staff, student and parent support Role modelling Enjoyed staff relationships Work life imbalance Challenging role Limited training given for the role Emotional demands</i></p>	<p><i>Not aspiring for Headship 13 years in education Attended a 1 day Assistant Headteacher course Not happy in the role Career change Resignation stage NPQH not completed</i></p>	<p><i>Not interested in Headship</i></p>
<p>AH 6</p>	<p><i>Over 50 years old Classroom teacher for over 15 years Medium sized school Employed in a large school (over 1000 students) Bilingual</i></p>	<p><i>Role contentment Staff, student and parental support Role modelling</i></p>	<p><i>Passion to work with children Planned to go into school leadership to make a difference Completed a Masters in Education NPQH not completed</i></p>	<p><i>Detached role Limited impact on individual students Limited teaching opportunities</i></p>

Table 29 Deputy Headteacher personal characteristics, role, career and perception of Headship

	Personal Characteristics	Role	Career Trajectory and Aspiration	Perception of Headship
DH 1	9 years in the role Married Mother was a Deputy Headteacher Classroom teacher for 6 years Employed in a small school (100-500 students)	Role contentment Staff and student support Work life balance can be a challenge	Passion to support young people Career encouragement from Senior Management Early promotion as a teacher to Head of Year Completed NPQH	Interest in Headship Attractive role Status Similar expectations to current role
DH 2	10 years in the role Married Mother Over 50 years old Employed in a small school (100-500 students)	Role contentment Pastoral focus Staff and student support through training and coaching	Variety of roles in teaching career Career encouragement from Senior Management Attends courses which support staff development. Never wanted to be a Headteacher NPQH not completed	Not an engaging role Administrative Business focussed Not interested in Headship
DH 3	Over 50 years old In role for 17 years Employed in a small medium/large school Religious school Family commitments Employed in a medium sized school (500-900 students)	Role contentment Staff and student support Full timetable Manages situations on behalf of the Headteacher	Background in working with young people Encouragement from Governors and Senior Management to apply for higher roles Prefers to be in the background Does not want to aspire to Headship	Hard role Need skills to manage human resources, finances, staff misconduct, crisis management /
DH 4	1 year in the role Married Family Over 45 years In educational roles for over 20 years People person In current role for 1 year Employed in a large school (over 1000 students)	Role contentment Role modelling focus Dealing with external issues Visible role High expectations High expertise Work life imbalance	New role Learning the ropes Developing strategic skills Headteacher support NPQH not completed	Headship is a possibility
DH 5	Married In role for 6.5 years Classroom teacher for over 6 years Medium sized school Employed in a medium sized school (500-900 students)	Settled in role Staff, student and parent support Role modelling Enjoyed level of responsibility	Not aspiring for Headship NPQH not completed	Not interested in Headship Headship accountability Health and wellbeing consequences Time constraints

DH 6	<p>Married In role for 1 year AH for 6 years Classroom teacher for over 5 years Employed in a large school (over 1000 students)</p>	<p>Role contentment Staff, student and parental support Challenging compared to Assistant Headship role Strategic focus High pace of change</p>	<p>Passion to work with children No career plan Encouraged by Senior Leadership to aspire for roles Acting Deputy Head role Declined to attend aspiring to Headship courses</p>	<p>Not interested in Headship Headship pressures High levels of responsibility and accountability</p>
DH 7	<p>Married In role for 6 years Classroom teacher for 6 years Over 40 years old Has personal hobbies Employed in a small school (100-500 students)</p>	<p>Good work life balance Well paid role Enjoys working in collaboration with other local schools Role enjoyment Staff, student and parental support</p>	<p>Passion to make a difference to the lives of children Promoted early in teaching role Encouraged by Senior Leadership to aspire for roles Strong Headteacher involvement NPQH not completed</p>	<p>Headship is a possibility Headship is a scary role Emotionally draining Concerns about not being a great Headteacher High accountability Pressure</p>
DH 8	<p>Married In role for 6 years Deputy Headteacher in a previous role Bilingual Employed in a large school (over 1000 students)</p>	<p>Role contentment Staff, student and parental support Enjoys cultural engagement with families Work life imbalance Hard to switch off Sometimes experiences sleeping issues</p>	<p>Passion to make a difference to the lives of children Leadership potential identified early in teaching career Building strategic skills across the school Highly motivated NPQH completed</p>	<p>Interested in Headship A role that can make the biggest difference to the lives of children and young people</p>

4.5 Conclusion

The data suggests that the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers shared similar role attributes and experiences, even though they were at different career stages. The descriptive data (see Table 18) show that 19% of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers were interested in Headship whilst another 37% considered Headship as a possible career option. The findings from the semi-structured interviews reinforce the descriptive data although it is not generalizable. Five out of the fourteen senior leaders perceived Headship as a possibility or were interested in Headship. These senior leaders were also taking steps to develop their leadership and strategic skills within their school.

Table 18 shows that 43.9% of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers that were not interested in Headship. This finding was reinforced by 65% in the semi-structured life history interviews. This group of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers experienced role contentment and enjoyed developing, building and maintaining relationships with staff, students and parents. Many had personal caring responsibilities such as looking after the children or caring for a parent. Role challenges were mentioned and accepted for most of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers and there seemed to be an understanding and security within the role. The desire to move into a higher career role with additional expectations and responsibilities was not deemed as a suitable career option at that stage in this group's career trajectories. This Chapter has examined the findings from the survey data and the semi-

structured interviews. Chapter 5 will discuss the findings in relation to the literature review in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the career trajectories of 14 Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham based on the Phase 1 (survey) and Phase 2 (semi-structured life history interview) findings and the literature review with reference to the research questions below:

RQ¹ What are the views of current Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham on

(i) the current role and experience of 'being a Headteacher'?

RQ² (ii) their own career trajectories?

This chapter identifies and discusses eight themes in the results which may influence Deputy and Assistant Headteachers' career aspirations; *Perception of the Headship role, Attitudes towards relationships, Attitudes towards autonomy and accountability, Personal life and Health, Career and Professional impact*. This chapter

reviews these themes in the light of the earlier chapters, which provided a critical summary of existing knowledge and policy.

5.1 Different perspectives on Headship

The accounts provided in Chapter 4 led me to distinguish between ‘Nesters’ (*Senior leaders that were settled in their role but played a very important part in the school*), the ‘Movers’ (*Senior leaders that were active in developing their experience and had an interest in Headship*), and the ‘Settlers’ who were defined as *senior leaders that had come to a standstill in their role and needed a change*. After further reflection on the findings, I considered the many relationship networks that the Nesters had developed throughout their career and the investment that that they had made in their schools. The Nester term was then changed to the ‘Bonders’, which seemed more fitting for this group of senior leaders as it highlighted the key characteristics within the role (see Table 30).

The Bonders in the research denote an identity and behaviour that is concerned about serving, nurturing others and acquiring the necessary skills to carry out the responsibilities required from them. This role is an important role which is able to lay down and support the required foundations within the school structure; however, they are not easily moved. The Leaver in this research reflects a senior leader that had decided to leave the teaching profession. The Movers were then redefined to having ‘Bridger’ characteristics, in that this group of Deputy and Assistant

Headteachers demonstrated a great deal of career movement and relationship building inside and outside of the school. Their actions were essential in building both internal and external partnerships which would build the school community offering the students a strong sense of belonging. This finding corroborates with the ideas of Putnam (2000, see paragraph § 2.1.3) who suggests that the social networks in the community are essential for building support and trust networks. Table 30 shows the Bondor/Bridger/Leaver profile for the Deputy and Assistant Teachers interviewed.

Table 30 Career profiles of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers

Participant	Assistant Headteacher	Career Profile
AH 1	Assistant Headteacher	Bonder
AH 2	Assistant Headteacher	Bonder
AH 3	Assistant Headteacher	Bridger
AH 4	Assistant Headteacher	Bonder
AH 5	Assistant Headteacher	Leaver
AH 6	Assistant Headteacher	Bonder
Participant	Deputy Headteacher	Career Profile
DH 1	Deputy Headteacher	Bridger
DH 2	Deputy Headteacher	Bonder
DH 3	Deputy Headteacher	Bonder
DH 4	Deputy Headteacher	Bridger
DH 5	Deputy Headteacher	Bonder
DH 6	Deputy Headteacher	Bonder
DH 7	Deputy Headteacher	Bridger
DH 8	Deputy Headteacher	Bridger

Whilst this discussion identifies how each of the specific themes has been noted in previous research, this study offers a new perspective by understanding these themes through the lens of Putnam's conception of social capital. This concept can be transferred to school communities. There are also similarities in the findings expressed by Flynn and Nolan (2008), Schechter and Sherri (2008) and Murray (2009), (see paragraph § 2.1.4), about how school and student, parent and community partnerships can help to create positive school relationships and overcome cultural barriers. The Bridger characteristics reflect the government expectations (DfE, 2016) on senior leaders in education in terms of being dynamic in building school networks and collaborating with internal and external groups.

These categories were drawn from Putnam's (2000, see paragraph § 2.1.3) study into social capital networks. Putnam (2000) suggests two perspectives on social capital networks and refers to 'Bridger' and 'Bonder' characters who display different approaches, values and identities within civic networks. The characteristics of the Bonders were akin to the building and maintenance of the internal relationships within the school at an operational level, whereas the Bridgers reflected both strategic and operational approaches with regards to both the external and internal relationships and processes within the school. This is the first time that Putnam's (2000) 'Bridger' and 'Bonder' distinctions have been used to explore the career trajectories of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in secondary schools.

The Bridgers were concerned about what was happening, both in the internal and external school environment, as well as looking at moving on to new opportunities in their careers, which could only be achieved by taking on more responsibilities. The role approach is different; they are not quite settled with their current achievements but would like to stretch their skills, abilities and responsibilities in order to move up the hierarchical ladder, or to maintain a level of challenge through new experiences. They also have strong professional career networks. Once they have obtained the desired role (e.g. Headship), the Bridgers might then transition into a high level of mastery and the decision to stay in the role or move on would be the next stage of their career stage. This finding agrees with Schein (1971, see paragraph § 2.4.2), Ribbins (2003) and Earley and Weindling (2007, see paragraph § 2.4.1) who suggest that advancement, disenchantment, career plateauing and levelling off are phases within the incumbent career stages of leaders.

The Bonders are also at the incumbent stage of their career journey, where role mastery is evident along with a sense of confidence and understanding of the role (Ribbins, 2003, see paragraph § 2.4.1). The Bonders had arrived at their own conclusion about their career, their abilities and aspirations through first-hand experiences, perceived expectations of themselves and an understanding of their values and place in their career trajectory and hierarchical school structure. Their focus was on all levels of relationships within the school, but they were not drawn to Headship and the levels of accountability that came with the role. The Bonder identity and behaviours support the research undertaken by Schein (1971, see paragraph § 2.4.2), which describes the career transitions and experiences that can af-

fect the behaviours and decisions made in the career journey. The findings also support studies conducted by Schein (1978; 1996) and James and Whiting (1998, see paragraph § 2.4.2), who identified career anchorage categories based on leader behaviours. In addition, the Bonders may also be experiencing organisational or personal plateauing, which can also stifle career movement (Stoner *et al.*, 1980, see paragraph § 2.4.3). My research extends previous literature by reflecting on how perceptions and experiences of accountability can impact upon how senior leaders in secondary education make career decisions.

The third group was defined as the 'Leavers' group. A tentative approach, therefore, was used for this group due to there not being many Deputy and Assistant Headteachers that were at this stage in their career at that time. This group of senior leaders have been in their post for a period of time, where they have committed and invested personal time into their role. They have achieved a level of competency at the senior leadership stage (Ribbins, 2003; Earley and Weindling, 2007, see paragraph § 2.4.1) and may have sacrificed personal aspirations for the sake of the role. They might be in a role that is financially stable but has not opportunity to up the career ladder. After, the senior leader might enter into a stage where they feel like they have missed out on personal dreams and aspirations due to their commitment to their role. They then might start going through the motions of undertaking the professional role, but not addressing personal and school stresses that they are experiencing.

Continued unresolved stresses and challenges might develop, which could lead to a stage of disengagement and role distress (Gronn and Rawlings-Sanaei, 2003, see paragraph § 2.5.3). If these internal challenges are not dealt with, then the senior leader could end up leaving the role or staying in the role with mixed motives and feelings that are based on negative experiences and feelings about the role, themselves and their career future (Stoner *et al.*, 1980 and Elsass and Ralston, 1989, see paragraph § 2.4.3).

The process of self-reflection and addressing the reality of the professional life – personal life situation is crucial at this career stage. The findings support research that has shown that personal and career experiences can impact upon how the role is perceived and enacted. For example, Elsass and Ralston (1989) suggest that coping in challenging situations over a period of time can lead to depression, guilt and career plateauing (see paragraph § 2.4.3). However, other possible explanations by Tremblay *et al.* (1995, see paragraph § 2.4.3) forward objective and subjective plateauing as stages within the career which consider the amount of years in the same role and the expected time before the next career move or promotion. They purport that after five years in a senior position the intention to leave the role decreases indicating levels of role satisfaction. It seems possible that these results are due to the study being of a quantitative nature, omitting a biographical perspective.

Alignment between career trajectories and school contexts

The career trajectories of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers reflected some of their personal values and beliefs, which appeared to be aligned to their personal identity and the educational context that they chose to be in. For example, some of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers interviewed came from faith, single sex, and mixed mainstream school contexts. Two senior leaders (a Deputy and an Assistant Headteacher) that were both of Irish descent and practising Catholics specifically chose to be educators in a Catholic school. They were both educated in a further education Catholic teaching college, which led to role opportunities and promotions within Catholic secondary schools in Birmingham. The present findings seem to be consistent with other research (Leithwood *et al.*, 2008; Ciabattari, 2010; Minckler, 2013, see paragraph § 2.1.2 and § 2.1.3) which discuss the different leadership structures in schools whether distributed, transactional and transformational along with the importance of school links with the community. These leadership approaches, the ethos and values of the school can attract potential candidates who feel that they can contribute positively to the school community.

Another example is of two senior leaders (AH 6 (Bonder) and DH 8 (Bridger), that were both from an Indian background who worked in predominantly Indian schools. Both expressed a desire to support young people and perceived themselves as a benefit to the school, in the context of being able to relate to the parents culturally as well as being visual role models to the students and in the community. The above

are two examples where religion and cultural capital played an important part in the career decisions made by the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers. The findings are consistent with studies conducted by Bourdieu (1977), Ryan *et al.*, (1994), Monkman *et al.* (2005) and Flynn and Nolan (2008, see paragraph § 2.1.3 and § 2.1.4) who suggest that social class and culture barriers can be overcome by developing and maintaining positive relationships in the community.

