THE INFLUENCE AND MANAGEMENT OF EMOTION ON PRIMARY SCHOOL HEADTEACHERS

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Abstract

The number of headteacher applicants has fallen to the point where there are vacancies for headships unfilled due to the lack of suitable candidates applying. It has led to a recruitment crisis (Policy Exchange, 2014; NCSL, 2012). From this declining number of applicants, it appears that many potential headteachers are opting away from applying for headship posts. This study was carried out as a contribution to, and to update, the body of research data on the influence of emotions on headteachers and to consider if this has impacted on their role, and whether this plays a part in the reduction of headteacher applications.

The research question was investigated through semi-structured interviews with primary headteachers. The qualitative data was then analysed and a model generated from the findings. This model represents the influencing emotions of pride, stress and anxiety the subsequent coping strategies. Findings also identified methods of coping, which headteachers use to remain in the role, with the most effective support derived from the headteacher's ability to manage and control their own emotions.

Based on the analysis of data, it is strongly recommended that recognition of the emotional cost of headship needs to be considered as an on-going concern, both nationally by recognising it in the National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers, and locally by governing bodies and Academy Trust leadership by incorporating it into the cycle of headteacher professional development.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and context of thesis

This study will explore the influence of emotions on primary school headteachers, and the management of these. It will investigate whether, through the undeniably pressured and influential role of the headteacher, emotions have a positive or negative impact and how headteachers manage this. The study seeks to identify the most effective methods of emotional support of headteachers which can subsequently be used as a basis both for future training and the provision of support mechanisms. My overarching aim is to investigate methods for the emotional support of headteachers, analyse data, identify key themes and make recommendations. I do this in the hope that headteachers can make use of my analysis and recommendations, and that this will not only encourage them not to leave the profession, but will give potential heads the confidence to enter it.

In this introductory chapter, the context of the study will be established. Further to this, the antecedents will be discussed, providing an overview of the current knowledge base in the key themes of this study. The research questions will then be introduced in detail. Justification for the study will be considered. Following this, a brief overview of the methodology will be explained. Finally, ethical considerations will be reviewed, and how the findings will be disseminated and reported.

Policy Exchange (2014, p.1) stated that there is a continued demographics-led retirement of headteachers and a lack of replacements. 21% of primary heads are approaching retirement age, and the School Teachers' Pay Body has identified a lack of replacements as a systemic issue in primary schools. In January 2014, 26% of primary headship vacancies needed to be re-advertised – up from 15% the previous year, which they stated was the highest rate since 2000.

NCSL (2008), NCSL (2012), Policy Exchange (2014) stated that the number of headteacher applicants was falling. Indeed, it had fallen to the point where there were vacancies for headships unfilled due to the lack of suitable candidates applying. Yet the number of headship roles had not declined. It led to what was referred to as a looming recruitment crisis (Rhodes and Brundrett, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2008; NCSL, 2008; NCSL, 2012). This was becoming an increasing concern, which needed to be addressed if schools were to continue to be managed under the same leadership structure as they were currently. From this declining number of applicants, it appeared that many potential headteachers were opting away from applying for headship posts. It was a problem which was acknowledged by the National Governors Association (NCSL, 2012), as it was the role of a school's governing body to recruit headteachers. The National College for School Leadership (2012, p.3) acknowledged this in its publication for governing bodies:

> The context in which governors are now recruiting has changed over the decades. Gone are the days where large numbers of aspiring heads would travel the length of the country to secure their first headship. Retirement of the baby-boom generation and low geographical mobility (three-fifths of headship posts are filled within a local authority area) mean that the number of applicants has reduced over the years.

This study will investigate the influence of emotions on headteachers and consider if this has impacted on the role, and will explore potential ways that this could be addressed in order to support headteachers.

Headteachers are under strong pressure to perform very well, which is clearly evident from the Department for Education's (2015) National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers, as well as publicly available league tables, Ofsted documents and the School Inspection Handbook (2015). There are increasing expectations on headteachers, and increasing developments associated with their role. This can be evidenced by tracking the task-based elements of the profession. Thus, if headship is becoming a much more demanding role, this leads to the need to review how headteachers are both prepared for, and coping with, the increasing demands. The headteacher standards document (DfE, 2015) outlines the tasks and duties that headteachers are expected to perform, including reference to the role of the headteacher in establishing a calm and positive environment for staff and children through presenting a positive demeanor. This is this key area which will be investigated throughout this study.

1.2 Antecedents of the study

This study was informed by the literature on effective school leadership. It considered the impact of emotions on leadership, emotional intelligence, leadership stages and the life stories of leaders, and the effectiveness of training systems alongside national school policy. The literature was drawn from a range of sources including books, journals, government reports and internet sites. From these, the framework for this

study was developed and the findings and analysis were formulated on a theoretical base.

In identifying the key areas from the literature review, it was possible to draw out four key strands for further research. These core areas were identified from the review of research, government websites and documents. The core areas were selected to provide an overview of the role of the headteacher, which could then be analysed to provide a deeper understanding of the emotional impact of headship and also identify positive and negative influences. From the analysis of data, recommendations for the support of heads could be formulated, and hopefully this would entice future applicants to the role.

The core strands identified from the review of the literature and research were:

- Policy and practice for enacting headship
- Emotions
- Effective leaders
- Life stories and career stages of headteachers

There was a wealth of information on each of the four areas. Policy and practice of headteachers incorporated the recent changes to the headteacher standards, as well as the changes to the Ofsted (2018) documents which outlined the inspection requirements that headteachers should adhere to. This also incorporated the current training provision for potential and existing headteachers, including the National Professional Qualification for Headship (hereon referred to as NPQH) and the peer mentoring systems. The Department for Education (DfE) and the National College

(NC) were key contributors to this knowledge base. To review the looming recruitment crisis, Rhodes and Brundrett's (2006, 2012) and Rhodes et al's (2008) texts were examined alongside government papers from the National College for School Leadership (2004, 2008, 2012).

Beatty (2000, 2002, 2008), Crawford (2002, 2004, 2007a, 2007b) and Southworth (1995, 1998), were key authors whose theories and studies on the influence of emotions on school leaders were accessed. Morrison and Ecclestone (2011) provided an insight into the impact of emotional intelligence on leadership. Their arguments that policy and guidance for schools do not incorporate or indeed acknowledge the impact of emotions on leadership, are evaluated. They strongly claimed that there was a powerful emotional influence on headteachers which impacts on their day-to-day abilities and psychological well-being and indeed on their length of service in the role.

In order to gain a deeper and more thorough understanding of the characteristics of effective leaders who thrive under the emotional pressure of the role, the literature was reviewed. Fullan's (2003) "charismatic leader" and Wallace's (2003) "transformation leadership" provided focal points for building an understanding of how effective leaders develop school progress, and how they cope with the pressures of the role and through this the management of their emotions. Further areas which were reviewed were the career stages of headteachers, with Gronn's (1999) career model forming the theoretical framework for the study. Alongside this Earley and Weindling's (2007) stages of leadership also informed the construction of interview questions and supported the formulation of key areas for findings and discussion.

A summary of the literature on the role of the headteacher undisputedly agreed that the headteacher was crucial to a school's success and that school leaders impacted on pupil learning (NCSL, 2004; Southworth, 1998; Harris et al., 2003). As Harris et al. (2003) claimed, it had been consistently argued that the quality of headship matters in determining the motivation of teachers and the quality of teaching. Southworth (1998) also highlighted the importance of leadership, which was measured not only through Ofsted and HMI but also, and perhaps, he claimed, most importantly, by teachers. The measurable impact of the headteacher, as these studies showed, reflected the pressure and expectations placed on school leaders.

Whilst researching the literature on emotions, it was necessary to narrow this to key elements as the field was vast. Therefore, the emotional impact on headteachers was explored with Beatty's (2000, 2008), Beatty and Brew's (2004) and Crawford's (2002, 2004, 2007a, 2007b) and Cowie and Crawford's (2009) texts being key to this study. The emotional intelligence of headteachers was also identified as a key area, and whilst this could be defined as the management and understanding of emotions in others, literature focused on the self-management of emotions was lacking.

Although it was possible to quantify the impact of a headteacher through test results and statistics, there were arguments that the emotional cost of headship was not always so easily measured. Southworth (1995) compared the reality of being a primary headteacher with the job description. He argued that headship is presented as a rational set of tasks, but this did not account for the affective, emotional dimension of dealing with people. Crawford (2007a) also presented this in her arguments, as she stated that although the National College make implicit in much of the research that

leadership is a dynamic, social influencing process, the essence of leadership is through emotional relationships, and these are at the centre of every school. However, Crawford's concern (2007a) was that the concept that headteachers are emotional beings, responding to situations that evoke emotion as they make crucial decisions, and this was not always apparent in the literature. Fineman's (2001) argument supported this, describing schools as emotional arenas which could not be separated from the organisational life because it was the emotions which humanise and enlighten them.

In contrast to this lack of literature on emotions, much key literature was written on career stages for school leaders, tracking them through their incumbency. Of particular focus for this study was Gronn's (1999) and Earley and Weindling's (2007) definitions of career stages. Earley and Weindling (2007) separated the cycle of leadership into seven stages, moving from preparation prior to headship, through the first months in which the headteacher faces the reality of the role. This followed through to the 'taking hold stage', which was the first three to twelve months and moves through the reshaping period, in which the headteacher began to build on the experience. The next three to four years were grouped as the refining stage, following through to the consolidation stage. The final stage was the plateau, which Earley and Weindling (2007) perceived as emerging after eight years of headship.

Southworth (1995) raised the argument that headteachers developed through stages of experience, and it was the lessons learnt at each stage which helped them mature into their role. Effective leaders, he pointed out, were also effective learners. Harris et al. (2003) also noted that schools were constantly changing, leaving school leaders

with the challenge of responding to the school's inner life as well as its external context, requiring school leaders to draw on past experiences to support them in moving forward. This study utilised Gronn's (1999) four stages of leadership as a theoretical base. For Gronn (1999), a career was more than performance in role, or indeed task performance; rather it was planned and chosen, therefore becoming what he referred to as, an anticipated trajectory and a commitment to a course of life. He perceived a career as a planned, vertical movement through roles and positions, thus it became possible to time phase this, from which he created the four-stage career model. This consisted of the formation stage, the accession stage, the incumbency stage and the divestiture stage. It is these stages, alongside Earley and Weindling's (2007) breakdown of stages of headship, which was used as a guide in forming the semi-structured interviews.

A concern reviewed in this study was that of what happens to headteachers who do not have the motivation or the capacity to adapt to these constant changes? Flintham (2003) defined ways in which headteachers leave their role early. He divided them into three groups; 'striders', who have planned a way to new challenge; 'strollers', who retreated in a controlled way; and 'stumblers', who left headship defeated. These last two groups, the 'strollers' and 'stumblers', were of particular interest in this study. Flintham (2003) claimed that there should be a formal entitlement to professional development and support for headteachers, since the loneliness and isolation of the role is a key issue which may contribute to their leaving the profession early or defeated. Often, Crawford (2004) stated, it is only when we hear of school leaders 'burning out' or under great stress that emotions in school culture are remarked on. However, she asked the question, yet to be answered, that rather than identifying

emotion only in terms of negative impact on the headteacher, whether emotion is indeed one of the defining essences of leadership within school culture, not just a feature to be identified in cases of failure.

Fidler and Atton (2004) also highlighted this point. They argued that headship would be far more attractive and manageable if there were reduced demands and greater assistance, better preparation for headship, support and development throughout the role, and recognition of the limited length of effective working life. If these action points were implemented, then, they argued, we would be less likely to see dips in headteacher performance. As Crawford (2007a, p.533) reflected:

> At a time when sustainability in headship in England is a national issue, the ability to take what we know about leadership and emotion and enhance the work of experienced leaders in primary schools is vital, as well as being a major component of attracting new candidates into such posts.

1.3 The research questions

From the literature review, the following research areas and key questions were formulated:

1. Is there an emotional impact on a headteacher from enacting headship and, if so, to what extent are headteachers managing the emotional demands, and how are they being most effectively supported?

To further investigate, the research questions were broken down into sub areas:

1.1 What do headteachers perceive to be the major sources of emotional investment in both the cost and rewards of the role?

1.2 What sources of support or training have headteachers received which have supported them in the emotional management of their role?

1.3 Do headteachers perceive, or anticipate, that the emotional cost of leadership has changed as they have progressed through Earley and Weindling's (2007) stages of leadership?

1.4 What are the coping strategies used most effectively by headteachers to manage the emotional impact of the role including self-management of emotions?

Through the interviewing of headteachers, questions were asked about the major sources of emotional investment, and key areas were identified. Alongside the cost of emotional leadership, the rewards were also investigated.

One of the key areas for this study was asking headteachers how they managed the emotional demands of leadership, and what recommendations they would make for future training. This provided an insight into what coping strategies headteachers have effectively employed. From this, it was possible to identify what headteachers perceived as both the most effective and the most ineffective, and thus guide future practice. This study sought to provide valid recommendations based on a review of what had so far proved successful in supporting headteachers in managing and preparing for the emotional cost of headship and, perhaps most importantly, what it is deemed that they require for the future.

1.4 Justification

There has been considerable change to the role of the headteacher (Bennett et al., 2003). It was recognised as a very powerful, very demanding role, which, although it offers great personal pride and satisfaction, also brings with it great responsibility and accountability (Southworth, 1998; Harris et al., 2003; Earley and Weindling, 2007).

Indeed, the pride and responsibility were reflected in the Preamble to the DfE National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers (2015, p.4) which replaced the 2004 standards:

> Headteachers occupy an influential position in society and shape the teaching profession. They are lead professionals and significant role models within the communities they serve. The values and ambitions of headteachers determine the achievements of schools. They are accountable for the education of current and future generations of children. Their leadership has a decisive impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements in the nation's classrooms.

However, this study investigated further into the role of the headteacher, asking whether headteachers perceived there to be emotional demands in enacting their role and, if so, how they were supported in managing these, in what can be perceived as an almost impossible task. Gronn (2003) claimed that educational leadership is greedy work, as it demands more and more of headteachers as individuals, further highlighting how the emotional management and support of headteachers needs to be addressed.

A key aspect of this study was reflecting on the headteacher 'succession crisis'. Research was revealing that we are facing a looming recruitment crisis which may lead to unfilled headteacher vacancies, as there appears to be a shortage of suitable and willing candidates. Policy Exchange (2014, p.23) stated:

> This seems to be a particular issue in the primary sector. The latest Education Data Surveys report on headteacher vacancies, and re-advertising in primary found that of the 261 primary schools advertising for a new headteacher in January this year, 26 per cent were forced to re-advertise within two months – up significantly from just 15 per cent for the same period last year, and a higher proportion than in any year since 2000.

Through investigating the emotional cost of headship, this study sought to provide answers to the many questions including why we are facing this crisis, and why potential candidates seem unwilling to apply and take on headship. In addition, though investigating the potential emotional demands of headship, this study sought to provide recommendations on how struggling headteachers, who may be in danger of 'stumbling' from the profession (Flintham, 2003), can best be supported in the future.

It was evident that the role of the headteacher has changed to include a much more demanding range of professional practices which may be deterring many suitable candidates. In one study, Bennett et al. (2003) highlighted the changing dimensions of headship over the previous ten years to now include such practices as competitive tendering for cleaning and canteens facilities, and complete management of staff and pupil welfare as well as competitive bidding for external funding. We read much about the shortage of suitable headteacher applicants and the looming headteacher succession crisis, however this study was not focused on why there are so few candidates. The focus was concerned with how the changing role of headteachers was managed and how the pressures on headteachers, and the emotional impact that this may entail, was made possible. As Crawford (2007b) highlighted, recognising the symbiotic relationship between emotion and the rationality of leadership, should have implications on how we train potential educational leaders to manage the cognitive appraisal of emotion within schools.

1.5 Methodology and method

For this study, the conceptual framework was based on the 'multiple realities' of identified headteachers and their perceptions of emotional influence and their coping strategies in their incumbency. This study can be placed within Ribbins and Gunter's (2002) 'humanistic knowledge' domain, which gathers and theorises from the experiences and biographies of leaders and the led. Ribbins and Gunter (2002) stress how this was the more flexible domain in that the research gathers data from literary and non-empirical sources of information to form the body of knowledge. This was key to this study, as qualitative data was gathered through the experiences and perceptions of school leaders, thus providing non-empirical data which therefore placed it in this category, resulting in the use of Ribbins and Gunter's (2002) humanistic approach to the data collection and analysis.

In this study, the perceptions of headteachers were sought to evaluate the influence and management of emotions on their headship. The research method used was individual interviews with twenty headteachers. The sample for interview were headteachers, ranging in both age and years in post. Twenty interviewees were selected to provide a sample of responses. Over the course of several months, semi-structured interviews were conducted and the transcripts analysed so that themes and issues could be identified. This research procedure for data collection provided qualitative data.

For the purpose of this study, based upon Denscombe's categories for sampling, clustered probability sampling was selected. Denscombe (2007) contrasts probability

sampling with non-probability sampling. He points out that in probability sampling studies, people or events are chosen because they represent a cross section of the whole population, as opposed to non-probability sampling whereby the researcher would have no prior knowledge about whether the sample selected was representative of the whole population. The population for this study was primary headteachers, a known group, therefore I was able to select a sample.

The headteachers identified were contacted via email and letter and their consent to participate sought. The interview questions were structured to follow the key research questions under the theme of the emotional impact of their incumbency, alongside questions seeking information about their rise to headship and what motivated them, including the emotional rewards. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The data was analysed manually and decoded according to which themes were emerging. Any similarities in the data, or recurring experiences were identified, alongside any noticeable variations.

A limitation of the interview method lies in the relationship between the researcher and the participants, which could lead to bias. This was acknowledged as, through my role as headteacher of a primary school, I worked alongside some of the headteachers and schools involved in the interviews. When drawing conclusions, acknowledged these professional relationships.

1.6 Ethical considerations

The ethical considerations implied by the study were considered with great care. The British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2014) guidelines were adhered to throughout the study. Ethical approval for the study was applied for and granted through the University of Birmingham.

For Kvale (2008) ethical considerations were a major part of interview research. He argued that the very nature of the research was dependent on the interviewer creating a platform of trust and safety upon which the interviewee feels comfortable and confident to talk about issues personal and private to them (Kvale, 2008). These disclosures from the interviewee, Kvale (2008) continued to emphasise, are then with their consent recorded for later public use. He highlighted the argument that the pursuit of knowledge can be at odds with ethical considerations, indeed, that there was 'tension' between the two. Therefore, for this study, ethical considerations in inviting and engaging the interviewees to participate in the research were paramount.

Before the interviews were conducted, informed consent was sought from all participants, alongside a clear statement that they had the opportunity to withdraw, with the participants provided with a brief overview of the questions for the interview. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study before the interview, with their own context as participants made evident. They were also informed of how the findings would be reported. At every stage of the interview process, participants were given the opportunity to withdraw.

Due to the potentially sensitive and personal nature of the questions, participants were clearly informed that their contributions would be anonymous, with a letter and number code applied to each participant in the writing up of the transcript and in the analysis. All personal information and place names were anonymised. Although my role as headteacher was beneficial in assisting with access to the participants, it was also an ethical consideration, as there have been some responses which were sensitive in their nature. This was where a level of trust between myself and the participant was required and the clear, shared ethical guidelines for confidentiality and anonymity adhered were to.

1.7 Reporting the findings

The aim of this study was to provide an insight into what emotional cost was involved in enacting headship, and how headteachers most effectively cope with this. It was intended to be of interest to both serving headteachers as well as potential candidates for headship roles, who may reflect on the emotional cost of headship before applying. Findings concerning the emotional support needed are intended to illustrate further dimensions to the training providers who prepare our future leaders.

Key themes were evident in the study, each forming a research question. The findings for each of these themes was presented through the analysis of the interviews and linked back to the research question. The study continued with the detailed literature review following onto a summary of the design. The findings were analysed and discussed with recommendations made.

It was intended that the recommendations could be used to inform further research into headteacher support or, indeed, provide further solutions in managing the recruitment crisis by identifying an emotional schedule of support to match the demanding National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers (DfE, 2015).

1.8 Structure of the thesis

This study is presented in six chapters. The following chapter, Chapter 2, provides a synthesis of the literature on the current policy and practice in education, alongside literature reviewing emotions and emotional intelligence. There will also be a detailed overview of the theoretical framework for this study. Chapter 3 presents the methodology and research design selected for this study and justification of the selection process. Chapter 4 provides the findings from the study with an in-depth review of the qualitative data. Chapter 5 discusses the emergent themes and implications from this study. Concluding the study, Chapter 6 provides recommendations and suggestions for further research alongside an overall conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature on the key themes of this study, being the tasks and responsibilities of the headteacher, effective leadership and emotions, was vast. Therefore, a systematic literature review was required in order to gain a depth of understanding and to draw out the key theoretical concepts and themes which underpin this study.

To conduct the review, a systematic literature search included recent library-based books which provided a guide to further articles sourced through e-journals. In addition, an internet search using the search engine Google Scholar was conducted which led to further literature being sourced. To do this, key words were inserted into the search engine and a range of literature was identified. A trail to narrow down key authors and publications was then possible to track. Government reports and academic papers from key agencies, including the Department for Education (DfE) (2015), the National College (2008) and Teachernet, provided contemporary literature and discussion. Alongside this, key websites, for example National College, were instrumental in accessing current policy and practice for school leaders.

Once collated, these core publications were reviewed for the purpose of the literature review and were analysed thematically according to the research questions, which follow:

2. Is there an emotional impact on a headteacher from enacting headship and, if so, to what extent are headteachers managing the emotional demands, and how are they being most effectively supported?

2.1 What do headteachers perceive to be the major sources of emotional investment in both the cost and rewards of the role?

2.2 What sources of support or training have headteachers received which have supported them in the emotional management of their role?

2.3 Do headteachers perceive, or anticipate, that the emotional cost of leadership has changed as they have progressed through Earley and Weindling's (2007) stages of leadership?

2.4 What are the coping strategies used most effectively by headteachers to manage the emotional impact of the role including self-management of emotions?

The thematic areas were:

i. Policy and practice, for a review of the current landscape for headteachers

ii. Influence and management of emotions, including understanding emotional intelligence

iii. The characteristics of the effective headteacher

iv. Career stages of headteachers

This chapter will incorporate a brief review of how the role of the headteacher has developed, which will then be applied to the literature regarding emotional influences and implications on headship. Further to this, the literature on the headteacher succession crisis, reflecting on the challenges of training and recruiting headteachers, was reviewed.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study was Gronn's (1999) Career Stages model. This provides a conceptual model of the career journey of a school leader. It will be referred to throughout as a guide to the study. This framework was further supported by Earley and Weindling's (2007) model of Headteacher career challenge and change. Although this was based upon a study of Secondary headteachers, the principles and career stages it contained were applied to this study.

To further understand the progression to leadership, Gronn (1999) created a set of stages through which, he argued, leaders pass to become a headteacher. For Gronn (1999), a career was more than performance in role, or indeed task performance; rather, it was planned and chosen, therefore becoming, what he referred to, as an anticipated trajectory and a commitment to a course of life. Gronn (1999) perceived a career as a planned, vertical movement through roles and positions, and he time phased this, creating the four-stage career model. This consisted of the following:

- Formation

This was the stage through which a person forms early perceptions of the role of school leader. It was also in this stage that, Gronn (1999) argued, influences occur

which shape people as prospective leaders, when the deep-rooted social norms and family values exert their influence. From this, a conception of self, in attitude, ambition and outlook, was created.

- Accession

This stage was concerned with the experiences of a person as they aspire towards taking on a headship role. During this stage they may position themselves ready for responsibility, actively seeking promotion as they look for advancement.

- Incumbency

When a person becomes a headteacher, they move into this stage.

- Divestiture

This was Gronn's (1999) final stage, during which a headteacher moved away from the post, either through retirement or to take up another role. If they took on a new headship, then they return to the incumbency stage of the cycle.

These stages provided a longitudinal conceptual framework which was applied to the career journeys of the headteachers in the study.

2.3 Policy and practice for headteachers

To understand the incumbency stage of the headteachers in this study, it was important to understand the context of their role including the policies and practices within which they operated. There has been considerable change to the role of the headteacher (Andrews and Johnes, 2017; DfE, 2015, 2016; Earley, 2013; Bennett et al., 2003; Crawford, 2002). It was recognised as a very powerful, very demanding role, which, although it offers great personal pride and satisfaction, also brings with it great

responsibility and accountability (Berry, 2016; Earley, 2013; Earley and Weindling, 2007; Southworth, 1998; Harris et al., 2003). In the DfE White Paper, Educational Excellence Everywhere (2016, p.9), the impact of the school leader on the performance of a school was clearly set out:

> We believe that the fastest and most sustainable way for schools to improve is for government to trust this country's most effective education leaders, giving them freedom and power, and holding them to account for unapologetically high standards for every child, measured rigorously and fairly.