However, the personal values of the individual, their outlook or life perspective could significantly impact upon whether the ethos of the school is an adequate career match for the individual. With this in mind, the individual is able to tap into their own background, experience, language and values to support the students, families and the community, thus reflecting the values of social capital. The role then becomes more than a job because the senior leader is investing their personal experiences and knowledge into the role, reflecting the Bondar characteristics. The findings of this study support Monkman *et al.* (2005) who refer to transformative leadership as a way of developing teacher social capital which will result in a nurturing and positive school environment (see paragraph § 2.1.3).

The findings show that the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers applied to the schools which related to their identity, moral values and beliefs. However, it is important to consider other opportunities for choosing specific school contexts at different times in the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher career trajectory, e.g. opportunities at that time, serendipity, choosing a school that they related to or had specific features, job location, salary, matching the Headteachers attributes and

managing personal commitments. Both the Bridgers and the Bonders did not describe linear career journeys to senior leadership. According to AH 1 (Bonder):

'I know it may sound daft; I'm not a career person. I've never been one of those people who says, I want to be an Assistant Head in 10 years' time or I've never been that kind of person.'

DH 1 (Bridger) states:

'I think my career has always been looking towards the next level. I got promoted quite quickly initially in the days where usually you would have to spend 34 years at least in the classroom before you got any chance of promotion.'

Instead, variations of career decisions were made, which led them to where they were in their career journey at that time (Guihen, 2017, see paragraph § 2.3.2). The interview findings concur with studies by Owen *et al.* (1983, see paragraph § 2.1.5), in that some schools might advertise a specific job description which would attract a Deputy Headteacher type who already has experience and expertise in a particular area. Furthermore, career anchors could influence the role aspects that are deemed as essential in the lives of individuals, for example, security and stability, service and dedication and lifestyle (see Schein, 1978; 1996, paragraph § 2.4.2).

5.2 Perception of the Headship role

Perception of the Headship role - The Bonders

The findings showed that all of the Bonders respected the status of the Headship role, especially being in the position to lead and implement change as a Headteacher. This finding is consistent with Ribbins (1997; 2003), Ribbins and Marland (1994) and Smith (2011) who discuss how the Headship role is perceived as one with high status and power (see paragraph § 2.2.1). However, caution was also expressed by the Bonders. Even though Headship was perceived as the ultimate position in the career journey of a teacher, there seemed to be reservations about the role; for example, AH 4 (Bonder) stated:

'For me it's a no-no. I tend to be a people person I think, and a character flaw in me, probably, is that I like to be liked too much, and I think heads are a very isolated position.'

The Bonders seemed to draw on a caution or tension towards the Headship role from their personal experiences of being a Deputy or Assistant Headteacher, what they had witnessed in the professional and personal lives of their current or previous Headteachers, and their perception of what autonomy and accountability meant to them. These experiences are consistent with the Deputy Headteacher findings by Earley and Bubb (2013, see paragraph § 2.2.1) who reported on the high pressures

in the Headship role and Oplatka and Tamir (2009, see § 2.5 paragraph, § 2.5.1 and § 2.5.2) who suggest that the challenges experienced in the Headteacher's role (e.g. poor work-life balance and role pressures) had impacted upon the desire for female Deputy Headteacher decisions to aspire to Headship.

These findings concur with research into the lives of Deputy Headteachers (Draper and McMicheal, 1998 and Hayes, 2005, see paragraph § 2.3.2) who refer to the Headship role being perceived as an isolated position with a negative role perception. All of the Bonders (AH 1, AH 2, AH 4, AH 6, DH 2, DH 3, DH 4, DH 6) felt that the Headship role was not one that suited their personal character and career objectives indicating that they would not be confident in this role, however the values of supporting the educational direction and future of young people was in common. The findings support previous research on based on career trajectory experiences drawing correlations with research on career anchors, self-efficacy and discrimination that are important drivers or inhibitors in career journeys (Bandura, 1997, see paragraph § 2.2.2; Schein, 1971, see paragraph § 2.4.2; Powney *et al.*, 2003, see paragraph § 2.5.1).

The Bonders had experienced a level of freedom in their roles where they were responsible for a range of responsibilities, which made the role stimulating and interesting. There was also a sense of autonomy in that the Bonders were able to manage their remit in supporting the school under the watchful eye and trust of the Headteacher. There seemed to be a consensus that the Headship role was not one that embodied role freedom, but one that could be potentially limited in role

autonomy and decision making within the role. This finding is in agreement with the NCTL (2009, see paragraph § 2.2.3) study into the motivators and de-motivators of Headship for NPQH graduations in that government, administrative demands and stress were some of the demotivating factors when considering the Headship role.

The Bonders had an admiration for their Headteachers and a commitment to their role, which seemed to impact upon how they perceived their role, especially in wanting to support the Headteacher's objectives even if it meant extending their own working hours in order to get the job done. It seemed that the Bonders favoured a balance of autonomy within their role combined with a level of accountability and professional compliance that they were happy with. The findings relating to the professional limitations within the Deputy Headship role do not support Owen *et al.* (1983, see paragraph § 2.1.5) study where they infer that the Deputy Headship role has limited freedom and the space to develop. However, the findings do concur with Lawley (1988, see paragraph § 2.1.5 and § 2.3.2) in that the Deputy Headship role is one that is not perceived as charismatic but is based on relationships and teamwork.

Views on the Headship role - The Bridgers

The Bridgers perceived the Headship role as one associated with the ultimate role in the career trajectory of a teacher, and Headship was their next step. They seemed to have a clear idea of the Headship role and perceived themselves as having the ability and talent to become an educational figurehead. The Bridgers seemed to

have a closer relationship to the Headteacher, which probably gave them more insight into the role and government expectations. The findings support the research on the importance of the Deputy and Headteacher having a close relationship (Jayne, 1996; Matthews and Tong, 1982; West, 1992 and Doring, 1993, see paragraph § 2.3 and § 2.3.1).

There was an acknowledgement that the Headship role was not an easy one, but it was a role that was achievable with the right attitude, focus and networks. Headship was perceived as a role that was able to steer the direction of the school. The essence and status of leading and managing a school seemed to be a motivator for the Bridgers. Emphasis was on what could be achieved within the role, being the figurehead, imparting influence and change for the benefit of the young people. According to AH 3 (Bridger):

‘The key thing is to be part of something that make such an impact, to be part of something that enables people to grow, to be really influential in that process is a huge gift. I think that’s what would pull me towards the passion of ensuring the best and that’s not saying that I know the answers but I will hopefully know enough people that can make things happen, the can do approach.’

These findings are also consistent with the Headteachers’ responsibility in building social and leadership capacity using equitable practices (Minckler, 2013; Blackmore,

et al., 2006; DfE, 2016, see paragraph § 2.1.3). The NCTL does not use the terms Bridgers or Bonders to describe the characteristics of senior leaders and it does not refer to the concepts of social capital and how it is utilized in the roles. An examination of the nature of leaders might help to identify roles that fit or are compatible with the character and values of aspiring leaders.

Views on the Headship role - The Leavers

The Leaver followed a similar perspective to the Bonder experiences. Headship was an admired role however it was not a role that was attractive and deemed as the next hierarchical step up the career ladder. Personal experiences of Headship and what were witnessed over the years contributed to the experiences and decisions made in the role.

Views on the Headship role – Reflection

It is important to bear in mind the time when the Bonders and the Bridgers became Deputy and Assistant Headteachers along with the political and societal state at the time. Over the past 10–15 years, government initiatives and reforms have strongly guided the direction of the school which the Headteachers are directed to implement. This was indicated in some of the conversations with the Bonders, who had seen and experienced the complex and difficult decisions that the Headteacher has had to take, the change in the working patterns combined with the increase in accountability, while being limited in the role. These results are consistent with

studies conducted by Gillborn (1989) and Fink and Brayman (2006, see paragraph § 2.1.1) who reported on Headship pressures that were associated with changing Government demands and levels of autonomy. Previous research (Ouston, *et al.*, 1998; Hall and Southworth, 1997 see paragraph § 2.1.1) refers to an increase in autonomy and accountability for Headteachers in the England. The Bonders referred to Headship as a role which was highly accountable with limited role freedom. According to AH 6 (Bonder):

‘As a Headteacher there is a lot of responsibility to carry on your shoulders. It’s not a very nice job ((laughs)) and it’s thankless.’

This research sheds new light on the perception of the Headship role in that tensions exist in the conceptualisation of the current Headship role. It appears that the ‘experience’ of autonomy seems to decrease, whilst accountability increases when considering the career trajectory to Headship. The choice not to aspire to Headship, therefore, might not be due to the Bonders stagnating within their role, not having the right skill set or a lack of confidence, but it might be associated with a strategic lifestyle decision which involves a desire for some role autonomy at a management level, encompassing regular contact with the students with a level of professional compliance that was manageable to the Bonder characteristics.

5.3 Attitudes towards autonomy and accountability

Autonomy and Accountability - The Bonders

The Bonders were not attracted to having greater responsibility for the accountability of the school or the stakeholders which is reflected in the Headship role, but they were in their most favoured educational position to support the Headteacher. The findings support previous studies conducted by Lawley 1988 and Hughes (1999, see paragraph § 2.3.1) who referred to the Deputy Headship as one that was harmonious with the Headship role and suggest that the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers who were not aspiring for Headship shared a commitment to support the Headteachers' goals and values and took accountability in their role seriously. The Bonders also showed a huge amount of commitment to their role and responsibilities but were also certain that they did not want to add to the accountability levels that they already had.

AH 6 (Bonder) further states:

'The headship is very prickly. People don't want that responsibility. Who wants that? People are merely becoming puppets now. Here, at this level I have got some control. I am staying true to myself.'

These findings present new perspectives from the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers showing that there was an understanding of the challenge of meeting the whole school targets, but they were mindful of trying to maintain a work-life balance by not taking on additional responsibilities, which could lead to adverse effects within the role.

Autonomy and Accountability - The Bridgers

The more ambitious Bridgers seem to embrace the fact that their role incorporated a high level of responsibility and this level would continue to increase. There was an acknowledgement that they would do whatever it took to refine their skills within the role and taking on more responsibility was part of the transition to higher level roles. The presence of the Headteacher was also key in this transition. According to DH 7 (Bridger):

'I think I was really lucky I was grown into it very successfully by my past Head. She got me ready, so it never felt like a huge leap and she protected me and built me through this, in that first year or two of Assistant Headship so it wasn't daunting and allowed me to grow and experience as I was ready, instead of throwing the whole lot at me so I was grown quite gently and she then got me ready to go on to Dep-

uty Headship. I think she gave me enough experiences at Assistant Headship to then take the steps to Deputy Headship relatively easily.'

There was a steady approach to gaining a range of skills through taking on more school responsibilities, training staff and making sure that staff were meeting their own departmental targets as part of the whole school agenda. The findings concur with Schein (1971, see paragraph § 2.4.2) who refers to the concept of indoctrination, preparation, testing and passages through the hierarchical and inclusion boundaries during the career phases and stages according to Schein (1971) Career Stages and Phases model. The Bridger attitudes towards autonomy and accountability were not averse to risk and being in a position where they had to learn new things.

Autonomy and Accountability - The Leavers

They did enjoy aspects of the role but the high levels of accountability combined with the emotional pressures and stressful experiences had contributed to the decision for the Leaver (AH 5) to resign from the post. The leaver also felt challenged by the autonomy within the role and maintaining personal confidence:

'I haven't had training for behaviour or for SEN..... Publicly, certainly I'd have confidence, most of the time I'm fine, but still there are situations where I'm out of my depth.....I'm a perfectionist, and I like to do everything really brilliantly well, which is not possible in this sort of job. And therefore, when things aren't brilliant, I take a knock to my self-esteem, on my self-confidence, which is ridiculous, really.'

Managing a difficult school remit (behaviour) meant that the Assistant Headteacher was inundated with dealing with student-teacher issues. These findings are associated with studies conducted by Donnelly (1999) and Crawford (2007) who examine and highlight the complex challenges that can exist in senior leadership roles (see paragraph § 2.5.3).

Autonomy and Accountability - Reflection

The findings reflected varied perspectives on the prominent levels of accountability within the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher role, along with the subordinate role held to the Headteacher who would have the ultimate say regarding the decisions made in the school (Owen *et al.*, 1983, see paragraph § 2.1.5). This, in some cases, has given assurance to the senior leader knowing that the Head will have to answer to the authorities if anything goes wrong. The findings shed new light into how autonomy within the Deputy and Assistant Headship role is perceived in comparison

to how autonomy is perceived by Deputy and Assistant Headteachers when considering the Headship role. The Bonders seemed to believe that they could make more of an impact through direct contact with students. The Bridgers seemed to believe that they could make more of an impact through taking on the role of Headteacher with the external responsibilities that this entailed. The Leaver recognised that their professional impact and enjoyment of the role was nearing an end. The Bonder and Bridger Assistant and Deputy Headteachers has shed new insight on senior leader perspectives on effectiveness and implementing change from a distance or implementing change 'on the ground'.

5.4 Professional Relationships

Relationship with colleagues – The Bonders

The Bonders seemed to have close relationships with their colleagues and there seemed to be a desire and enjoyment of supporting them in their roles. The Bonders expressed that they felt respected by their colleagues and that respect had been developed over time by working closely with staff. According to AH 2:

'Staff see you doing your job to the best of your ability and being fair when you're dealing with them then I think you get the respect I think that's what's important motivating people to do the best they

can do and I think that comes down to how you model yourself and the way you are with people and how you treat people.'

This respect allowed them to be influential in their relationships with staff when training them in school. These findings concur with Matthews and Tong (1982) and Jayne (1996, see § 2.3 and paragraph § 2.3.1), who make reference to the importance of the Deputy developing strong relationships with their staff. In some cases, the Bonders reflected a closer relationship with other staff members in comparison to their relationship with the Headteacher. This might have been due to the time invested to support staff with personal issues, school challenges and working harmoniously with the Headteacher. This group of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers valued their leadership position in terms of establishing levels of trust with staff. The desire not to aspire to Headship and focus on the centrality of the role concurs with Lawley (1988, see paragraph § 2.3.1), where there are warnings against the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers aiming for the 'limelight', but instead an encouragement to concentrate on building effective teams is stressed.