Indeed, Morrison and Ecclestone (2011) referred to school leaders as being the 'vanguard' for the policy makers in driving continuous solutions and impacting on change. The responsibility, therefore, was placed on the school leaders to be at the heart of central policy, and arguably thus accountable for impacting on school improvement. For Earley (2013), the central role for school leaders in enacting policy change was challenging as there was an expectation for school leaders to be visionary, creative and entrepreneurial whilst, managing policy realities which required them to be reactive, compliant and managerial.

For Allen (2009), the very nature of the 'ideal leader' shifted as we moved to the 21st century. Allen (2009) argued that the ideal leader in the 20th century had 'strong but hard personal qualities' and was 'aspiring but arrogant'. However, the 21st century leader, Allen (2009, p.1) contrasted, 'demonstrates a greater empathy and concern for people issues and does not rely on people or rank for status'. She claimed that this was because in the 21st century, leaders needed to be emotionally intelligent to model the vision and inspire improved performance as well as arguing that competencies for the workplace, upon which effective job performance relied, were socially and emotionally based. Lowenhaupt et al. (2016, p.786) also observed the importance of

social interactions and effective communication: 'Principals must focus on relationship-building, communication, and mediation to manage accountability pressures and enact change.'

Lowenhaupt et al. (2016) highlighted that to engage a school community to bring about change, school leaders had to be empathetic and demonstrate competence beyond the task-based expectations of the role. Edge et al. (2017) argued that there was a new social identify in the generation of leaders who are emerging in the 21st century. These leaders, Edge et al. (2017), claimed, desire and actively seek out collaboration, mobility, diversity and more experimental organisational structures. This supported Allen's (2009) argument that leaders were becoming more socially aware and as a result, more emotionally intelligent.

The Department for Education (2004) (formerly the Department for Children, Schools and Families) document outlined the evolving role of headteachers, reflecting the Government's current thinking and guidance. The standards were set out under six themes; shaping the future, leading learning and teaching, developing self and working with others, managing the organisation, securing accountability, strengthening community. In October 2015, the standards were updated to become the DfE (2015) National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers. Berry (2016, p.11) highlighted the diverse range of expectations placed on headteachers in her reflection of the role:

> During the course of a working week you may experience a huge range of different tasks; a governors' meeting debating future strategy; a finance meeting looking at budgetary priorities and constraints; leading an assembly; interviewing staff; meeting parents. You might be working within the community as a representative of the school you lead and a spokesperson for education. You will certainly spend considerable time with your senior leadership team, making the most of their

> complementary skills and ensuring that, in the words of Dylan William, they work ‘as a team’ rather than simply ‘in a team’.

The tasks of the headteacher was also summarised by Edge et al. (2017, p.866) as the headteacher was responsible for ‘…running the school, including caretaking, budgeting, planning, hiring all staff members, teaching and learning and professional development, among other tasks.’

Reviewing the expectations placed upon school leaders, Earley (2013) questioned whether this was possible to achieve as he recounted that the rapidly changed autonomy of schools resulted in a sharp increase of work load placed on school leaders alongside the pressure of balancing local government, parental choice and central control.

The justification for the continuous change to policy and expectations on leaders and schools, was that raising teaching standards lay at the heart of the government’s plan for education, and that world-class, excellent school leaders were vital in driving this ambition forward. Indeed, as Laws emphasised in his foreword to Andrews and Johnes (2017, p.7) study on the impact of Free Schools in England:

> Over recent decades there has been significant reform of the structure of the schools system in England - not least with the introduction and scaling up of the academies programme. Since 2010, the government has introduced a free schools programme in which new schools can be established outside local government control and oversight, with central government funding both the capital and revenue costs.

The DfE (2015) stated in its release that ‘the revised standards, created by the profession, for the profession, are designed to empower and inspire heads, drive

aspiration, promote excellence and reflect the greater decision-making powers heads now enjoy'.

The DfE (2015) document, National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers, acknowledged the influence of the headteacher on the success of the school. This was developed in the DfE (2016, p.41) White Paper which said 'effective school leadership has a profound impact on the quality of education a child receives.'

Indeed, due to the shortage of willing or suitable candidates for headship, (Policy Exchange, 2014) the DfE had altered its very nature, with the introduction of executive headteachers who lead multiple schools as the DfE (2016, p.42) stated 'we will convene experts to redesign voluntary, world class National Professional Qualifications to prepare leaders more effectively for the full range of leadership roles in the new schools system.'

Executive headteachers would lead the increasing number of Academy schools. In becoming an Academy, schools opted out of Local Authority control to become part of a sponsored academy trust. Schools were linked together often into a network including secondaries and primaries, led by an executive headteacher and several heads of school.

It was apparent that the role of the school leader was changing. In most contexts, a headteacher had led one school, executive headteachers would be responsible for leading more than one school. Job titles varied, including principal, executive, associate and co-headteacher as did the governance arrangements to which

headteachers were accountable. This rapid change in leadership policy and structure was noted by Lowenhaupt et al. (2014, p786), ‘recent policies have placed principals in the centre of reform efforts, granting these school-level leaders greater freedoms, along with greater accountability and new responsibilities.’

Lowenhaupt (2014) argued that the subsequence pressure on school leaders to act as change agents, or transformational leaders, could have a detrimental impact on the school leaders. Their position was particularly difficult, Lowenhaupt et al. (2014, p.786) argued, because school leaders have become middle managers as they were ‘mediating the policy environment and multiple stake holders, especially local and state government policymakers.’

In reviewing this expectation of the capacity of headteachers to respond to changes in policy, Edge (2013) highlighted that there needed to be a sense of urgency amongst policy makers and practice leaders to begin a review and discussion of the unrealistic pressure being placed on headteachers to make immediate improvements in their schools according to every shifting demands. Indeed, the DfE (2015) National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers further acknowledged that headship was now dynamic and changing, having to adapt to the shifting landscape of schools. The standards (DfE, 2015) were intended as guidance to underpin best practice, whatever the particular job description of the headteacher. They were to be interpreted in the context of each individual headteacher and school, and designed to be relevant to all headteachers, irrespective of length of service in post. (DfE, 2015). What was evident from these standards was that the headteacher was crucial to a school’s success.

Research documents overwhelmingly agreed that the impact of the headteacher on the success of a school could be great and that school leaders impacted on pupil learning (Southworth, 1998; NCSL, 2004, 2012; Harris et al., 2003; Crawford, 2004; Ofsted, 2016; Edge et al., 2017). As Harris et al. (2003) claimed, it had been consistently argued that the quality of headship mattered in determining the motivation of teachers and quality of teaching. Branch et al. (2013, p.66) focused on the estimated impact of school leaders on student achievement and claimed that:

> We expect highly rated principals to be more successful both at retaining effective teachers and at moving out less effective ones. Less highly rated principals may be less successful in raising the quality of their teaching staffs, either because they are less skilled in evaluating teacher quality, place less emphasis on teacher effectiveness in personnel decisions, or are less successful in creating an environment that attracts and retains better teachers.

Southworth (1998) also highlighted the importance of leadership which was measured, not only by Ofsted and HMI, but also, and perhaps, he claimed, most importantly, by teachers. The measurable impact of the headteacher, as these studies showed, reflected the pressure and expectations placed on school leaders. This pressure became increasingly visible when schools were in challenging circumstances, or Special Measures. Ofsted (2018, p.33) defined special measures as being in two categories, as follows:

> Serious weaknesses. A school is judged to have serious weaknesses because one or more of the key judgements is inadequate (grade 4) and/or there are important weaknesses in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
> Special measures. A school requires special measures if it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Lynch et.al (2017), in their study into headteacher retention and recruitment, identified varying degrees of retention dependent on the Ofsted rating, with the higher

performing schools maintaining higher retention and the schools in an Ofsted category as described above, struggling with retention levels.

As Crawford (2002) argued, leadership impacted on change in a school, but there was also change to the role itself. The changing role of the headteacher included more roles and responsibilities, reaching beyond that which was encompassed in the standards set out for teachers (DfE, 2013). Indeed, as evidenced by Smith (2015, p.1), the priorities for headteachers and executive headteachers was not focused on pupils' development through the curriculum and teaching development:

> While it is not surprising to learn that more than one-third are prioritising the development of effective assessment and an additional 18 per cent of heads are focusing on curriculum development, there was a marked increase in the focus on finding more creative solutions to budgetary challenges – for example nearly 10 per cent of heads will be prioritising the need to identify new revenue-generating activities this year.

Leaders, therefore, needed to adapt to keep up with the constant change and demands from government. As Gronn (2003) highlighted, perceived leadership must be fluid and dynamic. This was also noted by Hopkins et.al (2014, p.276) who argued in the outcome of their global research on how school leaders can impact positively on pupil outcomes and development, that school leaders needed the capacity and flexibility to identify what they perceive to be successful policy changes for their institution, and then deliver them with force and energy:

> Implement with precision and energy, then study the effort, reflect on it, re-energise and refine. Moral purpose may be at the heart of successful school and system improvement, but educators will not be able to realise this purpose without powerful and increasingly specified strategies and tools to allow them to deal with the challenges presented by globalisation as well as the increasingly turbulent and complex communities they serve.

2.4 The Retention and recruitment of headteachers

The role of the headteacher has changed to include a much more demanding range of professional practices, which coincided with a reduction in headteacher retention. A report by the NFER (2017) stated that there had been a downward trend in retention since 2012. They claimed that system instability and mixed support had been a contributing factor in headteachers leaving the profession. In one study, Bennett et al. (2003) highlighted the changing dimensions of headship over the previous ten years to include such practices as competitive tendering for cleaning and canteens facilities, complete management of staff and pupil welfare as well as competitive bidding for external funding.

Not only are there quantifiable demands on headteachers, through league tables and measurable progress, but also, for Crawford (2007), it was the parents' perception of the headteacher, who was perceived as the most important person responsible for their child's education, that therefore further increased the demands and pressures. But when we reflect on the headteacher as a person who experiences these challenges and pressures, we can ask the question of how this impacts on the leadership of a school? The question then arises how the changing role of headteachers was being managed and how the tremendous pressures on their shoulders are being made bearable? Branch et al., (2013, p.64) stated: 'Patterns of principal transitions indicate that it is the least and the most effective who tend to leave schools, suggesting some combination of push and pull factors.'

The above quote emphasises how school leaders and their career trajectories could be influenced by push and pull factors. For Branch et al. (2013), they argued that the headteachers who performed in their role at either extreme of effective school leadership, as the most successful and the least successful, were the headteachers who tended to move schools more frequently. The headteachers who functioned without intense failure or intense success may, therefore, have a more static career.

Gronn (1999) segmented his career stages into four, tracking the school leader through from formation to divestiture. If divestiture was focused on, then it was possible to explore not only why headteachers leave their role, but also when in their career journey they did so. The literature revealed that the 1950s baby-boom generation are approaching retirement (Edge et al., 2017; Policy Exchange, 2014; NCSL, 2008; Rhodes and Brundrett, 2006), indicating that headteacher posts will become vacant as they retire. NCSL (2008, p.45) claimed:

> More than half of the country's headteachers are now aged over 50 and will be reaching retirement at the same time. Nearly a quarter are 55 and over. Projections indicate that the number of school leaders retiring is likely to rise from 2,250 in 2004 to nearly 3,500 in 2009.

If Gronn's (1999) Career Stage model was applied, then there should be potential headteachers in the accession stage of their career, but there appeared to be a barrier between accession and incumbency, as potential candidates are shunning the role and adding to the crisis faced. For Edge et al. (2017, p.864), the reluctance of the next generation of school leaders to seek headship was of great concern and as a result 'identifying, nurturing, recruiting, developing and retaining leaders is increasingly one of the most pressing urban education issues.'

The NCSL (2008, 2012) recognised this, and raised its own concerns that there were not enough aspiring headteachers to fill these vacancies. Whilst Rhodes and Brundrett (2006) identified this leadership crisis as a retirement bulge, they also referred to the research in the quantity and also, perhaps more alarmingly, the talent of future leaders. Guidance for recruiting governing bodies by the NCSL (2012) stressed both the challenge and the importance to governors of recruiting suitable candidates from a shortage of applicants.