Relationship with colleagues - The Bridgers

The Bridgers felt respected by their peers and staff members, however there seemed to be a professional distance in some of the relationships. According to DH 8 (Bridger):

'Well, I know I have high expectations and sometimes getting that from other people that's a challenge, but you do it by modelling it because if you can demonstrate modelling then you can practice what you preach and that holds a lot of substance and credibility.'

DH 1 (Bridger) stated:

'I also feel that I'm respected which makes a real difference.'

Literature on Deputy Headship has not confirmed or denied that there is a difference in the senior leader relationships with colleagues when aspiring within the role; however, Schein (1971, see paragraph § 2.4.2) refers to the socialization processes and the acceptance into working groups when the employee is moving up the ranks which could result in both positive and negative working experiences. It would also make sense to assume that some relationships would be more important than others and a social investment in certain relationships would be chosen for a purpose. There was an assurance that the drive and motivation for challenging staff to improve their performance was ultimately linked to the development and improvement of the learners and not being emotionally embroiled in the day-to-day politics of school life when dealing with the many emotive staff, learner and parental issues that arose.

Relationship with colleagues - Leavers

The Leaver expressed that staff support was in place and that positive collegial relationships were experienced; however, it could be possible for tensions to exist in relationships where a staff member is trying to maintain school targets whilst feeling unhappy, stressed or disengaged in the role (Borg *et al.*, 2006, see paragraph § 2.2.1).

Relationship with colleagues - Reflection

The Deputy and Assistant Headteacher relationships with staff members are considered central to building an effective school ethos and school environment, and studies have shown that building relationships is a positive aspect of the Deputy Headship role (Matthews and Tong, 1982; Jayne, 1996, see § 2.3 and paragraph § 2.3.1). However, time and strategic management must be invested by the senior leaders in order to build an effective team. The findings support the research about the senior leadership role being one that is based on maintaining positive and effective working relationships. Also, it is a role which might involve the senior leader 'changing character hats' to attend to many situations and challenges that involve managing staff working relationships as purported by Owen *et al.*, (1983, see paragraph § 2.1.5). Research suggests that sustained periods of negative working relationships can lead to psychological and stressful outcomes if not monitored (Borg *et al.*, 2006, see paragraph § 2.2.1). This was evidenced in the findings of the Leaver

experience who had decided to leave the role due to a build-up of negative experiences, emotions and a difficulty in building a suitable work-life balance.

Relationship with learners and parents – The Bonders

The Bonders had a teaching element within their role which allowed them to have a grounded approach in understanding the day-to-day experiences of the learners. This, too, seemed like an integral part of the role due to the day-to-day interactions with the learners, where the opportunity for positive learner relationships could be fostered. According to AH 6 (Bonder):

‘That, for me, is unique and is why you’ve still got that hand in your teaching. Some people might not think that’s important but for me that is critical as you want to be credible to your peer group.’

These findings concur with Ryan *et al.* (1994) and Oplatka and Tamir (2009, see paragraph § 2.1.4), where the teaching element and maintaining positive relationships was a valued part of the role. The Bonders expressed an enjoyment of teaching the students, which gave them a sense of fulfilment in the role. There was a focus on student achievement and having positive relationships with the parents. They described themselves as having ‘real’ relationships with the students. This allowed for difficult situations to be de-escalated and relating to both the parents and

the students from a less authoritarian approach. The findings are consistent with studies conducted by Flynn and Nolan (2008; Schechter and Sherri, 2008) and Murray (2009, see paragraph § 2.1.4) which found that positive school-parent and school-student relationships can yield beneficial long-term outcomes.

Relationship with learners and parents – The Bridgers

The Bridgers had positive relationships with the students and parents and they were very serious about upholding the values and standards of the school. They seemed to have high levels of responsibility in building positive relationships with learners and their parents. A supportive and visionary approach was evidenced in how the Bridgers discussed their relationships with their learners, with a strong focus on family cohesion. According to AH 3 (Bridger):

‘The Headteacher has to have the visions and we are part of the movement of making the vision happen. So in my capacity as an Assistant Headteacher I need to know clearly what my area is and I need to know that I can and I need to make sure that I can deliver on that area.’

AH 3 (Bridger) further states:

'..but sometimes dealing with the parents who haven't got that structure themselves that's where you are limited but the schools work with parents with regards to literacy skills and numeracy skills to try and enable them to support their child's home, ICT skills development. We have sessions when parents come in to work with us, which is great.'

With regards to managing challenging situations with parents and learners, there was a slight difference in perspective. The Bridgers seemed to be able to, or were in the process of learning to distance themselves from traumatic situations that happened in the school. Strategies including de-stressing on the way home and, depending on their faith, were discussed as ways of managing potentially stressful situations.

Relationship with learners and parents – The Leavers

The Leaver relationships with learner and parents were similar to that of the Bonders.

Relationship with learners and parents – Reflection

Many positive student-teacher relationships have been identified in research along with the effects on students from different cultural backgrounds (Ryan *et al.*, 1994; Schechter and Sherri, 2008; Murray, 2009, see paragraph § 2.1.4). The findings supported this research where the enhancement of positive teacher and learner relationships were emphasised by the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers interviewed. Overall, a sense of satisfaction in seeing learners progress academically and socially within the educational setting was apparent, along with the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers having an important part in influencing the future of learners.

The negative aspects associated with the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers and their learners were linked to the problematical situations that can occur when managing destructive and challenging behaviours, as well as trying to inspire and work with learners with low academic levels. This understanding is reflected in studies conducted by Schechter and Sherri (2008) and Flynn and Nolan (2008, see paragraph § 2.1.4), where the development of relationships with both parents and learners is considered highly in building motivation and engagement in learners. This perspective was evidenced in all of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers. It was further emphasised by Deputy and Assistant Headteachers who shared the same cultural and religious background of the students that they taught.

Relationship with the Headteacher – The Bonders

The interviews revealed that the relationship between the Headteacher and the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher is an integral part to the self-confidence and self-development of the Deputy and Assistant Headship role; however, the Bonders seemed more dependent on the Headteacher and acknowledged the ultimate authority of the head (Matthews and Tong, 1982, see § 2.3). They did not pose a career threat in terms of being overly career ambitious and were more concerned about the day-to-day happenings of the school (Lawley, 1988, see paragraph § 2.3.1). The Bonders were aware of the school budget and were willing to sacrifice speaking to the Head about attending courses and being out of school. Professional compliance and commitment to supporting the Headteacher's targets was evidenced in the Bonders' commitment to support and please the Head (Blasé, 1989, see paragraph § 2.2.1), where allegiance is a crucial element in the relationship with the Headteacher. According to AH 2:

'The heads role is very much a visionary role and it's up to me to basically make that vision happen. It's a bit of educational jargon, but it's actually the way it is.'

Many of The Bonders were sensitive to the ongoing changes with job roles and responsibilities, along with increased expectations that some Deputy and Assistant

Headteachers experienced a level of stress within the role. The findings concur with studies undertaken by Kerry (2000; 2005) and Barnett *et al.* (2012, see paragraph § 2.3.2) reflecting how Deputy Headteachers faced difficult issues that they were not prepared for along with unexpected tasks that they had to undertake. In some cases, the Bonders might not have felt confident to approach the Headteacher if they are experiencing high stress levels or tension due to feeling insecure, showing weakness and/or an inability to cope.

Other emotional aspects identified involved the fear of letting others down if initiatives and expectations have not been completed, delivering whole school initiatives to a timescale and feelings of loneliness in the role. The findings also show that the bonders did not have a career plan in place with regards to Headship. These findings agree with studies carried out by Draper and McMichael (1998, see paragraph § 2.3.2) who report on the lack of opportunities for Deputy Headteachers to work alongside their Headteachers along with a lack of a career plan. Professional mentoring was not in place which also would have impacted upon the career decisions made (Machida and Schaubroeck, 2011, see paragraph § 2.2.2).

Relationship with the Headteacher – The Bridgers

In contrast to having a more passive relationship with the Headteacher, the ambitious Deputy and Assistant Headteachers seemed to have an active career social network and dynamic relationships with their Headteacher, and there was a sense

of autonomy regarding their career direction and what they needed to do to refine their skills. According to DH 1:

'I'm really in control of my own CPD.'

When reflecting on his previous experience DH 1 said his Headteacher deliberately made his role varied in order for him to be prepared for his next career transition:

'so I had lots and lots of different roles out of my comfort zone so whether it be curricula more options or timetabling for the pastoral stuff which is more my default. I did lots of different roles and so when I applied here as Deputy was able to say look I've done all these things and so I am always keen to say hold on I don't know enough about that so I need to either set goals and training or do some more reading around it.'

These findings concur with Harvey (1994, see paragraph § 2.3.2), who refers to the Deputy Headteacher taking steps to become empowered to move away from being an administrator, but taking personal responsibility and action within their own career journey. The findings also concur with literature on the Headteacher being the gatekeeper to professional development (DfE, 2016). They also show that the relationship that Deputy and Assistant Headteachers have with their Headteacher is es-

sential for developing confident and aspirant leaders (Lawley, 1988; Doring, 1993, see paragraph § 2.3.1). The Headteachers' remit would be to support the development and training of future Headteachers in preparation for succession planning. The findings showed that the Bridger Deputy and Assistant expressed that the Headteacher was encouraging them to undertake courses, take on additional responsibilities to gain confidence and knowledge of specific school areas, and to attend aspiring network groups for senior leaders. These findings concur with Schein (1971, see paragraph § 2.4.2) who reports on the sub stages that potential leaders go through including the preparation for higher status through coaching and seeking visibility.

The Bridgers demonstrated a managerial competence approach (Schein, 1978, see paragraph § 2.4.2) to their career development, which was less dependent on the Headteacher in comparison to the Bonders. The research confirms that the senior leaders that received support, guidance and nurturing from their Headteachers were more confident in their role and were able to take risks. The Bridgers were involved in a socialization process along with regular career dialogue with the Headteacher. The findings assert that the vision that the Headteacher has for his/her senior leaders can help them to develop their self-confidence, career resilience as well as reduce the 'fear of failure' within the role.

Relationship with the Headteacher – The Leavers

The relationship the Leaver had with the Headteacher was similar to that of the Bonders.

Relationship with the Headteacher – Reflection

Matthews and Tong (1982, see § 2.3) highlight the complexities and the power that the Headteacher has in their relationship with the Deputy Headteachers and state that 'only the helping hands of the Headteacher can save him, and only then if the Head understands what help to offer' (Matthews and Tong, 1982, p. 16). This understanding was evident in the interviews and is a reminder of the vast strategic role that the Head has on directing the school and developing senior staff. Furthermore, the continued commitment to support the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers' careers, whilst managing external government pressures and school targets, can result in a compromise in career support.

5.5 Personal Life and Health

Work-life balance and stress – The Bonders

The personal life and health of the Bonders were deemed as very important areas that suffer to different degrees within the role. A clear understanding of what the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher would and would not want to manage within their role was clearly expressed. These findings concurred with studies undertaken by Oplatka and Tamir (2009, see paragraph § 2.5.2) and Smith (2010, see § 2.5) who discuss the challenges faced by female Deputy Headteachers. Witnessing negative experiences encountered by Headteachers within their career journeys, maintaining a positive home life, managing the constant changes in the role, and continued accountability were elements within the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher role which impacted on their decision to aspire to Headship and their work-life balance. The findings also concurred with Chard (2013) who reported on the challenges experienced by male Deputy Headteachers. Some Bonders expressed that there was no work-life balance due to having to work at home and at the weekends, because of reasons that were attributable to the demands of the role. When asked about maintaining a healthy work life balance AH 1 (Bonder) stated:

‘With huge difficulty. I’ve got two daughters, one is five and one is five months and my partner is a police officer. With his shift pattern, with great difficulty.’

AH 5 also stated:

'Truthfully, I don't think I do very well within the week. But, this is only fairly recent, I'm now trying increasingly to do no work at weekends as much as possible. But, that's not true, because the majority of weekends there are things that absolutely have to be done.'

These findings concur with Draper and McMichael (2003, see § 2.5). In one case, an Assistant Headteacher commented on the devastation and unhappiness that an over-dedication to the role had on making both personal and career decisions resulting in stressful emotional experiences that can be suppressed, as asserted by Crawford (2007, see paragraph § 2.5.3). Other Deputy and Assistant Headteachers suggested that these activities would not be able to be maintained if they became Headteachers.

Work-life balance and stress – The Bridgers

The Bridgers all reflected some form or level of work-life imbalance and a personal sacrifice, whether in personal time for self, time with the family, or reduction in or no hobbies over the years. The commitment to the role, along with additional time devoted on weekday evenings and weekends, were seen as part and parcel of being a Deputy or Assistant Headteacher in their secondary school. AH 3 stated:

'I'd have to finish it. I'll go home and finish it and before you know it your whole day has been dedicated to doing something. You think later oh wait a second did I actually have my dinner and did I actually do something that wasn't school-related this evening. That kind of annoys you, it annoys you in this sense but it makes me laugh sometimes but I can easily..... work life balance is fine.'

These findings were in agreement with studies carried out by French (1985) who reported stressful situations and the different ways that events can be perceived. All the Bridgers mentioned that their hobbies and personal activities had to be reduced in some form due to the time demands and responsibilities within the Deputy and Assistant Headship role. However, some of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers were able to maintain some activities that helped them to “de-stress” and relax, including gardening, going to the gym, music and reading. These findings support the

research undertaken by Dunham (1994, see paragraph § 2.5.3) which suggests strategies that can support a healthy work-life balance and reduce stress.

Work-life balance and Stress – The Leavers

The Leaver displayed levels of emotion, stress and dissatisfaction concerning the work-life balance. Stress was experienced mainly due to the 'goal posts' moving with regards to the expected responsibilities and duties. These findings concur with the onset of workplace stress (Sorenson, 2007, see § 2.5) and career plateauing (Stoner *et al.*, 1980 and Elsass and Ralston, 1989, see paragraph § 2.4.3) which can result role disengagement and reduced motivation levels within the role. An Assistant Headteacher was in the process of resigning from the role in order to pursue a different career route within education.

Work-life balance and Stress – Reflection

The work-life balance is different for every senior leader. Studies have shown that there are differences in gender perspectives on how the work-life balance is perceived and managed. These differences, which were reflected on in the interviews, included family considerations, career sacrifices and personal perspectives on how the senior leader perceives themselves and manage situations. These findings are aligned to the findings of Bandura (1997, see paragraph § 2.2.2), who refers to self-

efficacy and how it can affect the individual's perspective and confidence. Also managing personal commitments was a priority emotionally and physically in the career trajectories of many senior leaders (Oplatka and Tamir, 2009; Smith 2010; Chard, 2013 and Chagger, 2014, see paragraph § 2.5).

There are different perspectives on how stress affects performance and how an imbalance in work-life management can result in stress. Chaplain (2001, see paragraph 2.2.1) purports that stress can either be a motivator or result in negative effects, and coping strategies such as sports, relaxation and hobbies are essential in maintaining a healthy work-life balance and building positive experiences. This has been evidenced in the findings from the interviews where some Deputy and Assistant Headteachers had found a way of achieving a work-life balance, however inconsistent, whereas others said that they did not have one. Research has shown that, in some cases, the pressures from work can filter into the personal lives of leaders, which can then lead to psychological and health problems (Dunham, 1994, see paragraph § 2.5.3). For example, many senior leaders had reported that constant changes in the job role (Mujis and Harris, 2003, see paragraph § 2.3) can result in stressful experiences. Furthermore, unresolved staff tensions, parent and student conflicts can also have negative and devastating effects on how a leader manages situations at school and in the home life (Borg *et al.*, 2006; Crawford, 2007, see paragraph § 2.2.1 and § 2.5.3).

5.6 Career

Career – The Bonders

The findings support research on how the demands and pressures within the role can impact upon the emotions and affect the decisions made during the career journey (Brennan, 1987, see paragraph § 2.5.3). Career experiences seemed to contribute towards the Bonders in making informed decisions about career choices, some of which might have been based on recounting past experiences and situations that had occurred. Many shared experiences of lacking confidence at a point in their career journey and how the Headteachers were instrumental in supporting them to a certain point in their careers. Some shared the sacrifices that had been made by their Headteacher, for example working long hours, working during the school holidays, illness and the work pressures experienced, which could have impacted upon the career decisions made. The Bonders were not attracted to the Headteachers salary (Jayne, 1996; Draper and McMichael, 1998, see paragraph § 2.3.2).

The findings supported the literature on the perceived relevance of the NPQH by the senior leaders (Rhodes *et al.*, 2009; Howson, 2011, see paragraph § 2.6.4). Even though the NQPH was perceived as a requirement for Headship, there was no urgency or desire expressed by the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers interviewed, who were not aspiring for Headship, to take it. Many of the Deputy and Assistant

Headteachers that were not aspiring to Headship appeared content in their career and they were aware of the course opportunities available to them if they wanted to take them.

The Bonders did not have a clear career structure to undertake professional development courses. This perhaps indicates a contentment with the mastery of the practical day-to-day requirements of Deputy and Assistant Headship, along with a demonstration and understanding of the school culture, hence the achievement of role mastery as forwarded by Ribbins (2003, see paragraph § 2.4.1). The lack of CPD continued development to undertake professional development courses within the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher roles could be perceived as portraying 'Ambitious or Career Deputy' characteristics as defined by Hayes (2005, see paragraph § 2.3.2), or as 'Settlers', 'Unpredictables' or 'Potential aspirants' as referred to by James and Whiting (1998, see paragraph § 2.4.2). They could, therefore, be defined as having an operational role focus.

Career - The Bridgers

The Bridgers that were career ambitious seemed to display an independent and headstrong approach to their career. There seemed to be elements of career resilience that outweighed the difficult times or obstacles in their career trajectories. These findings support the research undertaken by Schein (1971, see paragraph § 2.4.2) who refers to the testing times in the career journey and being accepted by

fellow colleagues during the career stages. The relevance of the NPQH was also brought into question with the aspiring senior leaders. There was an acknowledgement of it being a pre-requisite course to Headship; however, it seemed that some Deputy and Assistant Headteachers perceived it as being part of an expected exercise where some elements from the course were used in the role.

One Deputy Headteacher referred to herself as an 'NPQH serial avoider', reflecting once again a question with regards to its effectiveness in supporting the transition to Headship or an opportunity to build new skills within the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher role. The Bridgers were active in their professional development. They also expressed that the Headteacher had expressed confidence in their ability and ambition. These findings reflect that succession planning strategies are taking place however formal systems may help to ensure that a diverse senior leadership workforce is achieved (Fink, 2011; Coleman, 2012, see paragraph § 2.6.2). Many Deputy and Assistant Headteachers had professional networks that they attended, along with external social networks that were used to discuss concerns and anxieties within the role.

Career - The Leavers

The Leaver did not have a structured career pathway in place and was not receiving regular mentoring or career support. The Leaver had decided that the current role was not compatible with her career and personal aspirations. The findings also sup-

port research conducted by Rhodes *et al.* (2009) and Singh (2010, see paragraph § 2.6.4), who purport that the NPQH might not fully meet the leadership needs of aspirant leaders, and coaching and mentoring processes could prove to be useful in developing future leaders. The National College of Teaching & Leadership now include a coaching and mentoring strand to their senior leadership programmes (NPQSL, NPQML and the NPQH).

Career - Reflection

The findings support literature (Matthews and Tong, 1982; Lawley, 1988; Doring, 1993; Hayes, 2005, see § 2.3 and paragraphs § 2.3.1 and § 2.3.2) on the Headteacher having an important bearing on the career decisions that the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher made in terms of applying for future roles, being there for professional support and reassurance within the role. Also unstructured career pathways can affect the career direction and progress of the senior leader (Harvey, 1994, see § 2.3.2). The findings confirm that the Headteacher can steer the direction of a senior leader in their careers, e.g. introducing aspirant senior leaders to 'the right people', preparing for the NPQH, attending CPD courses and developing the role capacity in preparation for higher levels of responsibility.

5.7 Societal and external challenges that could affect aspiration

Physical barriers – The Bonders

The findings showed that the female Bonders had experienced physical barriers in their career trajectory. These included ageism and role fit when applying for a Deputy Headship role (Powney *et al.*, 2003 and Nelson, 2005, see paragraph § 2.5.1). All the female senior leaders were either the primary caregiver, in the process of starting a family, managing the relationship with their partner, or managing the family and extended family. According to AH 4 (Bonder):

‘Well, I have a family at home, I have four boys and I’m a single parent, so I have to maintain a work-life balance because they need me, as such, and I have to maintain the home. And so how I do it is I tend to work very hard when I’m in work, and I try desperately not to take work home.’

In some cases, it meant sacrificing their own career decisions for the sake of maintaining a positive family life (Coleman, 2002; Moreau *et al.*, 2005; Wilson *et al.*, 2006; Oplatka and Tamir, 2009; Butt *et al.*, 2010; Smith 2011; Chard, 2013 and Chagger, 2014, see §2.5 and paragraphs § 2.5.1 and § 2.5.2).

Physical barriers – The Bridgers

Both male and female Bridgers comment on age being an important factor. A Deputy Headteacher stated that Headship was a young man's game and how it was important for him to continue with transition to Headship. His conclusions may have been achieved through his personal experiences, or what he had witnessed during his senior leadership position. Another female Assistant Headteacher commented on how she was told that she was too old to apply to Headship and how overt and covert discriminatory practices could be carried out at the recruitment stage (Redman and Snape, 2002; Wilson *et al.*, 2006; Posthuma and Campion, 2009 and Coughlan, 2010 and Malinen and Johnston, 2013 see paragraph § 2.5.1).

Physical barriers – The Leavers

The Leavers barriers with regards to aspiration was that she was at a time in her life where she wanted to start a family. The demands of the role were considered against the physical capabilities of managing both work life and personal life.

Cultural and ethnicity barriers – The Bonders

There was a Bonder from a BAME background in the group. She did not discuss cultural or ethnicity barriers that might have been experienced. Reference to the literature review reflects some experiences and barriers experienced in the career trajectories of senior BAME leaders (Bush *et al.*, 2006; Campbell-Stephens, 2009; Boyle and Charles, 2010 and Lall 2011, see paragraph § 2.5.1).

Cultural and ethnicity barriers – The Bridgers

In the Bridger group there was a senior leader from a BAME background. She did not discuss cultural or ethnicity barriers that might have been experienced. Reference to the literature review reflects some experiences and barriers experienced in the career trajectories of senior BAME leaders.

Cultural and ethnicity barriers – The Leavers

There were no cultural or ethnicity issues raised from the Leaver.

The survey data findings (n 57) reflected that 14.1% of the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers were of a BAME background and the semi-structured interview find-

ings reflected this low percentage (14.2%) indicating a need for proactive recruitment for BAME senior leaders.

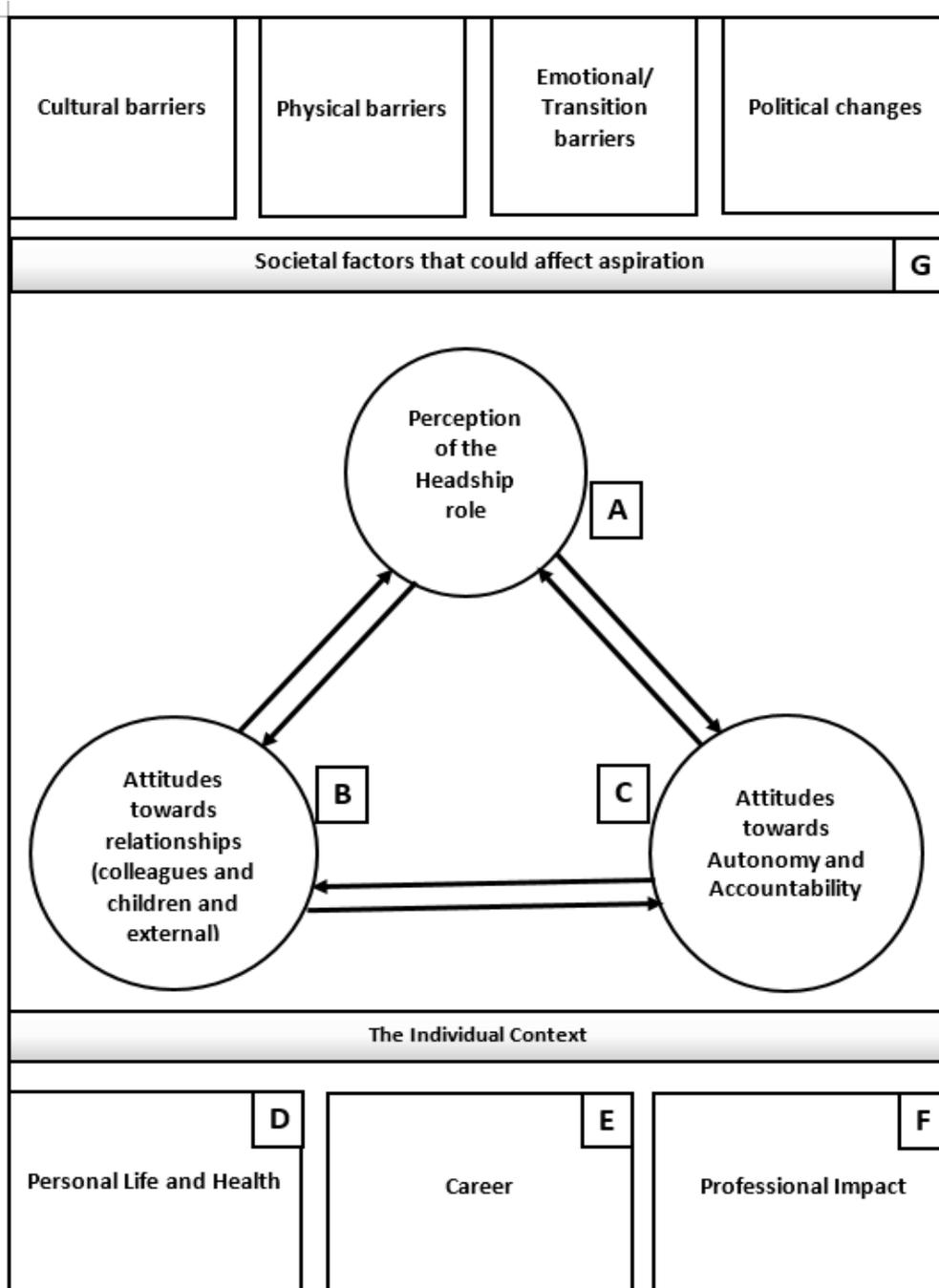
5.9 Summary

This chapter aims to draw on previous research and extends it by introducing new perspectives when considering the senior leadership role in relation to the career trajectories of senior leaders, as well as their perspectives on Headship in secondary education. This research had identified three career groups of senior leaders in relation to their career trajectories of the Bonders, the Bridgers and the Leavers. Each group reflects characteristics and experiences that have resulted in the Deputy or Assistant Headteacher continuing in their role, aspiring to Headship or leaving the role. The Deputy and Assistant Headteacher role is one that is heavily relationship based. The relationships reflect the importance of the investment of social and cultural capital to meet the needs of the student, family and the community effectively in twenty-first-century teaching. A desire to work in a 'bonding' capacity through teaching, maintaining positive family and community relationships whilst having some managerial responsibility could be forwarded as a reason why Deputy and Assistant Headteachers chose to stay in their role.

In comparison, the Headship role has been perceived as more managerial, administrative, having a higher role status with fewer opportunities for bonding with the students, families and the community. With this role distinction in mind, the Deputy and

Assistant Headship role could therefore be perceived as a senior leadership role in its entirety instead of a role that precedes Headship. Figure 5 (Influences and challenges to the aspiration of a senior leader) provides an overview of the many factors that could impact upon the life course decisions and experiences of senior leaders in education.

Figure 5 Influences and challenges to the aspiration of a senior leader
 (J Bruce-Golding, 2017)



This study has revealed how important the individual's values, background, personal outlook, career experiences, professional and personal relationships can impact upon the career trajectories and the perception of the Headship role. New reflections and insights into the attitudes and perspectives towards accountability and autonomy, indicating strategic lifestyle preferences and a reconceptualization of the Headship role, followed by the importance of the relationships in the lives of the senior leader, have been forwarded. Insights into the work-life balance of the senior leader have revealed how family considerations, career anchors, responses and reactions to the socialization processes, self-efficacy and self-management are some of the factors that can contribute to the internal decision-making process during different stages of the career trajectory.