Retirement of the baby-boom generation and low geographical mobility meant that the number of applicants had reduced over the years (Rhodes and Brundrett, 2012). In addition, there remained challenge for particular schools, such as rural and faith schools. Primary and special schools had more difficulty recruiting than secondary schools, indeed two-fifths of these types of school have to re-advertise (NCSL, 2012, p.3).

> Governors need to understand the constrained circumstances in which they are now recruiting, whilst not compromising on the need to select a good candidate who will deliver the governing body's vision for the school and excellent outcomes for the pupils.

As part of the succession problem, Rhodes and Brundrett (2012) highlighted the impact this will have on the government's drive to raise standards, and claimed that not only were we facing a high number of vacancies for headship and senior leadership posts, but that this problem was only heightened by the falling number and declining quality of the applicants. The Framework for Action (NCSL, 2008) also highlighted the concern that deputies were not expressing a desire to become a headteacher.

Rhodes and Brundrett (2012) also highlighted how the leadership talent retention was one component of local solutions to leadership succession and talent management. Respondents sampled in their study reported on current approaches to retaining leadership talent in their schools and how they perceived that their local authority could be more helpfully involved in their leadership talent retention. Rhodes and Brundrett, (2012, p.20) summarised the National College's local solutions action areas required to ensure effective succession planning. These were:

> retaining talented leaders; attracting talented leaders; identifying talented leaders; recruiting and inducting leaders; developing leaders; accelerating career progression for those with good leadership potential, and actions to support and manage the careers of leaders.

These actions from the National College were reflected in Fullan's (2002) measure of what a successful leader was. Indeed, for Fullan (2002, p.2), succession planning needs 'attention at all levels':

> The main mark of a successful leader is not their effect on the bottom line, on profit or student achievement, in the short run, but rather how many effective leaders there are in their organization at the end of the tenures.

In the paper, Seven Strong Claims about Successful School Leadership, Leithwood et al. (2008, p.4), also expressed concern about the recruitment crisis and the impact on the government's standards and the falling number of applicants for headship posts, 'unplanned headteacher succession is one of the most common sources of a school's failure to progress.'

There was an argument that future leaders should be identified within two or three years of teaching (Barker, 2006), as this could impact on how the high percentage of headship vacancies we were expecting could be filled. If this was carefully planned,

then it might be possible to prevent the unplanned succession which Leithwood et al. (2008) argued to be so damaging to a school's progression. According to Rhodes and Brundrett (2006), some schools were becoming more aware of the leadership crisis, and indeed, the possibility of identifying and developing talent within their own schools. This notion of talent does not appear to be defined, although they referred to the government's Fast-Tracking system and their methods of identifying talent. A measure like this, they argued, could help schools identify their own future leaders and avoid, what was argued was a declining quality of leadership applicants. This measure of talent provided further answers to questions about why some people chose to make the progression to headship quickly and what influenced them. Indeed, as Rhodes and Brundrett (2006, p283) argued:

> There is evidence that headteachers are becoming more aware of this growing leadership crisis and they are generally keen to express their support for actively promoting the identification and development of leadership talent within their own schools.

Talented leadership was something that Leithwood et al. (2008) also claimed to be essential in successful schools, as they stated that talented leadership was only evident in schools which had successfully increased their pupil achievement. Nevertheless, this raised the question of how they accurately measured talented leadership in making that claim.

Recognising that succession planning was essential in managing the recruitment crisis, an element has been incorporated into the National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers (2015, p.6) by 'identify emerging talents, coaching current and aspiring leaders in a climate where excellence is the standard, leading to clear succession planning.' However, when revisiting Gronn's (1999) career stages, although the

barrier between the accession and the incumbency stages was evidently recognised, would identification alone be enough to remove it, and thus encourage potential headteachers to move to the incumbency of their career?

2.4.1 Support mechanisms for headteachers

If headteachers were to remain in their incumbency career stage, amidst the pressures highlighted through the literature, it became necessary to review how they could be most effectively supported and thus remain in post rather than moving to the divestiture stage of their career. For Ribbins (2003), divestiture did not only entail retirement or leaving the profession, it could also mean 'enchantment', in which headteachers would move to a new school and establish themselves once more as headteacher.

Although the knowledge base for asking why people do not want to apply for headship was growing, questions could be asked about our serving headteachers and why many choose to leave the profession early. Indeed, what happens to headteachers who do not have the motivation or the capacity to adapt to the demands of headship? Flintham (2003) defined ways in which headteachers leave their role early. He classed them into three groups; 'striders', who planned a way to new challenge, 'strollers', who retreat in a controlled way, and finally, 'stumblers' who left headship defeated. Flintham (2003) claimed that there should be a formal entitlement to professional development and support for headteachers as the loneliness and isolation of the role was a key issue which may contribute to them leaving the profession early or defeated.

Fidler and Atton (2004) also highlight this point. They argued that headship would be far more attractive and manageable if there were reduced demands and greater assistance, better preparation for headship, support and development throughout the role and recognition of the limited length of effective working life. If these action points were implemented, then, they argued, we would be less likely to see dips in headteacher performance. As Crawford (2007b, p.533) reflected:

> At a time when sustainability in headship in England is a national issue, the ability to take what we know about leadership and emotion and enhance the work of experienced leaders in primary schools is vital, as well as being a major component of attracting new candidates into such posts.

In a small-scale study, Cowie and Crawford (2009) explored the relationship between preparation for headship and the management of novice headteachers. Through this they investigated how training and preparation impacted on headteachers in post and on how they performed in their role. In England, it became mandatory for all first time headteachers to have completed the National Professional Qualification for Headship (hereby referred to as NPQH) from 1st April 2004 in the maintained sector. This was then amended in 2012 to become an optional qualification.

The DfE (2015) Standards for Headteachers then became the measure by which all aspiring headteachers could be measured in order to judge whether they were ready to take up a position in a school. Cowie and Crawford (2009) argued that it also becomes a measure by which to control aspiring headteachers, and could thus be a limiting factor in performance. This, they argued, mirrored the politically driven competence movement of the 1990s which served to control quality, specify outputs and reconstruct meaning and identity among headteachers (Cowie and Crawford, 2009). As part of their research, they claimed that, without exception, new

headteachers talked of being ‘talent spotted’ and encouraged to take on further responsibilities as well as to have the need to believe that they could become a headteacher. It was through NPQH that the headteachers constructed their identity as headteachers, through the principles instilled in them rather than a focus on a specific element of the programme (Cowie and Crawford, 2009).

When reflecting on how headteachers could be supported, studies appeared to steer away from formal, prescriptive training courses to more collaborative, discussion- and observation-based opportunities (Cowie and Crawford, 2009; Earley and Weindling, 2007; Harris et al., 2003; Lewis and Murphy, 2008; Southworth, 1998). Although Lewis and Murphy (2008) highlighted how leadership was a craft best learnt on the job, they argued that process-rich work-based professional development opportunities would develop leadership. Indeed, they claimed that the most valued activities among school leaders emerged as a result of networking and school visit opportunities. Through networking with aspiring headteachers on the preparation programmes, Cowie and Crawford (2009) claimed that the professional identity of new headteachers was developed.

One of the recommendations was for critical friends and learning communities to be created (Harris et al., 2003; Southworth, 1998). These learning communities relied on mutual trust between colleagues and were centred on collaboration, observation and evaluation (Harris et al., 2003). Critical friends (Earley et al., 1996) supported this development; their role being, when requested, to listen and help sort out thinking, as well as to support making sound decisions. They should not be afraid to say what they think, and also ensure that expectations were consistently high (Earley et al., 1996).

Indeed, Earley et al. (1996) claimed that for effective partnerships to occur, key features must include shared beliefs and values, collaboration, support, joint evaluation and critical friendship. When considering the benefits of collaboration,

Cowie and Crawford (2009) emphasised the potential dangers of established professional communities, in that these may not always support the development of new ideas since they may not always be open to change or to question assumptions. The challenge arises of how these leaders can be best supported once they embark on their incumbency. Harris et al. (2003) made the assumption that schools were constantly changing, leaving school leaders with the challenge of responding to the school's inner life as well as its external context, requiring school leaders to draw on past experiences to support them in moving forward. This assumed that the school leader was prepared for headship and has, as Flintham (2003) stressed, the experience to draw upon such training opportunities. Whilst Cowie and Crawford (2009) claimed it was clear that no leadership preparation programme could fully prepare for the realities of headship and the emotional burden that this brought, their analysis suggested the need to build on their experiences in the preparation stage.

In a study for the National College, Pass (2009) sought to identify prerequisites for promoting positive wellbeing in those leading and managing schools, the purpose of which was to develop a 'programme for lifestyle development to enhance personal effectiveness and well-being for school leaders'. Through his study Pass (2009) identified what headteachers felt may help or hinder a more proactive approach to development in this area. His study highlighted that only 10% of headteachers accessed a wellbeing programme. This compared with 86% who had experienced

work-related stress. He concluded that a wellbeing development programme, which incorporated both peer support and personal reflection on lifestyle vision and reactions to stress, alongside leadership in emotional intelligence, would be well received by headteachers. For Fullan (2002), policies for individual development were required. He argued that policies and practices directed at changing the conditions in which leaders learn was required, and learning with others outside the classroom was part of this.

However, even with the most effective programme in place, there was still the danger of new heads failing or turning away from the challenge of their first post. Gronn (1999) highlighted that new heads needed a sense of self-belief and self-efficacy if they were to negotiate a successful transition to leadership. Perhaps it was self-belief and self-efficacy which gave leaders the perceived element of the charismatic leader, thus enabling them to bring about change in the organisation.

To conclude the literature review on the policy and practice for headteachers and the recruitment crisis faced, it was undeniable that not only the role of the headteacher but also the very nature of school leadership and structure has changed, with headteachers under great pressures to manage and lead every aspect of the organisation in schools that were slowly moving away from Local Authority control towards Academy chains. The quantifiable recruitment crisis highlighted that the role of the headteacher was not a desirable one, and yet the need for the schools to be led by a talented and effective headteacher was great. This leads to the questions of how schools identify and attract the talented future leaders and of what support they will

require to be able to move from Gronn's (1999) accession stage to the incumbency stage, and even more importantly, what will keep them there?

The constant pressure of pupil test data and the resulting pressure from Ofsted, with the possibility of being placed in Special Measures, was a contributing factor to headteacher pressure. Thus, the literature review proceeds to focus on how headteachers manage the influence of emotions involved with the role, and to investigate the concept of emotional intelligence.

2.5 The influence of emotion on headteacher performance

2.5.1 The definition of emotions

Before reviewing the literature concerned with the emotional management of headteachers, it was important to highlight that this was a complicated area of study, which appears to be lacking conceptual clarity as there were many differences of opinion, alongside conceptual difficulties (Beatty, 2008; Crawford, 2004; Morrison and Ecclestone, 2011). This lack of conceptual clarity was evident, although Morrison and Ecclestone (2011) cite Allen's (2009) claim that there was a pre-history to the concept of emotional intelligence which post-dates the cognitive intelligence tests. They referred to the 1920s, arguing that it was evident that there was an element in intelligence measurements in those days by means of which people were observed to have the ability to successfully understand and manage others. Yet there was still a lack of conceptual clarity in the literature, as previously indicated. Indeed, Oatley and Jenkins (1996) reflected, in relation to studies concerned with emotion, that examples were easy, definitions were difficult. This, consequently, presented a challenge in

reviewing and comparing the various articles and texts for this study, a challenge that will be reviewed further in the contrast of opinions. Therefore, this literature review will begin by gathering together what emotion and emotionality have been defined as. This study will be focusing in particular on three emotions; pride, stress and anxiety. Therefore, operational definitions were required. For the purpose of this study, both fear and anxiety were considered as emotions managed by headteachers. However, when reviewing the definitions of fear, the threat perceived when experiencing fear was almost an endangering of life (Lang, 1985; Ohman and Mineka, 2001).

Gullone (2000, p.429) defined normal fear as 'a normal reaction to a real or imagined threat, is considered to be an integral and adaptive aspect of development.' This definition described the impact of fear as a reaction to a threat and was further defined as 'normal' or 'adaptive'. This was emphasised as being differentiated from clinical fears or phobias which interfere with everyday functioning. However, for the review required in establishing headteachers' emotions, the emotion of anxiety needs to be contrasted with the emotion of fear. Rachman (2013, p.3) conceptualised anxiety as:

> Anxiety is a tense unsettling anticipation of a threatening but formless event; a feeling of uneasy suspense. It is a negative feeling so closely related to fear that in many circumstances the two terms are used interchangeably.

This was translated into a state of helplessness. Whilst fear, he argued, was used to identify a threat that was identifiable, anxiety could be long term and could 'nag away' for days, weeks or months. This conceptualisation of anxiety, rather than fear, formed the operational definition for the purpose of this study, as it described how events which were potentially ongoing, as well as negative and undesired, rather than life

threatening, impacted on the role of the headteacher. The subsequent impact of how anxiety affects a headteacher in their role was applied.

Whilst there appeared to be many differing definitions of stress available, (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) the operational definition for the purpose of this study was taken from Upadhaya's definition (2017, p.33), which related the external pressures which could also be combined with the internal reaction of anxiety.

> Stress is a physical or emotional reaction / response to any kind of change which may be external, internal or both. External pressure for example can be due to job stress, competition, challenges or frequently changing government policies etc. Internal pressure is mainly due to negative thoughts, anxiety and fear. There is an individual variation in stress response.

This definition of stress linked with the literature relating to the external pressures and changing policy in education from Lazarus and Folkman (1984). Upadhyaya (2017, p.33) also emphasised that it was the individual's ability to cope with these pressures which varied. He referred to it as inner strength or resilience to manage the cumulative effect of stress.

> People who have learned to manage stress also minimize the effect of stress. Those who do not have good inner strength and who have not learned the management of stress suffer a lot because of it. Whenever there is the brain tells the body to release adrenalin so that the body is ready for the fight or flight reaction to deal with immediate danger.

This individual response to the external stressor was focused on by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). Whilst their definition of stress was more variable in its nature, it was the core element of it being the processes in response to the situation which was important. They referred to Lazarus's (1984, p.12) definition which suggested that:

> Stress be treated as an organising concept for understanding a wide range of phenomena of great importance in human and animal adaption.

> Stress, then, is not a variable but a rubric consisting of many variables and processes.

For both Lazarus and Folkman (1984), and Upadhyaya (2017), it was the individual's reaction to the external stressors and the vulnerability which determined the stress outcomes. This study will be referring to the external influences, or environmental stressors, which have a negative reaction on the individual in regards to managing those pressures.

When considering the emotion of pride, Brown and Marsall (2001) argued that, through their study, people felt pride as a self-relevant emotion, emphasising that the happiness accompanying pride was based on an experience or outcome which affected the person directly. Brown and Marsall, (2001, p.575) referred to Weiner's (1986) definition: 'This is because pride always describes how people feel about themselves, usually arising when people assume causal responsibility for bringing about a positive outcome'.

This, they argued further, was evident when they claimed that pride involved an appraisal of one's worth as a person (Brown and Marsall, 2001). Williams and DeSteno (2008), also argued that pride was derived from one's own abilities. They agreed with Brown and Marsall's (2001) discussions that pride was core to a person's positive well-being. Williams and DeSteno, (2008, p.1004) created a definition of pride, which has provided the operational definition for this study: 'Pride is a positive, self-conscious emotion arising from achievements that can be attributed to one's abilities or efforts'.

This became more relevant to the role of the headteacher when it was emphasised that pride was most strongly evoked in public situations, through which achievement and accomplishments were publicly acknowledged (Williams and DeSteno, 2008). Alongside this, they argued that pride became 'authentic' when it was applied to a specific achievement. The power of pride, they claimed, was great as it could be the incentive to pursue goals and success despite short term adversities and losses.

To support her study into emotional leadership, Beatty (2008) referred to Hochschild's (1990, pp.118-119) generalized definition of emotion as:

> ... an awareness of four elements that we usually experience at the same time; (a) appraisals of a situation, (b) changes in bodily sensations, (c) the free or inhibited display of expressive gestures, and (d) a cultural label applied to specific constellations of the first three elements. We learn how to appraise, to display, and to label emotions, even as we learn to link the results of each other to that of the other. This is the definition of emotions. A feeling is an emotion with a less marked bodily sensation; it is a milder emotion.

Crawford (2007b) provided us with a working definition of emotion through which she argued that it was made up of feelings in relation to what we experience, emotions which were the feelings that we show, and finally, moods that were feelings which were persistent over time. Oatley and Jenkins (2006, p.29) contrasted historical definitions of emotion from theorists and identified that there was a link between definitions which were categorised into components, which impacted on the actions or physical responses that a person experiences: 'Putting these insights together, one may treat emotions, at least to start with, as multi-component responses to challenges or opportunities that are important to the individual's goals, particularly social ones'.

From this they reviewed how the person perceives and responds to the goal, or event, that was desired. Crawford (2007b) highlighted how difficult it was for the researcher to gain knowledge regarding emotions. She raised key concerns, including that people may not wish to reveal their true feelings, and even if they do, the assumption could not be made that they were able to articulate or express how they feel. To summarise, it was evident to Crawford (2007a, 2007b) that feelings could be intense and personal, therefore making it extremely challenging and problematic to truly locate and then define or analyse them in others.

Russell and Lemay (2000) stated how difficult the subject of emotion was to identify. Human emotion they referred to as being a perennial mystery. Because of this, they claimed that human understanding of emotion was sometimes taken to be emotion itself. The idea that we struggle to grasp the true subject of what human emotion actually is, for Russell and Lemay (2000), became a key topic in itself. How emotions impact on our actions was also reviewed by Leithwood and Beatty (2008, p.7), who drew their ideas together in what they refer to as 'emotions guide thinking in ways that allow us to act 'sensibly' under conditions of uncertainty.'

2.5.2 The emotionally intelligent school leader

If we applied the notion that emotions 'guide us to act sensibly' (Leithwood and Beatty, 2008) to the school setting, especially when reviewing the many different interactions that teachers experience through their day, it was, Leithwood and Beatty (2008) argued, difficult to conceive a profession more dependent on emotion to guide action than the teaching profession.

In agreement with this argument, Morrison and Ecclestone (2011, p.200) claimed that it was emotional intelligence that impacts directly on leadership in that: 'Emotional intelligence has been converted, almost 'imperceptibly' into emotional resilience as a factor in why some leaders excel in challenge and change and some 'fall by the wayside'. If this was to be acknowledged, then questions arose as to how we understand and how we develop the emotional intelligence of our school leaders as, Morrison and Ecclestone (2011, p.200) continued, leadership was very much focused on developing the 'emotional rather than the cognitive intelligence'.

Before exploring how developing emotional intelligence in leaders could be understood, it was first necessary to explore the nature of emotional intelligence itself. As with emotions, there was no clear consensus in the definition of emotional intelligence (Goleman et al., 2002; Fullan, 2002). However, there remained the potential of effectively utilizing emotional intelligence to enhance school development (Fullan, 2002).

The National College for School Leadership provided a diverse range of training for school leaders which encompassed the importance of an emotionally intelligent school leader, developing coaching and mentoring, and developing emotional intelligence. This was mirrored in Morrison and Ecclestone's (2011, p.201) claim that there had been a 'swing' in how 'emotional' was viewed by policy makers, and that emotion was now perceived to be at the 'heart' of school leadership:

> From the beginning of the 21st century, then, 'emotion' emerges as the 'progressive' alternative to over-rationalised approaches to leading. The adjectival prefix 'emotional' has also grown in prominence in leadership development programmes; emotional 'management', 'development',

> ‘intelligence’, ‘literacy’, ‘ capacity’, ‘initiative’, ‘well-being’, ‘power’, ‘resilience’, ‘resonance’ becoming part of the new discourses of development in which ‘knowing yourself’ as a leader or potential leader in order to ‘know’ others, comes to the fore.

However, a question that could be asked was how emotional intelligence was managed and indeed, whether the concept itself was inherently given or whether it could be learnt (Morrison and Ecclestone, 2011). This became a key consideration when reflecting on how aspiring and incumbent headteachers could be more effectively and successfully able to manage in their role as school leader. Indeed, for Grant (2014, p.14) a previous headteacher, the combination of the task-based elements of the role alongside the management of emotions could be overwhelming, and so how these are managed became essential: ‘There is a need to learn how to manage the intense demands of both the operational and strategic aspects of the role, as well as the huge range of emotions (your own and others’) that are the flipside of being a leader’.

For Goleman et al. (2002), emotional intelligence was vital in a school leader’s career, as they would require this ability to monitor and control others’ feelings, to ‘discriminate among them and use this information to guide thinking and actions’ (Morrison and Ecclestone, 2011). Indeed, for Goleman et al. (2002), whilst emotional ability was needed to obtain a position in leadership, if a headteacher was not emotionally intelligent, then they were unlikely to ‘soar’ in their career.

Morrison and Ecclestone (2011) explored factors which they perceived to have influenced the growing interest in the emotional wellbeing of school leaders. These included changing the previous reliance on rational leadership, in which school leaders

acted on ‘ring binder’ leadership which, they claimed, had a detrimental impact on school performance. They presented the government’s increasing interest in the emotional well-being of the general population as a factor, with a particular focus on the emotional state of schools. The recruitment crisis was also a factor, which was considered. The final factor for Morrison and Ecclestone (2011) was the link between emotional intelligence and ‘talent-spotting’ potential leaders, once more reiterating the belief that successful leaders with emotional intelligence ‘soar’. Alongside this was the notion that a deeper understanding of the emotional well-being of school leaders would assist in preventing leaders failing, becoming less effective or retiring early. Morrison and Ecclestone (2011) argued that the emotional resilience of these leaders would be developed and sustained, thus providing more effective support.

Writing for the National College in 2009, Allen (2009, p.1) also argued that leaders’ emotional intelligence was pivotal in supporting and retaining school leaders as well as identifying future leaders. ‘Effective school leadership requires high levels of emotional intelligence that should be acknowledged as being central to effective school leadership; further developed in current school leaders to retain and sustain them; developed and honed in those spotted as having future leadership potential’.

To support this development, Allen (2009) drew a model which had strong moral purpose central to its conception. This model combined the strong moral purpose of emotionally intelligent leaders with core competencies set the ‘emotional climate’ of the organization. Allen (2009) argued that emotionally resilient leaders created emotionally resilient communities. These learning communities, she argued, were more effective in creating onward progress. In a similar study for the National College,

Bullock (2009) highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence on effective school leadership by arguing that heads themselves were now recognising the quality. In his study of fifty-one headteachers, 73% rated emotional intelligence as 'very important' to effective school leadership.

2.5.3 Managing the impact of emotions as a headteacher

When reflecting on emotional impact, Crawford (2004) argued the concept that how headteachers experience emotion and meaning in their daily interactions impacts directly on their approach to leadership. Crawford (2004) stated that this was an area which was only now emerging as an area for consideration when reflecting on leadership and the effective leaders in schools. In her earlier work, Beatty (2000) identified that what was missing from the knowledge base was the voice of leaders themselves. Beatty (2002, p.334) also highlighted how the study of the impact of emotions on leadership has been neglected from research:

> Emotions and emotional realities have escaped the gaze of the educational research community. Emotions are messy. As you begin to reflect on them, they change...They are the disgust that repulses and the passion that drives us to discover.

This was an area which had been neglected to the detriment of the development of school leadership and Beatty (2000) argued that the emotional experience of leaders was rich in its potential to assist us in developing our understanding of leadership. In agreement with Beatty, Crawford (2004) continued to acknowledge that the headteachers who lead and manage schools were emotional beings and it was these emotions that defined who they were. The key questions she highlighted that related to this asked how headteachers feel, contain, describe and manage their emotions

within the complex setting of a school. Indeed, the answers to these questions, she argued, then framed how headteachers experienced emotion and meaning in the daily lives which then directly influenced their performance, and indeed effectiveness in role. Therefore, she substantiated her claim that that acknowledging emotions and their impact was essential in reviewing leadership.

It was, perhaps, concerning that headteacher emotions were rarely remarked on except in acute cases of stress or burnout (Crawford, 2004, 2007a). This, it may be argued, categorised the emotional as a negative element, and attaches it to failure. Indeed, Beatty and Brew (2004) claimed that where negative, or indeed uncontrolled emotions were released, shame was experienced and the headteacher reverted back to professional control and suppressed subsequent emotions. A different viewpoint on emotions was that of looking at them as problems to be solved (Oatley and Jenkins, 2006).