The political status and government policy discourse can impact upon the conceptualisation of the Deputy and Assistant Headship role and how it is interpreted. Furthermore, it is important to consider how the political, cultural and physical barriers including the selection, recruitment and transition processes can affect the aspirations and dreams of the next generation of aspiring educational leaders. The choice to aspire to Headship, or to be effective within the senior leadership role, is therefore grounded in an ability to understand the changing landscape of education reform in terms of how global, societal and governmental influences can affect the current role, being innovative and flexible in meeting the educational demands and to have a reflective and solution-orientated approach to understanding self and capabilities. This section has highlighted the many complex situations and experiences that can be encountered due to difference when compared to the traditional paternal male-dominant group in education. Within

education, aspirant candidates that happen to be born into a different culture, gender and social class are more likely to experience 'covert' and 'overt' forms of prejudice.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.0 Introduction

When I began this study, my main motivation was to explore the Headship crisis and the reasons why so many schools were struggling to recruit new Headteachers. There were many newspaper articles and reports about Headteacher shortages, the unattractive media portrayal of the Headship role and the challenging working conditions for some Headteachers. The reporting of the Headship crisis was partly in response to the high retirement rates of Headteachers, commonly referred to as the 'baby boomers', and to the high level of re-advertisements of Headship posts, combined with the shortage of applicants for these posts in England and Wales. With this in mind, my interest then led me to examine the career trajectories of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers.

My interest in life course experiences and career trajectories of educators has brought me closer to understanding some of the joys, motivations, difficulties and dilemmas in these complex but unique Deputy and Assistant Headteacher roles. Furthermore, using a narrative approach allowed the role complexities of the senior leaders in secondary schools to be highlighted. Continual policy reforms have led to changes in school governance, which have affected leadership roles and responsibilities in schools.

This chapter presents the answers from the research questions. It explains the limitations of the research which should inform the interpretation of its results and suggests some implications for future practice and research. This contribution to leadership education has an emphasis on important issues and considerations that continue to affect the decision-making processes of potential future school leaders. The research aims to support government policy, national teaching establishments, school governors and Headteachers in reviewing the current secondary school management structures in England, together with developing and supporting senior leaders more effectively and holistically within their roles.

6.1 Answers to the research questions

In answering the research questions, I developed a way of understanding the career trajectories of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers that applies Putnam's (2000) distinction between bonding and bridging social capital. I have positioned this innovative way of understanding senior leadership journeys within previous contributions from Schein (1971), Ribbins (2003) and Earley and Weindling (2007). This study extends our knowledge of the lives and careers of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers by categorising or applying dimensions to how senior leaders enact their role and utilize social capital within it. The Career Stages and Phases of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers (see Table 31) tentatively reflects the different phases and stages experienced within the role by the *Bridgers*, *Bonders* and *Leavers* when considering how social capital is used in leadership education.

6.1.1 Research question 1 – What are the views of current Deputy and Assistant Headteachers on their current role?

Analysis of the interview transcripts suggested that the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers could be described as primarily 'Bonders', 'Bridgers' or 'Leavers'. As far as I am aware this use of terms from Putnam's theory of social capital (2000) is a contribution to knowledge in the field of understanding trajectories towards school leadership. This summary of the answer to question 1 `suggested by this research explains the meaning and salience of these terms in this context.

The Bonders

The Bonders characteristics were demonstrated through relationship bonding within their school community. They were inward looking and they invested their social capital within the internal educational context. The social capital of the Bonders was enacted through carrying out the internal training of new staff members, coaching, leading and supporting the Heads of Year and ensuring that the whole school targets were being met. The relationship elements in the role seemed to support their sense of professional identity. Solidarity and a commitment to relationships in the school was shown in the Bonder Deputy and Assistant Headteachers. The Bonders, had achieved an acceptable work-life balance, which had an effect on their emotional management. They were experiencing career satisfaction at that point in their career stage and they did not want to experience the perceived risks associated with being

a Headteacher. Further insight into the Bonders views of their current role can be found in Chapters 4 and 5.

The Bridgers

The Bridgers also were experiencing career confidence and role satisfaction. They utilized their social capital in a different way to the Bonders. They utilized their social capital to involve themselves in skill building leadership opportunities reflecting a level of freedom and decision making within the role. They were also involved in building both internal and external relationships (reflecting bridging characteristics) and gaining experience in all areas of school management. There was an acknowledgment that mastery had not been achieved in all areas and there was a desire to learn more. The Bridgers seemed to be motivated by the way in which their current role prepared them to become a Headteacher. They placed a high value on gaining experiences through tasks that lay beyond their current role. This involved working closely with the Headteacher, experiencing career mentoring, attending aspiring leader meetings and being part of external relationships that were pertinent to the future development of the school whenever time permitted. Further insight into the Bridgers views of their current role can be found in Chapters 4 and 5.

The Leavers

The study showed that the Leaver followed a similar pathway to the Bonder category in that role aspirations had been experienced, many years had been invested into the role (over 5 years) and a high level of mastery was evidenced. However, the Leaver had arrived at a point in their career where the desire to focus on personal aspirations (relationship and family) became the forefront of their priorities. Although mastery was evidenced in the role, emotionally challenging experiences over a sustained period of time led to role dissatisfaction. Organisational career plateauing and religious school hierarchical career limitations also meant that the Assistant Head teacher was at the top of their career ladder, so this combined with role dissatisfaction contributed to the Disorientation stage (see Table 31) resulting in the resignation from the role. Further insight into the Leaver characteristics can be found in Chapters 4 and 5.

6.1.2 Research question 2 – What are the views of current Deputy and Assistant Headteachers on their own career trajectories?

The Bonders

This study has shown that the Bonder group were unique in that their sensitivities were orientated to the internal relationships that they were committed to. They had reached a level of mastery (Schein, 1971; Ribbins, 2003) and they were aware of

their own skills, talents and limitations. The Bonders had followed the same stages as the Bridgers and Leaver (*Entry, Basic Training, Reshaping, Refinement and Autonomy*) and then entered into the Skill Building stage in preparation for the new internal school roles and developing the current role. Their values, career needs (in that they wanted to be in a position make a difference to the lives of children), personal needs (being in a well-paid educational role where impact could be evidenced) and the needs of their family seemed to be a basis as to why they were in the role that they were in. These factors are aligned to Schein (1978; 1996) career anchors which could have shaped the career decisions of the senior leaders. Further insight into the Bonders views of their own career trajectories can be found in Chapters 4 and 5.

The Bridgers

A major finding of this study was the duality of the Bridger Deputy and Assistant Headteacher role in that they were developing their capacity to manage both the internal and external relationships within their context. Some had not originally planned to become a senior leader. The Bridgers had followed the same stages as the Bonders and Leaver (*Entry, Basic Training, Reshaping, Refinement and Autonomy*) and then entered into the Skill Building stage in preparation for the Role Promotion to Headship. The career opportunity for Headship and encouragement from the Headteacher and other senior leaders had prompted a new aspiration and foundation to becoming a Headteacher. The Bridgers were at the career stage where indoctrination (according to Schein, 1971) and socialization processes were taking

place in order to prepare them for their next career steps and they were explicit in ensuring that they were a part of leadership networks, undertaking leadership courses and taking opportunities to get to know other aspiring Headteachers (Schein, 1971). Further insight into the Bridgers views of their own career trajectories can be found in Chapters 4 and 5.

The Leaver

As mentioned previously the Leaver seem to follow the same stages as the Bonders and Bridgers (*Entry, Basic Training, Reshaping, Refinement and Autonomy*) pertaining to transition and aspiration in their career trajectories. However, the Leaver entered into the Disorientation stage even though role mastery was achieved. The dual psychological and physical pressures between the professional role and their personal family commitments are experienced. The Leaver, in preparation for the future changes might go through the motions in the role which could limit the way that social capital is utilized. The desire for stability and a lifestyle that accommodates family life and personal aspirations are sought at this stage. Further insight into the Leavers views of their own career trajectories can be found in Chapters 4 and 5.

The important career stages from Ribbins (2003), Schein (1971) and Putnam's (2000) framework led me to create the Career Stages and Phases of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers (see Table 31) which reflect the processes, phases and stages pertaining to transition and aspiration in the career trajectories of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers. There are slight variants after the main stages (*Entry,*

Basic Training, Reshaping, Refinement and Autonomy) for the Bonders, Bridgers and Leavers. During the Autonomy stage, the Bonders and Leavers experience self-doubt in terms of aspiring for the (expected) Headship role and establishing a long-term position within the school context. Over time, role confidence, contentment and mastery are achieved. The Bonders then enter into a cyclical levelling off and skill building stage which involves taking on new internal responsibilities in line with new government reform and supporting the Headteachers' mission, whilst the Leavers enter into the Disorientation stage. The Bridgers enter into an extensive skill building phase after the Autonomy stage which incorporates building and maintaining both internal *and* external school relationships. Further socialization processes take place which build vision, self-efficacy and personal confidence as the Bridger builds their own vision of becoming a Headteacher. Role promotion to Headship is the expected next step along with the passing through another inclusion boundary as part of the 'Granting of Tenure' stage.

Table 31 Career Stages and Phases of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers

(J Bruce-Golding, 2017)

LEAVER	BONDER	BRIDGER
NEW CAREER DIRECTION	ROLE PROMOTION	GRANTING OF TENURE Passing through another inclusion boundary
RESIGNATION	LEVELLING OFF	PROMOTION TO HEADSHIP ROLE PROMOTION
DISORIENTATION Internal school management focus Going through the motions Loss of career direction Disheartenment/Excitement Planning Social capital: Limited	SKILL BUILDING Internal school management focus New/additional (internal) school roles and responsibilities Social capital: Internal relationships bonding	SKILL BUILDING Internal and external school management focus New/additional (internal and external) school roles and responsibilities Leadership networking Leadership socialization Personal, local and national vision Social capital: Internal and external relationship focus-bridging and bonding
AUTONOMY Role Mastery Active in staff and student development Role challenge Self-doubt re aspiration Role/Self-reflection	AUTONOMY Role Mastery Active in staff and student development Role challenge Self-doubt re aspiration Role/Self-reflection Role contentment	AUTONOMY Role Mastery, Self-development Personal vision, Role contentment Personal and professional expectations Passing through hierarchical boundaries Accepted role challenge
REFINEMENT Limited Headteacher support Testing experiences which inform career decisions Staff confidence/acceptance Relationship building Career anchor reflection Professional strengths reflection	REFINEMENT Limited Headteacher support Testing experiences which inform career decisions Staff confidence/acceptance Relationship building Career anchor reflection Professional strengths reflection	REFINEMENT Headteacher support Socialization opportunities Testing experiences which inform career decisions Staff confidence Career anchor reflection Professional strengths reflection
RESHAPING Developing role (inner confidence) Managing challenge Self-efficacy Testing Career reflection and vision Professional and personal life planning	RESHAPING Developing role (inner confidence) Managing challenge Self-efficacy Testing Career reflection and vision Professional and personal life planning	RESHAPING Headteacher talent development Role development (inner confidence building and self-efficacy) Managing challenge Testing Career reflection and vision Professional and personal life planning
BASIC TRAINING Socialization Gaining staff confidence Learning the ropes Testing and training Indoctrination/trust building Passage to the inner inclusion boundary to leadership	BASIC TRAINING Socialization Gaining staff confidence Learning the ropes Testing and training Indoctrination/trust building Passage to the inner inclusion boundary to leadership	BASIC TRAINING Socialization Gaining staff confidence Learning the ropes Testing and training Indoctrination/trust building Passage to the inner inclusion boundary to leadership
ENTRY Role/School/Values compatibility School vision/career vision External inclusion boundaries	ENTRY Role/School/Values compatibility School vision/career vision External inclusion boundaries	ENTRY Role/School/Values compatibility School vision/career vision External inclusion boundaries

6.1.3 The Deputy and Assistant Headteachers' experience of Headship

This research extends our knowledge of the factors associated to how the Headteacher's role is perceived. The perception of the role of the Headteacher largely depends on the values, aspirations, professional, personal experiences and attitudes towards accountability and autonomy held by the Deputy and the Assistant Headteacher. Table 32 (*Deputy and Assistant Headteacher experiences and perception of Headship*) reflects the societal, political and personal factors that can affect the lives and career decisions of secondary school leaders. The individual experience considers the personal life, emotional health and the role experiences which filter into how roles are perceived and how career decisions are made.

The Bonders

Since the Bonders were focused 'inwards' on relationships within the school community they perceived Headship as a role that was disengaged from the real work of supporting the students and staff. They also perceived Headship as a respected role that was highly administrative and reactive to external government demands. They tended to experience tension between the internal day-to-day and 'top-down' government external demands as a source instability in the role. Many Bonders perceived Headship as a business role, which focused on the external work of the school which limited the interpersonal relationships with staff. Furthermore, a key factor in the Bonders' career decisions was that they wanted to work with, and impact the lives of, young people which was aligned to their personal values and career

experiences. The level of accountability and the lack of autonomy that came with the Headship role was an issue for the Bonders who seemed to have achieved a balanced level of accountability and autonomy within their roles (see Table 32 *Deputy and Assistant Headteacher experiences of Headship*). Many Bonders also did not feel that their current skills and experiences qualified them for an appropriate 'Headship-fit' when reflecting on the Headteacher profiles that they had experienced in their career trajectories.

The Bridgers

The Bridgers perceived Headship as a role that displayed more attractive characteristics and opportunities than negative. Accountability was perceived as an element that was already part of their existing role where they were used to working under pressure to deadlines. They also had a more positive attitude towards the external relations of the school which they perceived as offering autonomy over the running of school: the ultimate role in their educational career. The status of being a Headteacher along with being the ultimate decision-maker and the face of the school was something that the Bridgers did not fear. They were aware of the challenges experienced by other Headteachers and seemed ready to extend their skills and knowledge, as well as undertake whatever tasks they needed to in order to reach their goal. Having the support of their own Headteacher, other Headteachers and being part of a network that was supporting their progress and development, reflected the uses of social capital to 'open doors' and tap into the aspiring senior leadership-Headship pipeline which was of great significance in the career trajectories.

The Leavers

The Leaver did not perceive Headship as a viable role at that time in their career journey. The challenges within the current role combined with not achieving personal aspirations had resulted in the Assistant Headteacher resigning from the role. Career plateauing, emotional toil and stress were evident. Although Headship was perceived as a respected role, it was not a role that was attractive. The pressure within the current role and the pressures of fulfilling personal aspirations had resulted in disorientation and role dissatisfaction. The decisions to leave the role had encompassed past and current experiences from the current role and the perception and experience of Headship.