To attempt to define these emotions in terms of problems to be solved, Oatley and Jenkins (2006) devised a working definition of emotion in three parts. The first was that emotion was caused by a person consciously or unconsciously evaluating an event as relevant to a concern that was important. Secondly, that positive emotions could be felt when a concern was advanced and negative emotions felt when a concern was impeded. The third emotion was usually experienced as a distinctive type of mental state, sometimes accompanied by bodily changes or actions.

It was this final state of emotion that was a particular concern when reflecting on the emotional cost of headship. As highlighted earlier, Crawford (2004) argued that

emotions were acknowledged to impact on school when stress or burnout occurs. Even putting aside the neglect of the other emotions experienced, this raised questions about the negative impact of emotions and the difficulty in managing these which resulted in stress occurring. Zapf (2002) stated that stress could be caused by the frequent need to display positive emotions which were at odds with the neutral or negative emotions felt. When you apply this to the task of the headteacher, Crawford (2004) argued that through her study of primary headteachers it was apparent that the headteachers interviewed overwhelmingly perceived that they had to manage and contain their emotions. She highlighted how one in particular stated that the role of headteacher involved a great deal of acting and emotional control in order to regulate the emotions of others.

Elements of Hochschild's (1990) definition could be reflected on when considering the role of the school leader and this regulation of emotions, especially when reflecting on the free or uninhibited display of expressive gestures which features in the definition. Hochschild (1983) had defined this as emotional labour, when a person was required to stimulate or repress a feeling in order to maintain a specific outward experience in order to produce the required emotional state in others. Beatty (2000) referred to Hochschild's definition of emotional labour, claiming that school leaders' work involved emotional management of self and others. In the primary school, the headteachers whom Crawford (2004) interviewed perceived themselves to be doing exactly that, controlling and managing the emotional state of others by stimulating and repressing their own feelings, which appeared a daunting task.

Leithwood and Beatty (2008) reflected on Beatty's (2000, 2002) previous wide scale study of headteachers' reflections on managing emotions in leadership. They drew out headteachers' reflections, which demonstrated that their role often involved a chaotic whirl of unpredictability and quickly recognised that, where emotions were concerned, the first job was to control and even hide them altogether. It was claimed by other researchers (Morrison and Ecclestone, 2011; Crawford, 2004) that leadership was akin to a performance. This point of view took into account the 'chaotic' events which unfurled in a school day, and reflected on the leader as an individual with their own feelings, responses and emotions who was charged with managing and directing the actions of others. For Morrison and Ecclestone (2011), persuading and influencing were key aspects of leadership. For this to be successful, the emotional burdens of leadership were great, and consequently so were the energies used in managing, containing, suppressing and controlling them (Morrison and Ecclestone, 2011).

Gronn (2003) acknowledged the daunting task of managing emotions and the impact that this has on the individual. His claim was that educational leadership was greedy work demanding more and more of headteachers as individuals. This notion of headteachers as individuals who struggled with emotions was, once again, an area that was neglected from the literature (Beatty, 2000; Beatty and Brew, 2004; Crawford, 2004), even though for Beatty (2002) people were the organisation.

Beatty (2002) researched leaders' reactions to emotion during a seven-month study, using teachers' reflections on school administrators and online postings, which leaders could make anonymously. She identified four perspectives from which she formulated a pattern in emotional aspects of leadership and relationships. The four perspectives

were adopted in this study as a conceptual model, to guide the interview analysis and categorise the headteacher responses.

The first perspective was ‘emotional silence’. Beatty (2002, p.16) linked emotional ‘silence’ with rationality and defined it as:

> ...[a]ttempts to describe the way the complex interactions among emotions and emotions about emotions can be ignored, suppressed, denied or not valued as meaningful (despite their inescapable influence). Within this stance the illusion that one is exclusively ‘rational’ is maintained by the tendency to engage consciously with emotions only in the effort to wrestle them back into control and some form of containment.

In the rational organisation, as described by Ribbins (2003) and Fineman (2001), school leaders would have to suppress emotions and function rationally. This would not allow for the management and effective ‘display’ of emotions which, Beatty and Brew (2004) claimed, led to trusting relationships and consequently effective organisations through transformational leadership.

The second area was ‘emotional absolutism’ in which bureaucratic hierarchies formulated ‘feeling rules’ through which particular emotions were identified as ‘right or wrong’ specific to the local culture. Beatty (2002, p.16) argued that this polarised people at different levels of hierarchy and ‘denies the entitlement to an emotionally professional self’. Both emotional absolutism and emotional silence required the school leader to be operating under high levels of emotional labour (Crawford, 2004; Gronn, 2003; Hochschild, 1983).

The third area was ‘transitional emotional relativism’ which focused on the importance of ‘inner emotional realities’. This occurred when an event caused a disturbance in the

‘professional smooth surface’ and emotions, uncontrolled, appeared. However, Beatty claimed that these outbursts would be followed by shame, withdrawal and then ‘emotional silence’. For Beatty and Brew (2004), a solution to this was the creation of ‘emotionally safe places’, which fostered emotional perspectives and respect. What form these places took was a key consideration for this study. Beatty and Brew (2004) presented this as an opportunity for schools to develop and more effectively manage the workforce through enhancing trusting relationships which could develop even though schools were hierarchical. Key to this was the regulation of emotions and a ‘safe’ place for this to occur and exploring how this could be established would provide potential recommendations for this study.

The fourth and final perspective was presented by Beatty and Brew (2004) as the ideal, through which resilient emotional relativism allowed a leader to gain deeper layers of emotional knowledge. This was achieved by leaders recognising the range of emotions that they may experience in order to form a ‘deeper embodied awareness’ of them. Ignoring the challenging emotions, such as anger, grief or shame, Beatty and Brew (2004, p.334) claimed, could result in the dysfunctional relationships between individuals which could impact on the entire organisation:

> In conserving the energy used to deny and suppress emotional experiences that are inherent in leading teaching and learning, greater energy, confidence and curiosity for creative collaboration can emerge.

Crawford (2004) recognised that greater conceptual clarity about headteachers’ emotional coping mechanisms was required, as this may indeed have had an impact on effectiveness. She stated that the definitions of school leadership often involve professionals who rely on good inter-personal skills. Crawford (2004) built on this idea further by stating that conceptualising the notion of leadership based on interpersonal

skills was challenging, not only because one facet that has to be considered was emotion. This encroached on the concept of emotional intelligence. Goleman (1995) believed that there were five domains to emotional intelligence and to be emotionally intelligent you would operate within these. He defined them as being able to know emotion, to manage emotion, to motivate self, to recognise emotions in others and to handle emotions. This added a further aspect to the DfE (2015) National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers highlighted at the start of this review, which approached the task but neglected these emotional intelligence operations. Or rather, it presumed that they were implicit in the person seeking headship.

Leithwood and Beatty (2008) believed that emotional intelligence was key to supporting teachings. Goleman's (1995) emotional intelligence domain, where emotions were recognised and managed in others, related to their concept that key to successful school leadership should be in recognising and assisting teachers to maintain positive emotional stated. This, they claimed, would leave teachers better placed to manage the many uncertain situations that they encountered through their role in a controlled and more rational manner.

However, there was an argument that we were in a therapeutic culture in which the intense government interest, and indeed social interest, in well-being and emotional intelligence was overriding the academic element of learning and ultimately resulting in the 'diminished human subject' (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009; Ecclestone, 2011). Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) defined the therapeutic turn in education as the emphasising of the emotional, or feelings, over the intellectual. Although Ecclestone and Hayes' (2009) paper was centred on the change to the curriculum in schools and

the attitudes to learners and how we perceive learners, there were parallels which could be drawn with the attitude to leadership and how leaders coped emotionally and what interventions were offered. Indeed, many of the interventions which were available from the National College could be argued to fit within the 'therapy' category as there was an emphasis on the emotional rather than the intellectual element.

For Ecclestone and Hayes (2009), understanding how these therapeutic ideas permeate educational goals and practices was essential, as we could not rely on people's attitudes and uses of such practices to evaluate their influence. This shift to therapy culture, Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) clearly stated, was unfounded as it had been reinforced by a cycle of positive psychology which had been demanded from a society which 'warrants therapeutic responses'. Thus, they claimed, a continuous cycle was renewed as the therapy culture was reinforced. Underpinning this, Ecclestone and Hayes (2009, p.382) claimed, was a perception of the human subject as 'diminished', that there was a fragility about the person which required them to be better protected, and from this it was perceived that they were then shielded. Ecclestone and Hayes (2009, p.382) went further to claim that the ongoing initiative centred on emotional well-being was an 'attack' on the human subject:

> Within therapy culture, there is a dual attack on the 'subject'. This, as we have argued, is an attack on the human subject and also an attack on humans' ability, either in wanting to understand or in being able to be educated in order to understand the world

It was important to acknowledge this counter argument in the movement towards emotional well-being as, for Ecclestone and Hayes (2009), there was certainly a gap in the debate and thus therapy culture was continuing in a self-fulfilling cycle of development without challenge.

To conclude the literature review on emotions, it became apparent that there was significant influence of emotions on the headteacher as a result of the 'chaotic' role. This 'greedy work', as Gronn (2003) described it, was incorporated into a task-based role as defined by the DfE (2015) National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers. Emotions were generally described as having a negative influence or connotation within the literature, either in their overwhelming influence on the school leader or in the perception of emotions in others, referring once more to Crawford's (2004, 2007b) claim that emotional outcomes were usually perceived as 'burnouts' or 'breakdowns'. However, it was acknowledged that to 'soar', the headteacher needed to have a level of emotional intelligence that managed the emotional climate of the school. Two questions that this study asked, were how do headteachers use emotional intelligence to manage their own emotions as well as the emotions of others, and does this make them more effective in coping with the stress and pressure of the role?

2.5.4 Leadership policy and practice and the influence of emotions

If, from the literature, it was assumed that the role of the headteacher was daunting in the magnitude of the emotions it created, then how does this emotionally demanding role tessellate within the rational functions of the school and the policies and practices entailed?

When Gronn (2003) referred to the role of the headteacher, he referred to it as 'greedy work', swallowing up the emotions and time of the person leading the school. Indeed, he asked whether this emotional labour was specific to primary schools in their context

and intensity. Through the very nature of the primary school setting, Crawford (2007) highlighted how people and relationships were woven into the everyday role and, indeed, life of a headteacher. Through her studies into the experiences of the primary headteacher, Crawford (2004, 2007a) recounted the numerous social interactions which engage the headteacher on a daily, if not hourly basis. Each of the social interactions, Crawford (2007a, p.527) argued, invoked an emotional response. Indeed, she stated that 'emotional relationships are the core, not just of any school related work, but are pivotal to the concept of educational leadership.'

Relationships, she argued, were at the centre of a school (Crawford 2007a). For Beatty and Brew (2004), relations depend on trust, and trust was an emotional phenomenon. But Beatty and Brew (2004) also expressed concern that there was a need to identify the emotions of leadership in order to establish better prepared school leaders who could cope with emotional as well as the task-based demands of the role. Yet through their research, Beatty and Brew (2004) concluded that school leaders had to find that their emotional selves were anything but welcome in their work. Beatty and Brew (2004, p.331) went further, to argue that aspiring leaders had to leave emotional integrity at the door to secure their positions:

> Leaders who overcome the cultural pressures for emotional silence can learn to connect with self and colleagues but to do so they must embrace a 'pedagogy of discomfort'. A counterintuitive commitment is required.

For Beatty and Brew (2004) this would not result in transformation leadership, as for them it was how the school leaders handled and managed emotions which 'reflected and shape the climate of their school and the interactions with parents, students and faculty and establish the culture.' Beatty (2000) also argued that emotions had not been recognised in educational administration and policy. Beatty, (2000, p.334)

claimed that emotions have been treated, when recognised at all, as little more than ‘pesky interlopers, distracting us from higher, rational purpose ...’. Indeed, she emphasised that in the educational administration, the literature showed us that problem solving, strategic planning and reflective practice were considered from an exclusively rational standpoint.

Far from identifying it as a rational organisation, Fineman (2001) identified a school as an ‘emotional arena, with the intensity of organisational life’. Indeed, he argued that emotions could not be separated from the organisational process because they enlighten them. In essence, schools would not be the educational, social settings that they were if the emotion was removed and they therefore became rational organisations. Relating to this idea, Crawford (2007b) argued that to try to control the emotion within the setting would be naive, as it was this emotion which shaped the practice of the school, filtering through from the school leaders to the teachers. Leithwood and Beatty (2008) highlighted that understanding teacher emotion would seem to be at the heart of understanding why teachers act as they do.

Indeed, Beatty (2000, p.334) warned that:

> Education administration and researchers can no longer afford to treat the emotions as subordinate, insignificant or peripheral if we are fully to explore the way leaders are and the way they can be.

The notion that schools were rational organisations reflected on the people who work within them. Beatty (2000) claimed that our impression of school culture supports the idea that professional demeanour was somehow essential to the role of the school leaders. This, Beatty claimed, entailed the school leader behaving rationally and with carefully controlled emotions. Morrison and Ecclestone (2011) linked this ‘rational

school leader' to the argument that there was a link between a failing school and 'shoehorned' school leaders. These leaders, they claimed, would operate in systems that were rational, functional and controlled without any sense of critique or scepticism about the policies that were imposed on them. It was possible to surmise that these school leaders of 'failing schools' and their organizations would be rational and, it could be argued, controlled by central policy rather than through individual understanding and depth of knowledge of what was required on a school-by-school basis.

Morrison and Ecclestone (2011) took this further as they referred to arguments that there was an 'impending danger' facing schools from these rational school leaders who uphold norms and implement policy without concern. These norms, they argued, should be challenged for change to occur. Only then could education be 'evolutionary rather than revolutionary'. When considering change and the impact on schools, Morrison and Ecclestone (2011, p.200) claimed that: 'When change is embraced or organisations get bigger or more complex, the managers' primary role, it is argued, is to make organisations function better so as to facilitate organisational cohesion, frequently by emphasising their coercive roles in effecting change'

This, once more, emphasised the pressure on the school leader to implement change. Not, as Morrison and Ecclestone (2011) argued, simply by upholding rules and implementing existing policy, but by challenging norms and raising expectations. For this to be successful, they continued to emphasise how the 'emotional dimension' of leadership was crucial, as only then could we understand the principles that underpin change, which may be influenced by 'non-rational forces'.

When we apply the emotional expectations, pressures and constraints, or in Hochschild's (1983) terms, 'emotional labour', to the pressures of accountability reviewed under the policy and practice for headteachers, it became more apparent why schools were struggling to appoint headteachers and why potential, possibly talented future leaders were remaining at the ascension stage of their careers. It may also be a contributing factor to why the headteachers moved to the divestiture stage and left the profession before retirement. So, who were the headteachers who thrive in this environment, driving school improvement forward whilst inspiring staff, and what could be learnt from their characteristics? To investigate this further, this literature review moves us to the next phase of exploration into the characteristics of effective school leaders who remain in their post, and how headteachers move through their careers.

2.6 The characteristics of headteachers

The term 'effective,' in the context of leadership, could be broad and almost vague, and should include a more precise measure of its effectiveness. The literature provided a review of effectiveness, many of which agreeing that effective leadership impacts on pupils' progress in a quantifiable manner (MacBeath, 2006; Wallace, 2001) Although Harris (2004) linked the impact of leadership on school effectiveness and school improvement as being significant, she highlighted that there was no empirical evidence linking various conceptual models with impact on the learner. Although conceptual models for leadership were plentiful, she argued that these models were based on the same concept, with only a change to the label. The real question should be, she claimed, to ask what evidence there was to support these models.

In 2008, Leithwood et al. provided a paper for the NCSL, which used empirical evidence to support its leadership recommendations. Leithwood et al's (2008) Seven Strong Claims About Successful School Leadership opened with the claim that school leadership was second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupils' learning. In another claim, that leadership distribution was more effective than focused leadership, the measure of effectiveness used was the measure of value-added student achievement. However, questions arose as to whether there were other influences which impacted on the value-added student measure, or whether this was the result of the impact of the distributed leadership model.

For Wallace (2003), innovative, complex education change could only occur if there it was orchestrated by transformational leadership. This consisted of unobtrusive leadership, 'steering' the organisation through complex changes. He highlighted how this leadership was slow, methodical and almost set back from the change itself in order to control and guide at a distance. In a further clarification of transformational leadership, Wallace (2003) implied that staff culture for change occurs through articulation of a vision reaching beyond individual self-interest, colleague support and empowerment of people to set up structures through which they could manage the change. This last element, the empowerment of people, reflected similarities of Fullan's (2003) key characteristic of adaptive change in which people needed to seek the outcome themselves. However, Wallace's (2003) argument that the vision needs to be articulated contrasts with this.

Fullan (2003) argued for a different element of leadership to achieve adaptive change. After highlighting the difficulties in achieving innovative change, which could challenge the very status quo of the organisation, he claimed that it was trust and relationships which could be the vehicle for change. Indeed, he argued that quality relationships, with integrity, motivation and trust at their core, could be more powerful in delivering change than the moral purpose behind it.

What became very evident from both Wallace (2003) and Fullan (2003), was their condemnation of charismatic leadership. Fullan (2003) in particular, was damning, claiming the 'saviour' leader to be damaging to the organisation as they were risk takers who provided false guidance which led to superficial change with premature clarity. The charismatic leader was at odds with Wallace's (2003) transformation leader, who worked quietly behind the scenes. A leader who, we could presume, operated through high levels of trust and integrity. Indeed, for Fullan (2002, p.2), the characteristics of a leader were simply 'hope (unwarranted optimism), enthusiasm and energy'.

Fullan (2002, p.2) continued to argue that the actions and mindsets of leaders were based on: '... a strong sense of moral purpose, an understanding of the dynamics of change, an emotional intelligence as they build relations, a commitment to developing and shaping new knowledge and a capacity for coherence making (enough coherence on the edge of chaos to still be creative)'.

Crawford (2002) researched the impact of charismatic leadership and the value of such leaders on schools in special measures. The role of headship, she argued, had

become even more prominent through the media interest in what they referred to as ‘superheads’, who transformed ‘struggling schools’ within relatively short timescales. These ‘superheads’ carried with them the perception of the hero/heroine at the centre of the school. Southworth (1998) linked leadership to power relations, which sustained the belief in the dominance of the leader.

When investigating this further, Crawford (2002) referred to how the word ‘charisma’ originally came from the Bible, meaning ‘gift of grace’, and referred to how it could be described it as a form of authority based on people’s perceptions of an extraordinary individual. Through her research, Crawford (2002) observed that charismatic leaders impacted considerably on the emotions and self-esteem of followers. These, she highlighted, were the effective motivational variables rather than cognitive variables. Crawford (2002) referred to the Conger-Kanungo model (1998) which studied how members of an organisation attribute charisma to those in leadership positions.

Crawford (2002) argued that models of charismatic leadership advocated that leaders had transformational effects. From the Conger-Kanungo study, she concluded that the charismatic leader was concerned with influencing others to follow their vision and work towards its realisation. The leader used strategies and techniques to make followers feel empowered within a situation. Although charismatic leadership could have a powerful effect, this was often limited. Her recommendation was for headteachers to identify the perceived need for charisma and to engage with this, as part of leadership, to manage the situation of the school. This would require high levels of emotional intelligence and perception as well as ability to take on the mantle of

leadership. Indeed, Grint (2005) claimed that leadership should be visualised as a talisman, which in itself would give the person the resilience to cope.

We could conclude from the literature, (Fullan, 2002), that the formation stage of the effective leader was essential as that was when traits and characteristics, such as 'hope (unwarranted optimism), enthusiasm and energy', were embedded. Whether it was through quietly transformational or through dynamic charismatic leadership, the characteristics of the leader still involved the ability to influence and inspire others in order to create positive relationships. Therefore, it could be argued that the effective leader demonstrated a level of emotional intelligence used to inspire and connect with people, grounded by integrity and moral purpose. In light of that, this study explored not only the emotional impact of headship, which may result in headteachers moving to divestiture disenchanted, but also the emotional impact which kept headteachers enchanted.

2.7 The careers of headteachers

For Ribbins (2003) the potential for studying closely the lives and careers of senior leaders was untapped. Indeed, he claimed that with such information about what influences and motivates the decisions that were made, policy makers could be informed and decisions made through practical advice regarding what had been successful and instrumental. This information, he argued, would balance out the narrow and, he claimed, often biased information, which had previously dominated government-led thinking.

In understanding the biography, a crucial difference must be made, he argued, between the ‘life lived’ and the ‘life told’. A breakdown of the two components between the ‘life lived’ and the ‘life told’, was needed. The former, the personal and emotional reflection of life, including sentiments and emotions, and the latter, the more factual narrative, as influenced by the social context and audience. Ribbins (2003) described these differences, with the life history being a passive reconstruction of a core of factual events, and a life story being an active construction of a respondent’s view of their life.

When linking the importance of a case study with the lives and careers of school leaders, Gronn and Ribbins (1996, p.465) carried out research. This was an area which, they argued, has been previously neglected: ‘There is… an absence of any systematic understanding in the literature of how individuals get to be leaders, an ignorance of culturally diverse patterns of defining leadership and knowledge of the culturally different ways prospective leaders learn their leadership in their infancy’. From this they questioned how and why people chose leadership and argued that the way to uncover the answers was through research into the personal and social influences in life histories.

To further understand the progression to leadership, Gronn (1999) created a set of stages through which, he argued, leaders pass to become a headteacher, a system highlighted in the literature review as the theoretical framework upon which this study was based. Earley and Weindling (2007, p.4) formulated a model of career change and challenge that headteachers faced, based upon a longitudinal study of secondary headteachers spanning twenty years. Headteachers, they found, generally

experienced similar challenges as they moved through the career stages as set out below:

Stage 0 - Preparation prior to headship
Stage 1 - Entry and encounter (first months)
Stage 2 - Taking hold (3 to 12 months)
Stage 3 - Reshaping (second year)
Stage 4 - Refinement (years 3 to 4)
Stage 5 - Consolidation (years 5 to 7)
Stage 6 - Plateau (years 8 and onwards)

Stage 0 – pre-headship

Prior to taking up their position, conceptions on headship were formed both through formal and informal experiences as well as making judgements of both 'good and bad' headteachers.

- Stage 1 – Entry and encounter

'cognitive map' of the school's problems, people and culture was formed.

- Stage 2 – Taking hold

In this stage organisational changes were made; which staff were more lenient to. This 'honeymoon' period ends in a negative staff reaction to a change made.

- Stage 3 – Reshaping

Heads now understand the strengths and weakness of the staff, and likewise the staff understand the limitations of the head. Realistic expectations were set and major change was possible.

- Stage 4 – Refinement

Structural change was now refined. Heads described this period as 'hitting their stride'.

- Stage 5 – Consolidation

Changes have now been made and could be consolidated. However, legislation often brings unanticipated change.

- Stage 6 – Plateau

The cohort of pupils have now moved on. The cycle of change was complete.

If heads moved on, they stayed ‘enchanted’ and took up their second headship and the stages commenced again. However, some heads retired early or left the profession ‘disenchanted’, which could occur at any stage. Earley and Weindling (2007) asked if this, therefore, indicated that heads had a ‘shelf life’, and what options there were to support heads in remaining ‘enchanted’ and therefore in the profession. The notion that headteachers have a ‘shelf life’ would most probably be of concern to the policy makers who were identifying options for tackling the recruitment crisis. Further investigation of the characteristics of headteacher remaining ‘in post’ supported this study, when combined with a review of the influence and management of emotions.

2.8 Summary

Understanding the emotional impact of leadership on the organisation and whether this impacted directly on pupil outcomes was, perhaps, a question has not yet been answered with clarity (Crawford, 2007a, 2007b; Beatty, 2000). However, the literature indicated that emotional intelligence led to effective leadership (Goleman, 1995) which implied a direct impact on pupil outcomes.

At a time when we are witnessing the increased pressures and demands on school leaders, both through task based outcomes and public perceptions of headteachers, it appeared from the literature that although the emotional cost of headship was becoming more apparent in the knowledge base, there was still a perception of

schools being rational organisations, which influenced policy makers and educational administrators. Therefore, acknowledging the impact and influence of emotions on headteachers was not yet influential in guidance for policy and practice, as evident in the DfE (2015) National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers. Understanding and deriving evidence from the literature formulated the following research questions:

1. Is there an emotional impact on a headteacher from enacting headship and, if so, to what extent are headteachers managing the emotional demands, and how are they being most effectively supported?