Table 32 Deputy and Assistant Headteacher experiences and perception of Headship

(J. Bruce-Golding, 2017)

Relationship to the survey results, the experience of current role and the perception of Headship			
Experience	Theme	Sub-themes	Challenges within the role
Perception of the Headship role	Professional Impact Professional Relationships Personal Life and Health	Status/ Powerful role Ability to steer the lives of children Specific skill set for the Headship role	Managing relationships Work-life balance and Emotional demands Minimum/Non-teaching role Identity: fit – lack of global appeal
Attitudes towards accountability and autonomy	Autonomy Accountability	Managing responsibility Managing work/life balance Risk, Role change	Increased accountability Limited autonomy Role instability Personal and Work Pressure
Professional Relationships	Relationship with colleagues Relationships with students Relationship with the Head Internal/External Relationships Bonder/Bridger Characteristics	Developing staff relationships Maintaining learner and parent relationships Relationship with the Headteacher Staff voice Distance from the classroom/teaching	Limited time and opportunities Staff issues/conflicts Parent/Learner issues/conflicts Limited support from Head teacher and colleagues Micro politics
Personal Life and Health	Work life balance Emotional cost	Stress and emotional management Managing failure Work/life overflow Values and beliefs	Regulating emotional health Managing family commitments Personal reflection Self confidence
Career	Experiences Decision making Headteacher/Professional support	Career development and Career Stage Career Anchors Selection and recruitment Personality profiling	Limited career support Limited networking opportunities Limited time for training Career plateau and Limited job opportunities
Professional Impact	Role and Identity School and context Accountability	Professional socialization/role mastery Personal identity and school matching Multi-dimensional responsibilities Career anchors and decisions	Long hours Difficulty in switching off Role diversity/ambiguity Limited in decision making Managing whole school targets
Societal and external challenges that could affect aspiration	Physical barriers Cultural barriers Emotional barriers Transition barriers	Age/Gender/Ethnicity Self-efficacy and Self-Perception Job Opportunities	Discriminatory practices Psychological challenges and stress Lack of psychological commitment and career direction

6.1.4 Senior Leadership Development Model

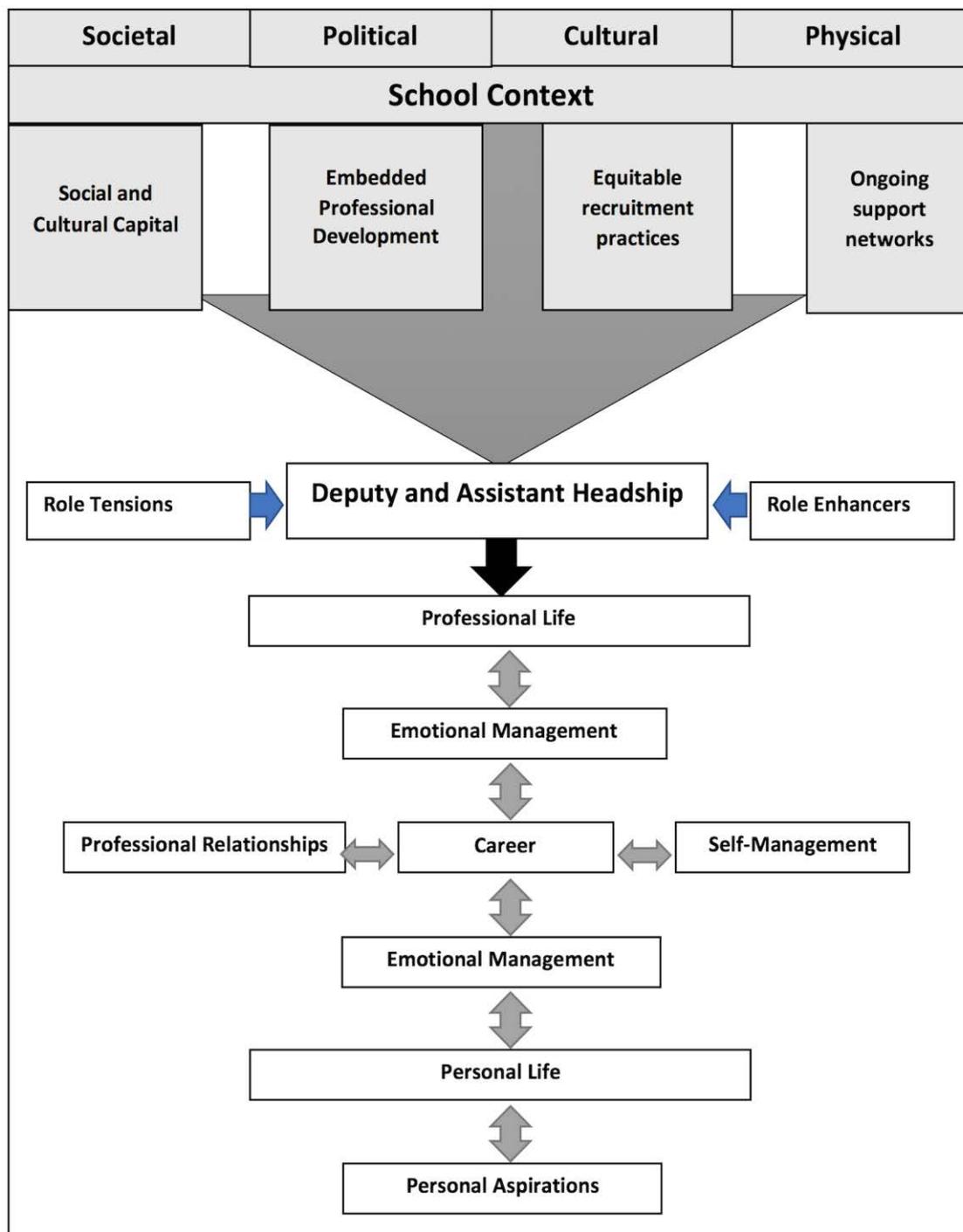
Figure 6 presents a Senior Leadership Development Model which positions the finding of this research (and its use of Putnam's social capital theory) within a broader model of school leadership trajectories drawn from previous research and referred to earlier in this Chapter. I designed the Senior Leadership Development Model as a way of displaying the strategic external factors involved in preparing and developing a representative senior leadership school workforce for the 21st century. This model provides an overview of some of the key workforce and leadership factors that Headteachers should consider when trying to build capacity, organisational commitment and progression within a social justice framework:

- Social and Cultural Capital
- Embedded Professional Development
- Equitable recruitment practices
- Ongoing support network

When applied, the four areas can be perceived as role enhancers, producing career opportunities, confidence and collaborative practices. However, when omitted from the school context role and career tensions, inequality and limited career pathways may exist. In relation to Figure 6 some of the Bonder senior leaders experienced limited embedded professional development and networking opportunities and this may have impacted on the career decisions they made. The Bridgers, however, had

experienced networking opportunities and were engaged in talent development and monitoring processes. The internal factors (*professional life, emotional management, personal life, career, professional relationships and personal aspirations*) reflect the important elements that are associated with the day to day lived experience of senior leaders, all of which can influence the role in a positive or negative way.

Figure 6 The Education Workforce Senior Leadership Development Model
 (J Bruce-Golding, 2017)



6.2. Implications of the study

Below are some of the implications of the study.

6.2.1 Leadership development and Headteacher training

Theory: When considering the relationship that the Headteacher had with the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers, the findings showed that all of them had experienced career nurturing and encouragement before entering into their Deputy and Assistant Headship role. However, after, the career nurturing seemed to stop for the Bonders and a role levelling or role plateauing seemed to take place in terms of ongoing professional development and training. The Bridgers made the transition into accessing additional socialization experiences (see Table 31) and continued to receive the Headteachers support in their roles.

Changes in the Bonder relationship with the Headteacher could indicate that Headteachers may have strategically developed the Bonder Deputy and Assistant Headteachers to that position understanding that they would not want to go any further in their career. Alternatively, they might not have had the time, skills or experience to help the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers through the transition stage to Headship. Further study is required to ascertain whether the aspiring leadership programmes are appropriate in developing senior leaders in their role, or are structured enough to provide Deputy and Assistant Headteachers with the opportunities to develop.

Praxis: Headteachers should be encouraged to undertake regular leadership development training on how to develop future leaders with reference to the career aspirations, monitoring course impact and practical leadership development opportunities provided to the Middle Leaders, Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in the school. Collaborative approaches with schools that are examples in these areas should help to provide insight and knowledge on developing staff.

Opportunities could be provided for Headteachers and School Governors to reflect upon their own career socialization experiences, and training given on how to develop social and cultural capital within a social justice framework when working with potential leaders. Although this would take a high level of honesty, these processes would help to develop, challenge and change views and perceptions of others who reflect difference in terms of gender, race, class and culture. These opportunities for reflective thinking could help Governors and school leaders to reflect on how their own biases, societal influences and backgrounds might affect their decisions within their roles. It would also help to develop practice and influence change when addressing the lack of diversity in educational leadership and management (see Figure 6).

6.2.2 Understanding careers and lives of senior leaders

Theory: Literature on the career expectations of senior leaders from some governing bodies present a linear approach to career transition, and it is an expectation that all school staff are to be actively involved in their professional development in order to

acquire new skills and support students more effectively. Furthermore, the Headteacher should be at the helm of providing opportunities and career support for staff. The life history of senior leaders, and research into career anchors and stages, has shown that many leaders experience chance opportunities and sometimes unstructured approaches that have led them to be in their roles (Smith, 2012). Furthermore, life history research has reflected the lived experience, gender and race challenges, along with the personal day to day sacrifices that are experienced, e.g. looking after the children, extended family, managing family pressures, having a career break to support the family.

Praxis: A distinction between the Bonder and Bridger senior leaders may be useful for future leadership research and planning for leadership development. Many Bonder Deputy and Assistant Headteachers were experiencing high levels of self-efficacy and role mastery in the current role, which resulted in them wanting to stay in their role. The new findings show that the Bonders felt that their strengths were best utilized in the internal context of the school which involved relationship building and operational duties, which, in some cases, might have resulted in feelings of inadequacy to undertake the Headship role. This could also serve as a barrier to aspiration within the role if Headship was a future option.

The professional development of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers should be prioritised by using career assessments and development courses that are embedded into the roles of the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher, whether or not Headship is a future aspiration. Further study is needed in order to find out how effective and prac-

tical the current Deputy and Assistant Headteacher courses and aspiring Headteacher courses are combined with the ease of implementation and usefulness within the school setting. The use of career networking groups, coaching and professional mentoring to address issues regarding building appropriate skill sets, addressing self-doubt and self-perception could, over the long term, help some Deputy and Assistant Headteachers who once felt that they were not capable of taking further steps in their career trajectories, to aspire to Headship.

- Annual career aspiration reviews and audits should be documented, monitored and actioned as part of the career planning process.
- The exploration of other senior leadership career pathways with the school context would allow potential future leaders to aspire to senior leadership roles that complemented their nature, values and skill sets.
- Job rotation and job enrichment focused on Headteacher competencies should be incorporated and scheduled into the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher role. This would enable all Deputy and Assistant Headteachers to develop key competencies over a 3–5 year period, as well as make an informed decision based on their experience and understanding of the Headship role.

Although finance availability and time factors will always be a challenge, schools should be reflecting on how professional development course opportunities and experiences are distributed, monitored and actioned. The research as mentioned previously has revealed that leaders do not follow a linear route and many leaders want to be in a role that compliments their career focus, expectations, nature and personality. Therefore, the Bonder and Bridger characteristics could play an important part in whether a Deputy or Assistant Headteacher makes the transition to Headship or develops a key relationship-based role within the school context. It might not be that they lack career ambition, but they have found a role that is aligned with their career anchors (Schein, 1978; 1996) and their professional expertise.

6.2.3 Social and cultural capital building

Theory: In light of the lack of leader readiness for some Headship posts, Headteachers and governing bodies should be equipped with the skills to identify, recruit, nurture and retain future leadership talent; however, research has shown that this may not always be the case. Further research into the current guidance and support given to Headteachers and School Governors would be needed in order to prepare future leaders through equitable recruitment practices.

Developing social capital (Putnam, 2000) and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977) in the educational context are processes that can be used to build capacity, provide collaborative experiences and new opportunities for developing and potential leaders. These processes combined with the implementation of social justice practices could

help to address the lack of applications for Headship, lack of confidence and aspiration barriers in some cases.

Praxis: School Governor and Headteacher guidance and training on how the concepts of social and cultural capital combined with equitable recruitment practices can be used to identify, select, nurture and retain future leadership talent:

- Regular structured coaching and mentoring sessions during the middle and senior leadership career stage could help to identify aspirations, address personal and professional barriers. Time to reflect on career goals in 1:1 and group settings could be a useful way in identifying career strengths, ideal roles and development areas.
- Opportunities for middle and senior leaders to access regular local networking events whether or not they are aspiring to Headship could provide positive opportunities for experiences (motivations, challenges and aspirations) to be shared.

6.2.4 Personal life and emotional management

Theory: Government policy papers do not refer to how senior leaders are to maintain a healthy work-life balance when meeting the continued pressures with changing reforms. However, Union and health publications have reported on the impact of

stress and emotional discomfort experienced in the Headship role, senior leadership and teaching staff role. Although some stress can be deemed as healthy, continued stressful situations can result in emotional toil, which could eventually lead to psychological illnesses and long-term absences. With the pervasive use of the internet and continued technological developments, the concept of switching off is becoming harder and harder and working at home is becoming the norm. A holistic view of the Deputy and Assistant Headship role is, therefore, proposed, one that considers the emotional demands and costs that are placed upon the role with consideration to the personal life, health and emotional management.

Praxis: In order to respond to the personal lives and the emotional management of senior leaders in secondary schools in England, (partnership) part-time and flexitime hours could be introduced to the role as a viable way of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers being able to achieve an appropriate work-life balance, whilst meeting the objectives of the Headteacher:

- Emotional management and developing emotional intelligence courses as part of the senior leadership role should be compulsory courses, providing strategies and support (professional counselling in some cases) in dealing with school issues; for example, traumatic child protection issues, dealing with violent parents, unhealthy staff relationships, and learning to switch off, all of which could affect the long-term emotional balance of the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher in a personal and a professional capacity.

- A call for consistent emotional support from the school management in terms of them forwarding empathetic approaches backed up with a plan of action. Or the provision of telephone counselling and support lines that could also be beneficial in helping to maintain the individuals emotional, professional and personal work-life balance.

6.3 Limitations of the study

The research design chapter gave a full overview of the approach taken for this study. However, limitations of this type of study remain. Although this was a small-scale study, it has been able to highlight critical differences and complexities in how individuals experience their roles. The sample size means that there may be other ways in which people experience being a Deputy or Assistant Headteacher, especially in other types of schools and in other localities. Birmingham may be different because it is a big city and the history of schools in this city has sometimes been challenging. When working with social beings, it is always important to remember that decisions and minds can be changed.

This small-scale study involved 14 senior leaders in secondary schools in Birmingham, England. The population sample came from one region of the West Midlands, which means that the findings are not statistically generalisable, even though valuable insights into the lives of senior leaders were obtained. However, on reflection, a stratified sampling approach using national data could have been used in order to provide a generalisable sample. Semi-structured interviews were used which allowed the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers to discuss their career trajectories and experiences. The interviews were managed within my time constraints. However, a longitudinal study over a period of time could also have provided further life-career insights and decision-making processes, which would have been valuable to this research.

Social desirability bias can always be an issue when working with social beings and obtaining their opinions; therefore, avoiding leading questions and not asking for direct personal opinions allowed the participants to express their thoughts and opinions on issues related to their career journey. I also had to be aware of confirmation bias, which could take place in my own thinking when analysing and discussing the data. This included challenging my own assumptions that I had, especially as an educator myself, and not just forwarding the perceptions and experiences that coincided with the research questions or underlying assumptions.

6.4 Areas for further research

This small-scale study has provided detailed accounts of the career lives and experiences of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers. However, additional regional narrative studies into the experiences of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers would help to build a strong picture of the career roles, responsibilities and experiences of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers and how their experiences have impacted on their career decisions made. Further investigation into the Bonder and the Bridger senior leader characteristics, and how their personal and professional internal and external relationships impact upon their career trajectories, career motivation and character traits, will help to deepen our understanding of how to identify future leaders. An understanding of the career anchors of senior leaders in education could also help to deepen our understanding of the future roles of teachers, middle leaders and senior leader career choices in light of the current teacher retention challenges. Continued evaluation of national and local leadership courses, as well as their effectiveness in

supporting role progression, would provide insight into how these courses support the steps towards Headship. Furthermore, reviews of the regional recruitment and selection procedures in place, in comparison to regions that demonstrate and display a healthy representative workforce, could help to provide further insights into how social justice, cultural and social capital practices are implemented in educational settings. Perspectives from secondary school Headteachers and School Governors could be obtained pertaining to the selection, recruitment and retention of staff, with a focus on career development, support and retention. This study has been able to provide valuable insights into both the lives and careers of 14 Deputy Headteachers and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham on their experiences within their role, career and of Headship. It has been very interesting learning about the different lives, backgrounds and experiences of school leaders from the perspective of being a Deputy or Assistant Headteacher in the secondary school context. The study has informed my practice by providing new understandings into the aspirations of senior leaders, the personal and professional complexities experienced when making career decisions.

Although this has been a small-scale study, it has also tentatively revealed that there may not necessarily be a Headship crisis, but a leadership crisis. This crisis is pertaining to the identification, development of potential leaders and maintaining the service of teachers. This might indicate a lack of training, understanding of career life journeys of teachers, inexperience in coaching, mentoring and strategic planning for succession. Changes are continually being made to national programmes and new courses are being developed to recruit future leaders in response to the changing needs within the England education system. These programmes aim to address

gender and diversity in school leadership which on the whole is an encouraging step forward in responding to the political, cultural and societal influences that continue to impact upon school leadership and management.

6.5 Contribution to knowledge from this research

This empirical study set out to investigate the career trajectories of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in secondary schools in Birmingham, England. It has been unique in obtaining first-hand accounts from this group of educators and applying the experiences and perspectives to a tentative new career stages and phases framework for Deputy and Assistant Headteachers. New insights and understandings can therefore be gained from this narrative approach into the lives of 14 senior leaders.

The study of the careers and lives of the senior leaders has revealed different perspectives, expectations and understandings between how the government and national teaching establishments perceive the secondary school Deputy and Assistant Headship role in comparison to how the role is experienced within the educational context. It has been important to consider that the nature of the context, the nature of how policy impacts upon different contexts, along with the nature of the role, will all yield different and enlightening individual experiences that result in the career decisions made.

The decisions that Deputy and Assistant Headteachers make within their career life course depends on their story, which is made up of their experiences (personal and

professional), characteristics, confidence levels, values, beliefs, career and personal motivations. Career and personal motivation can be influenced or affected by how both positive and negative experiences are reacted to and interpreted. A Deputy or Assistant Headteacher might have reached the decision that they are satisfied in their career and role, due to an understanding of their personal characteristics, their past experiences, their current experiences within their role and the professional and personal influences, e.g. family members, teachers and Headteachers. Alternately, a Deputy or Assistant Headteacher might be highly driven in their career due to overcoming challenges and experiencing positive experiences, along with career and personal support. Therefore, the Bonders, Bridger's and Leavers will tell a different story based on their previous and current situations and influences.

The findings suggest that the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher career experiences of socialization, experience of Headship and the perspectives of the day to day lived role impacts upon the future career decisions made. This combined with personal aspirations, commitments and the nature of the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher concerning relationships and how they believe they can best utilize their social capital can be deciding factors on whether they stay, leave or move up the career ladder. The eight themes identified in Figure 5 (Influences and challenges to the aspiration of a senior leader) all influenced the career aspirations and the career decisions made at that time; *Perception of the Headship role, Attitudes towards relationships, Attitudes towards autonomy and accountability, Personal life and Health, Career and Professional impact.*

Schein's (1971) career stages and phases framework has been vital in helping us to understand the structural and psychological processes that take place during different career stages. Insights into the career boundaries highlight the tangible (day to day role) and intangible processes (entrance into the 'inner boundaries', relationships, trust) that can become enhancers or barriers within a career. This combined with the concept of social capital and how it is utilized by Deputy and Assistant Headteachers and the Headteacher provides insights into different relationship types and investment given to them.

This research extends our knowledge of the characteristics of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers when considering social capital in school leadership. The present study makes several noteworthy contributions to understanding the lives and career journeys of senior leaders and this is the first time that Putnam's (1993; 2001) Bridger-Bonder characteristics have been applied to the Deputy and Assistant Headteacher roles in secondary schools. New and important recommendations for future policy pertaining to identification of future leaders, retention, diversity and succession planning. Currently the UK is experiencing an 'education workforce and leadership crisis' which spans from the beginnings of the teaching career to the higher echelons of senior leadership. Worrying Government statistics show that over 40,000 teachers including graduate teachers left the teaching profession in 2016 and this has been an annual trend over the last 5 years (DfE, 2017). Although the UK government is investing in the recruitment, development of training of new teachers, the rate of new teachers (between 1 year and 5 years) leaving the profession is alarming. This not only poses a threat to the identification and development of future

school leaders, but it will affect the long-term stability of the school teaching workforce.

It is important to investigate the barriers and challenges experienced by graduates and new teachers during the first five years of their teaching career, otherwise this will ultimately impact upon future leadership development, school effectiveness, and succession planning. It is time for the government to generate new understandings, through research, of the processes of how and why leaders are leaving the profession, staying in their current role and not aspiring to higher leadership roles, or taking the steps to Headship as part of acknowledging the changing professional and personal roles and experiences of secondary school leaders in school leadership and management.

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Appendices

Appendix: 1 Phase 1 Survey



Deputy and Assistant Headship – your thoughts on Headship

Deputy and Assistant Headship roles are very important within Secondary Education. This survey forms part of a study conducted by a University of Birmingham Researcher on the Leadership in Education Ed Doctorate course. The survey aims to gain information about your plans regarding the application for headship. This questionnaire is being distributed to 100 Deputy and Assistant Headteachers in Birmingham. Your response will provide important evidence in giving a 'snap shot' account of where you are in your career journey.

Once the questionnaire is returned it will be too late to withdraw from the project. The code at the top corner of this questionnaire will be cut off ensuring that your response is kept anonymous. The returned questionnaires will be stored under the University of Birmingham's ethical code of practice. No individual will be identified and the questionnaires will be destroyed after 10 years.

I look forward to receiving your completed questionnaire and thank you for your contribution.

Judith Buckley, School of Education.

Please note that by completing this questionnaire you are giving consent for your responses to be used in this study. Thank you.

Please tick the answer you wish to give and add numbers or text as appropriate.

Section 1: About you

Please circle your role in your school Deputy Head Assistant Head

Please indicate your gender Male/Female

Please indicate how many years you have spent as a classroom teacher in your present school (Years)

How long have you been a Deputy/Assistant Head teacher in total? (Years)

Please circle the code that describes your ethnic origin

White or White British 1
Black or Black British 2
Asian or Asian British 3
Other (please state) 4

Section 2: Interest in Headship

Which statement describes your interest in applying for Headship? (Please TICK)

I am interested in applying for Headship

I am not interested in applying for Headship

Applying for Headship is a possibility

Have you completed your NPQH? Yes/No/In progress

If yes, how long ago (in years)

Do you plan to complete your NPQH? Yes/No

If you are not interested in applying for headship would you be interested in taking part in an anonymous interview talking about your career journey to date? Yes/No

If yes, please email me at [redacted]

Are you happy for me to contact you via email regarding the interview? Yes/No

Thank you for your time

Appendix: 2 Phase 2 Interview Schedule



Interview Schedule

1. The opening

My name is and I am an educational researcher from the University of Birmingham. Your answers will be kept anonymous but may be quoted in the end report with no association or link to you. Can I remind you that you have the option to withdraw from this interview? Would you like to continue?

(Purpose) I would like to ask you some questions about the experiences that you have encountered as a Deputy/Assistant Headteacher in your school.

(Motivation) I hope to use this information to inform educational policy in addressing the shortage of head teachers through succession planning as well as to provide an anonymous voice of Deputy/Assistant Headteachers on their personal experiences and perception of Headship. If you do not want to answer a question, please say and we can move onto the next question.

(Time Line) The interview should take about 45 minutes. Are you available to respond to some questions within this time?

(Transition:) Let me begin by asking you how long you have been a Deputy/Assistant Head teacher in your school?

2. Body: Career journey, experiences and thoughts about headship

Overarching themes	Questions	Possible probes (follow up questions)
Previous experiences	Please could you tell me about how you feel about your Deputy/Assistant Headship role here currently?	What/who encouraged your decision to become a Deputy/Assistant Head teacher here?
Perceptions about current role and Headship	How do you feel about your Deputy/Assistant Headship role currently?	
	What are your views of Headship?	How do you maintain a work/life balance currently?
Reasons against Headship	What are the reasons why do not you want to aspire to Headship?	Could you think of any other reasons?
Role comparison	What are the unique features of Deputy/Assistant Headship as compared to Headship?	Types of differences: Main duties/responsibilities
	What are the similarities between your role and the Heads role?	How are the responsibilities distributed?
Perceptions of enjoyment within the Deputy/Assistant Headship role	Based on your personal experiences, what do you enjoy about your role?	Do you feel confident in your role as a Deputy Head teacher?
	What don't you enjoy in about your role?	Relationships with other staff members.
Perceptions of challenges faced by other teachers	What do you think are the main challenges faced by male and female Deputy and Assistant Head teachers if they would like to aspire to Headship?	What ongoing training is offered for Deputy and Assistant Head teachers?
Personal life	Tell me something about your personal life – hobbies, family.	How important are these things to you? Do you feel that you could maintain these activities if you were a Head teacher?

Transition: Thank you it has been a pleasure finding out about your experiences and perceptions about the reasons why you do not want to enter Headship.

3. Closing

(Maintain rapport) Thank you for taking the time to do this interview. I would like to mention again that you now have the option to withdraw from this interview. Are you happy for what we have discussed to be used for future educational research?

Depending on the response:

You will receive a transcript of everything that we have spoken about for you to have a look through and make any amendments wherever necessary if you have circled that you would like a copy of the transcript. Is there anything else that you feel that you would like to add?

Thank you for your time.

(Action to be taken) I should have everything that I need. Would it be alright to call you if I have any more questions? Thanks again.

Appendix: 3 Participant Consent Form



Participant Consent Form

Project overview

The purpose of this study is to explore the career journey of Assistant and Deputy Headteachers and to elicit the experiences and reasoning behind why Headship is no longer an option. Your verbal contribution through the interview process is required to contribute to the current and local experiences of Deputy and Assistant Head teachers in Birmingham.

Anonymity and confidentiality

All interviews will be kept confidential and only used for research purposes. Ethical research standards of the University of Birmingham (<http://www.rcs.bham.ac.uk/ethics/review/index.shtml>) will be adhered to and maintained at all times. The data obtained from this interview will be available only to the researcher and the Leadership and Education EdD tutors at the University of Birmingham [redacted] and possibly the External Examiner of the thesis. Your name and school details and any identifiable characteristics will be removed from the written transcript. The interview transcript may also be used in future research publications once again omitting any identifiable characteristics to you. The transcript from the interview will be kept securely on a computer with a password for access. Written consent forms and field notes will be locked in a filing cabinet and be destroyed after 10 years.

Informed consent

By signing this form, you are consenting to your interview to be used for the above project.

Right to withdraw

You have the right to withdraw before, during and directly after the interview. You will be verbally reminded of this before and directly after the interview. You can withdraw from the interview verbally – before, during and directly after the interview. After the interview a copy of the interview transcript will be sent your school email address. You will have 5 days from this date to withdraw from the study. Withdrawal requests can be sent to [redacted]

Answering questions

You will be given a copy of the interview questions prior to the interview. You have the right not to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable with. Please mention this to the Researcher before or during the interview.

Feedback

A copy of the transcript will be sent to you where you will have the opportunity to review and give further feedback to the transcript if necessary.

Acknowledgement:

Please sign this form to confirm that you have agreed your interview being used for educational uses. Complete the table below to state whether you would like a summary of the research findings on completion of the thesis.

Signed: Date:

Signed: Date:



Appendix: 4 Participant Transcript

Q *My name is Judith Buckley and I'm an educational researcher from the My name is Judith Buckley and I am an educational researcher from the University of Birmingham. Your answers will be kept anonymous but may be quoted in the end report with no association or link to you. Can I remind you that you have the option to withdraw from this interview? Would you like to continue?*

A Yes.

I would like to ask you some questions about the experiences that you have encountered as a Deputy/Assistant Headteacher in your school. I hope to use this information to inform educational policy in addressing the shortage of head teachers through succession planning as well as to provide an anonymous voice of Deputy/Assistant Headteachers on their personal experiences and perception of Headship. If you do not want to answer a question, please say and we can move onto the next question. The interview should take about 45 minutes. Are you available to respond to some questions within this time?

A Yes.

Let me begin by asking you how long you have been Assistant Head Teacher in your School?

A Since October 2011.

Who encouraged you, or what made you make the decision to become a Teacher?

A My Principle had always encouraged me to apply for SLT roles, but the ones that came up were remits that I was confident in applying for and then I passed all the remit that had come up, so I chose to apply for that.

When you were younger, did you have any thoughts about becoming a Teacher?

A I always wanted to become a teacher, always wanted to be a teacher. After I got over the vet phase, I seriously started thinking about teaching, probably from the age of about 15, so quite young. I always wanted to be a teacher and I applied and got onto the old B'Ed course that is 4 years. I was in the classroom at 18 – bit scary!!

How do you feel – this is a very open question, but how do you feel about your role as Assistant Head currently?

A Is that to me personally?

Yes.

A It's a difficult one for me. I know it may sound daft; I'm not a career person. I've never been one of those people who says, I want to be an Assistant Head in 10 years' time or I've never been that kind of person. I've always gone for jobs I think I could have an impact with. I was Head of Year because I wanted to have, knew I could have and impact with the year groups I had. The same came with the Assistant Head role, because I think if I was really motivated to be Head, I would have gone for all the other opportunities and I didn't. It was this pastoral Assistant Head role that came up and I thought WOW, I could have some real impact here. From my point of view, I feel, I am genuinely making a contribution to the college where I work. That's how I feel about it.

You are in the Assistant Head ship role now. What are your views – do you have any views about Headship?

A I would never ever become a Head. I can't – as a job, the accountability is phenomenal. I am accountable, but I am accountable for such a small remit in comparison to a Head. I just think that Heads are just brave and really good Heads are I think, few and far between. Looking at the TES over the past few weeks, it is full of Headship adverts you know. It's quite surprising. It's one of those jobs, I don't even think if I moved to a Vice Principle, I don't even think if I continued to make some progressive moves, I would be very shocked, if I genuinely seriously considered myself confident enough to do it.

How do you maintain a healthy work life balance?

A With huge difficulty. I've got two daughters, one is five and one is five months and my partner is a police officer. With his shift pattern, with great difficulty. What helps, is my principle is really good for flexible working hours. So even as a head of year, I was able to have late starts if I needed them and early finishes if I needed them. So I'm very lucky, I've had my time table accommodated for, just in case, with my partners patterns it is not always the case, as he could have the girls and I can go into school at 7.00am. I balanced it out by doing that, but I have to say that the school I'm at has made that viable. I am uber organized in terms of how I juggle my teaching commitments as well as my SLT commitments and typically the girls have my undivided attention. Every weekend, but every half term I'll go in for a full day and every bigger holiday like Easter or Christmas I go in for two days, just so, I don't like getting behind with things so you have to be really organised and I would generally say I have zero time to myself, but that's how I juggle it.

You've got a very understanding school.

A Yes, absolutely, definitely. Very lucky.

If you were to sum up some of the reasons why you don't want to aspire to Headship?

A I think pay is an issue; I am amazed that some Headships on the leadership spine are about £50,000/ £60,000, not actually considering your accountability and the scrutiny you're under, I don't think it's very much. If you wanted to earn double that, you're looking at a massive Academy in the city, so I don't think the pay reflects the level of scrutiny and accountability particularly. I also, think the role of the governing body is well, I don't..... its generalization. The school I am at is slightly different, but I have worked at other schools. You've either got a very good governing body that can support you, but scrutinize you properly or you have a mixed governing body that don't necessarily know what they are talking about and I think a governing body almost should be as good as OFSTED and be able to prepare you for how your being assessed. I think a lot of how the school progresses, isn't just down to a Head, it's down to a decent governing body. So that would also be something. I also think it's very hard to get rid rubbish Teachers and I would certainly say that is something that should be made a lot easier for Heads. It's a very long process. I genuinely believe if you are going into teach, you are going in to help young people achieve. That's it. There is no point in being there for no other reason. Yes, I accept that people can have problems. As a NQT, I had a really difficult first year, I learnt lessons, I moved on, my second year was much better, it was not without wanting to work hard and I still feel that there are a proportion of teachers that seem to think that it has to come from the students and don't put in enough time. There is a belief that you should be

given the time by the school to mark your books, you should be given the time off school to plan – you have two months holiday a year – Sorry that’s just one of my bug bears and I think it’s really difficult for Heads to get rid of and I know a lot of what Gove is suggesting, people are up in arms about, one of his things is that it should be easier to do. Term is a bit tight but I agree with that. I think as a Head, the quality of your school is hugely influenced by your staff and I just think that you’ve just got to recruit; you’ve got to have the flexibility.

A I don’t like the regional pay thing either. That can go against some Heads, because if you really want to recruit some quality staff and keep them, you don’t want to have that *in*. You want people to move for their jobs. When I qualified you moved to do your job. I moved from Newcastle to Norfolk, from Norfolk to Cambridge. I moved for work. I’m worried that that has an impact. So I think, from a Heads point of view, I wouldn’t want that getting rid of staff you know are not doing their job and you know that winds me up, as you know you are messing about with children’s futures. I do feel quite passionate about that. I just think they are very big headaches to take on as a Head Teacher and from my point of view as an Assistant Head I look at my staff management now, and compare it to what a Head has to manage; it’s such a massive leap. It does not appeal.

What would you say are the unique features of Assistant Headship compared to Headship?

A An Assistant Headship role is unique in that, you can really have quality control within your area. For example I am in SEN My remit has recently changed, so it is a bit of pastoral but it’s become a bit more on the teaching

pedagogy side I things. I'm in charge of, for example SEN, we have an Achievement Centre and I am in charge of Behavioural Management and then Humanities. And so for me, it's unique in that I could have complete quality control over all of those areas. I could move all of those areas to outstanding and have the freedom to do that. For me, I feel like, first of all I am contributing massively to the overall achievement of the school, but I feel it's unique in that I'd get the freedom. There are massive changes I am making to the SEN department at the moment changing my TAs, the way that we allocate provisions for Statement of students so that they achieve, and really turning it on its head. That is what I love about the job, the freedom to do that, with a view to having outstanding provisions across all my areas. I just feel that is more manageable because I get that special aim from and then that drive towards improving that. Whereas I just feel a Head has a block of everything. I feel like the unique side of my role is that I get that focus time to look at how to be more efficient and to have more of an impact on the students. Does that answer your question?

A Yes it does.

What would you say are the similarities between your role and the Heads?

A Staff management, that clear expectation to your staff and also, if you're dealing with ineffectual teachers, I have to get everything right from a legal point of view from the beginning. For example, if I mess up at any stage that stops the principle from doing what they need to do for the good of the school. That's how I see the similarities, so if you have got a member of staff who isn't up to standard, I document it. Any conversation I have, I follow up with an email, so

everything is recorded. All meetings are minuted and agreed and it all goes on file. It doesn't matter how good or not good a member of staff is, I'm putting in place accountability. I can be made accountable and they can be made accountable and I think if you can instill that into your teams, it makes it a lot easier for the principle. I'm echoing what the Principle wants essentially, that's how I see that it's similar. It's also similar in that you have the difficult conversations with staff, you may have to deal with tricky situations with parents, with students and a Head is not immune from that neither is his Assistant Head. In other ways what is similar is the dialogue, in that I can't make decisions in isolation. It's all very well me wanting to change SEN but that has to be put to everybody. There has to be a consultation process and I feel that a Head has to have a consultation process. That side of it I think is quite similar.

Thank you.

Based on your personal experience, what do you enjoy about your role?

A The creativity side of things. I've got departments that I oversee and all of them need work. All of them need changes and I am given the freedom to explore ideas to consult to come up with something that can move us. I love that side of things. I'm on maternity leave, I've gone away; I've come up with a new program for SEN. Put it to the Head, put it to the TAs. And I love that that. There is no point in me doing my job unless I have an impact. I would say that is what I love, that I am onto something that can really change the way I do things, not for the sake of change, but to have a real impact on students. That's the side I love the most.

Do you feel confident in your role as an Assistant Head Teacher?

A Yes, I think I do. Before I applied for this post as Head of Year, which is a thankless task at the best of times!! The Principle got me to work with a Professional Coach who was attached to the school. I've never really had the full confidence to apply for the Assistant Head role, so he did a lot of work with me, on what it was and then it was automatic - I am going to apply for this and all the things that I had mental blocks about as a Head of Year, about why I would not go for Assistant Headship just disappeared. It's a very interesting thing even for me to observe. All these things that I thought I would have difficulty doing, I didn't have difficulty doing.

How long were you seeing the Coach?

A I worked with him for about a year. I feel confident that being an Assistant Head is partly down to the work I did with him before applying.

Was he an Assistant Head as well?

A No he is an actual Professional Coach, who does Behavioural Therapy and has been on various courses and works in Education and works with SLT predominately. He is about changing mind-set. I feel confident, but I put that down largely to the work I did with him.

What don't you enjoy about your role?

A I say staffing. I wish I had more freedom to just kind of go 'Look, let's just put our cards on the table. I unfortunately have to go through this kind of progressive stepped approach. I like the staffing side of things because I oversee a lot of brilliant Staff, but then you will always come across the belligerent staff,

that just are losing sight of why they are at school and they are at school actually to help children achieve. Everything else is irrelevant. I don't like it, but I don't mind it. I do it because it is my job to do it. But it certainly is a bug bear!!

What are your relationships with other Staff members?

A Positive. I think the reason it has been an easy transition for me, is largely being Head of Year. You end up supporting so many members of staff. You're just picking up issues left, right and centre. So I know that staff see me as a supportive individual. I think that has helped, but probably in a year's time, I'm going to be disliked, because of the changes!!

And introducing something new and that brings along...

A It is the accountability and I would certainly say at my school, a lot of staff complain about workload and I would say it's not workload, I am making you accountable. If you're not achieving results or your children are behind their target grades throughout the year, you have got to explain what you are going to do about it. It's not a workload issue, it's the job. It is the accountability drive I don't think people particularly like.

What do you think are the main challenges faced by male and female Assistant or Deputy Head Teachers if they want to aspire to Headship?

A I think there is a big jump from Assistant Headship into Headship. You absolutely can't just jump on experience, you need to be doing courses. I did a SSA Team Middle Leaders, you can do an Aspiring Head Teachers course, the NPQH, so you absolutely got to. The challenge is you have got to be running that Assistant Headship job, with some committed Headship preparation.

I think, also the budgetary control and overseeing that. I have just small pots across areas and understanding the funding streams and how you allocate that. Now granted, we have a Finance Director, but if we didn't have that, at my last school previously which was in Sandwell, that didn't, it was an LEA school and it was just a bit more complexed, so I think there is a big jump there in terms of the monetary control. Definitely I think you have to have the commitment to do things out of the job. Understand legal process and ensuring as well that your SLT understand legal process. If you have a stagnant pool of staff; I've worked at schools where you have got 80% are due to retire soon and really couldn't care less what happening so I think understanding the legal process – you cannot have that as a learning curve, that is something that you need to know inside out and your SLT – yes, I would say those are the three big challenges definitely.

In your role, what on-going training is offered for Assistant Head Teachers?

A I did SSAT, I was offered Masters as well, but I just didn't have the time. I still want to do the Masters, I would just struggle to fit that in at the moment, but that is something that I definitely need to do it. I was appointed in October, I left in December on maternity leave and I had already been put on an outstanding schools course and attended that. I had feedback and did a training session with staff on Outstanding Practice in the classroom, so it's on-going. I did ask to go on another course and was told there was no money!!

Would you say every year?

A Yes, easily every year. If you want a commitment to a long term course, ie Masters, you can do that.

We are coming to the end. Tell me something about your personal life or hobbies, and how important they are to you around your role.

A Hobbies – I don't think I have any, not anymore. Pretty much my spare time is taken up with my girls. My parents are foster carers as well and they don't live too far away from me, but we have a lot of family things we do over the weekend with the children. My daughter is friends with a girl mum and dad fostered 6 months ago. A lot of my time is spent from a family point of view and catching up with family. I did have hobbies, but I don't get the time to do them anymore!! But it's literally, work, the girls, I really fight to get some time. Normally I get the time, but it just depends on the partnerships, but my life is pretty much, work, the family and squeeze something in randomly.

Do you feel that you could maintain these activities if you were Head teacher?

A No. I would not see my family. There is no way. My principle in for 7.15am and leaves probably about 7.15pm every single day, 5 days a week. She is in across the holidays for several days. She teaches as well as her principle role. No – if I was to move down the headship route, I would have to give up too much. I could not move up anymore, I couldn't go for a Vice-Principle and I couldn't go for Principle role. I can manage what I have got at the moment, largely because of the school that I am at. I don't even think I could move Assistant Head to another school. If you haven't got that culture of flexible working arrangements. We have got lots of working mums at our school as well. I just couldn't see it.

So do you think because your Head Teacher is female she has been able to look at how to support females?

A I think so – that is part of it. She is very much; her belief is that she is more than happy to offer a flexible package for a member of staff that makes contributions to the staffing group. We have part time teachers and she is happy for them to be part time because they are Grade 1 when OFSTED come in every time. As far as she is concerned, it goes hand in hand for the contributions that they make.

I could imagine that automatically makes staff feel like they want to do 100%.

A Yes, and they will stay. She gets the loyalty, they don't move to other schools. She is retaining the quality of the staff. So that is where she sees it working both ways. I have worked at schools where a request has been made for part time and it's been arranged around the timetable. Not even been able to request your days. She allows you to request your days. The timetable has got a timetable around it!!!

You get happy staff then don't you?

A Yes, then they stay; It keeps the good staff. So, there is method in there.

That is really interesting. Ok well, thank you it has been a pleasure finding out about your experiences and perceptions about the reasons why you do not want to enter Headship. Thank you very much for doing this interview and you will receive a copy of the transcript. If there is anything else I need, is it alright if I call or email you?

A Absolutely, no problem.

That's great – thank you very much.

A You're welcome. It was interesting.