1.1 What do headteachers perceive to be the major sources of emotional investment in both the cost and rewards of the role?

Alongside this, we are facing a recruitment crisis for headteacher vacancies, which was characterised by falling applications for leadership posts (Policy Exchange, 2014; Rhodes and Neville, 2008). Identifying future leaders and supporting them in their preparation and accession to headship appeared timely. Flintham's (2003) identification of leaders who left the profession early was a further opportunity to support disaffected headteachers through effective and targeted support. This, Flintham claimed, was an area where the emotional support was either lacking or absent. For Crawford (2007a, p.533), this was a very obvious measure that should be addressed as she stated that:

> At a time when sustainability in headship in England is a national issue, the ability to take what we know about leadership and emotion and enhance the work of experienced leaders in primary schools is vital, as well as being a major component in attracting candidates to such posts.

There appeared to be a gap in the knowledge base in terms of headteachers' perceptions regarding the emotional influence of their leadership, paired with the need to review support systems and coping mechanisms that they have adopted. Gaining the perceptions and reflections of headteachers would link together the strands concerning the changing pressures of the role with the support systems offered, and add to the knowledge base through which future policy and structuring was made. Therefore, this study sought to ascertain:

> 1.2 What sources of support or training have headteachers received which have supported them in the emotional management of their role?

The conceptual frameworks formulated from this literature, with Gronn's (1999) Career Stages forming the theoretical base, and Earley and Weindling's (2007) model for career changes providing additional detail of the incumbency stage, informed and underpinned both the design and the analysis of the research project. Hence the research question formulated from the literature sought to ask:

> 1.3 Do headteachers perceive, or anticipate, that the emotional cost of leadership has changed as they have progressed through Earley and Weindling's (2007) stages of leadership?

Alongside this, Crawford's (2007a, 2007b) previous studies and evaluation of the rational organisation and how school leaders manage their emotions in this context provided further discussion and direction. The scrutiny of the literature led to the formulation of the following research question:

> 1.4 What are the coping strategies used most effectively by headteachers to manage the emotional impact of the role including self-management of emotions?

This study was focussed on headteachers' self-management of emotions, as evident through the research question above, and was intended to add to the knowledge base

in this area. Beatty's (2002) four perspectives on emotional aspects of leadership and relationships were adopted in this study, as a conceptual model, to guide the interview analysis and categorise the headteacher responses, as detailed in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

This section of the research design was focused on the research methodology and methods selected. My epistemological position was investigated and the decisions made for planning and gathering the research were evaluated and justified. The design was constructed to best fit the nature of the research, in order to gather data that informed and framed the research addressed. The research strategy involved in gathering the research was then discussed and justified. My role as a researcher within the profession was reviewed. Further to this, the ethical considerations which underpinned the study were explained. Alongside these, additional considerations in the gathering of data, including access to the sample, validity of results and any potential issues in conducting the analysis were clarified.

3.2 Wider framework

Ribbins and Gunter (2002) argued for the value of categorising knowledge, as policy from central Government was decided on ‘what works’. Further to this, they emphasised the importance of researching the values that underpinned this pragmatic policy making and thus the weighting behind each criterion to measure the success. To support this, they emphasised the importance of knowledge from a wide intellectual foundation.

This study could be placed within Ribbins and Gunter's (2002) humanistic knowledge domain. This gathered and theorised from the experiences and biographies of leaders and the led. Ribbins and Gunter (2002) stressed how this was the more flexible knowledge domain in that the research gathers from literary and non-empirical sources of information to form the knowledge. This was key to this study, as qualitative data was gathered through the experiences and perceptions of school leaders, thus providing non-empirical data which therefore placed it in this category. When related to the four other knowledge domains that Ribbins and Gunter (2002) formulated, although this information may be informative to other school leaders, it could not be classified as critical, neither could it be classified as instrumental, as recommendations were made, rather than outlining strategies and tactics. There was no specific intervention or training tool which was to be measured, therefore it was not evaluative knowledge. Similarly, although there certainly was conceptual knowledge evaluated, it was centered on individual perceptions and therefore could not be categorised as conceptual.

Habermas (1971) categorised knowledge and paradigms into three types of cognitive interest; technical, practical and emancipatory. Technical interest was focused on tasks, with the knowledge drawn out to provide solution and analysis. The data was usually empirical and gathered from carefully controlled experiments. Practical interest was concerned with people and relationships; the knowledge sought was to understand and interpret why people behave the way they do and how we relate to each other. Emancipatory interest engaged critical reflection, which inspired action.

This was related to Ribbins and Gunter's (2002) critical knowledge domain, in that it sought to provide a remedy to social injustice.

Questions which arose from this thesis were interested in 'how' and 'why', therefore providing a practical understanding of social interactions, thus placing it in Habermas's (1971) practical typology. Whilst this research may not be defined as radical in its purpose, possible conclusions drawn from the new knowledge gathered may provide recommendations that were drawn up that may move the purpose of knowledge further from Habermas's (1971) practical understanding and closer to the radical paradigm.

3.3 **Educational research debates**

Hargreaves (2006) referred to research as being a tool for policy makers to generate information for the purpose of accountability. However, this supposed that the research presented was valued, or indeed, valid. The Department for Education and Employment (1998) claimed that research was prompted by policy, rather than guiding and 'forward-looking'. This highly critical paper also claimed that where research did address policy-relevant issues, it tended to be small scale and lacked the base of previous knowledge. In short, the claim was that the educational policy influencing research was invalid. Hargreaves (2006) reflected that the influence of research on policy makers has been very limited and referred back to the 1970s when, he argued, there was a breakdown of dialogue. Indeed, Hargreaves (2006, p.243) continued that the lack of communication and understanding between researchers was still impacting on the breakdown of research influencing policy:

> The continuing failure of research to exert direct influence on policy led some social scientists, including educational researchers, to see indirect impact or 'enlightenment' as the usual relation between research and policy making.

Through this, Hargreaves (2006) highlighted how it was critical research leading to enlightenment, rather than of positivist research directly forming policy, which sought to change educators' understanding. However, as Hammersley (2002) had warned, this was not good enough unless the research was valid and rigourous.

These arguments, which were still contemporary, impacted on this study and raised questions such as; *Why research? How will my research influence policy or practice? How will my research be utilised?* A key criticism from Hillage et al.'s (1998) DfEE report was that researchers often begun with their own question or area of investigation, rather than looking at policy or wider educational problems. They claimed that research worked backwards, with the research not focused on driving policy forward but following it. Although this study was small scale, which was a criticism of the 1998 report, it was ahead of current policy and sought to add knowledge to inform future practice and allow reflection on the emotional impact of headship. It was, on a small scale, interpreting the experiences of a group of primary headteachers and gathering knowledge which could be categorised into Ribbins and Gunter's (2002) human domain.

3.4 Philosophical approach

Key to approaching research was understanding and reflecting on what assumptions were made in how reality was constructed (Cohen et al., 2002). It was this essence of what reality was and crucially, whether it was formed through individual consciousness or whether external to the individual upon which ontological assumptions were formed (Cohen et al., 2002). Based upon this, it was my ontological belief that reality and truth were based on individual understanding and perception. My research was mainly concerned with people's perceptions of realities; therefore, I was subscribing to a nominalist ontology, as it was my belief that the reality formed by people was theirs to create, not determined externally.

Mason (2002, p.16) defined a researcher's epistemological position as being: '...literarily your theory of knowledge and should therefore concern the principles of and rules by which you can decide whether and how social phenomenon can be known and how knowledge can be demonstrated'.

My own epistemological position was that knowledge was based on experience and perceptions. Therefore, I categorised myself as having an interpretivist approach to knowledge. From this position, Mason (2002) emphasised how I, as a researcher, must understand my own approach to knowledge and evidence. However, Mason (2002) stated that alongside this understanding, the researcher must acknowledge that there were other epistemological approaches, even if they did not compliment the researcher's own system. In regard to my own research, I subscribed to a subjectivist epistemological approach to knowledge.

Opposed to this was the positivist approach. Where I, as a subjectivist, held the belief that knowledge was based on experience and insight, the positivist would argue that knowledge was absolute and could be measured in a tangible form. The very nature of my research, whereby I gathered multiple realities to derive the truth, placed my research almost at the opposite end to positivism on the continuum of epistemology.

Further to this, Denscombe (2007) gave rise to a phenomenological strategy through which multiple realities from people's experiences and interpretations of events were contrasted and a thematic approach to knowledge was used. This, he argued, was in direct contrast to positivism. Phenomenology, Denscombe (2007, p.109) emphasised:

> Subjectivity (rather than objectivity)
> Description (more than analysis)
> Interpretation (rather than measurement)
> Agency (rather than structure)

The focus of this study was to gain perceptions and experiences of headteachers. Its aim was to gain their attitudes, feelings and emotions. Therefore, the phenomenological strategy was used in the interpretation of my research as it was a strategy to review 'how life is experienced' (Denscombe, 2007).

3.5 Research strategy

My approach to data collection was interpretivist, and I used qualitative methods to gather my research, thus enabling me to gain opinions, from which I was able to explore and contrast multiple realities. Through gathering many different interpretations of events, I accessed multiple realities. This reflected my

epistemological position as interpretivist. When reflecting on interpretivist research strategies, Robson (2002) related them to constructivism in the sense that it was the task of the researcher to understand the multiple constructions of meaning and knowledge. When I applied this to my study, it was the multiple constructions of reality that I extracted from each school leader to construct a reality. Therefore, my research strategy was based upon a reality that was socially constructed. Robson (2002) emphasised how constructivists struggled with the concept of an objective reality. I also found objective reality difficult to apply to my own project as I was reflecting on multiple realities rather than an absolute truth.

3.6 Methodological approach

To gather my research, I conducted semi-structured interviews. When reflecting on identifying a sample, Denscombe (2007) used characteristics including wide and inclusive coverage at a specific point in time and empirical research. If these elements were transferred to my own research project, then it would be apparent that they became applicable as the wide coverage not only reflected the sample of headteachers selected, but also the research questions which were designed to obtain inclusive research to reflect this. The specific point in time occurred as the research reflected the present state of affairs in regards to headteacher perceptions and challenge as well as the current political, educational climate in regards to the research question. Although another characteristic was the empirical research, Denscombe (2007) defined this as being the research being active in the process, and physically gathering the tangible results. The semi-structured interviews conducted provided these tangible results.

Denscombe (2007) and Silverman (2014) acknowledged a potential limitation to the size of the sample. However, to collect data from everyone who falls into the category of the sample maybe impossible, and indeed it was, in this research project. Indeed for Silverman (2014, p.35) although a sample maybe small, it was still valid because 'by thoroughly examining a small number of cases, the researcher may explore in-depth the contextual dimensions that influence a social phenomenon.'

In further support, Lamont and White (2005) stressed that a large-scale study had the potential over oversee or downplay environment or situation factors, which could be acknowledged in a small-scale study. Therefore, a strategy for managing this, which still produced valid results, lay in the method of sampling. Denscombe (2007) stressed that only a portion of the 'whole' could be sampled in the expectation and indeed, the hope, that the results were indicative and consequently applicable to the rest of the population.

However, there could be no assumption made that the sample would be replicated in the rest of the population (Denscombe, 2007; Crabtree and Millar, 1999). Therefore, to ensure confidence in the results, careful sampling was made to ensure that the best possible selection of representative participants were selected.

For the purpose of this study, based upon Denscombe's (2007) categories for sampling, clustered probability sampling was selected. Denscombe (2007) compared probability sampling to non-probability sampling as being people or events chosen because they represent a cross section of the whole population studies as opposed to

non-probability sampling whereby the researcher would have no prior knowledge about whether the sample selected was representative of the whole population. The population for this study consisted of primary headteachers, a known group, therefore I was able to select a sample through which it became possible to represent the whole population.

In itself, the very nature of sampling produces limitations in the results, as to select a sample of a population may not produce the same results that a sample of the whole population may. For Crabtree and Millar (1999), true random sampling assumed a knowledge of the whole, from which the sample was taken. However, they emphasised that qualitative research projects usually made no such claim. Indeed, for this study there was no claim of knowledge over the population of headteachers other than basic assumptions. Crabtree and Millar (1999) argued that this basic assumption made random sampling appropriate. Denscombe (2007) noted that there was almost an element of luck in choosing the sample, who to be included and who not. Indeed, he claimed that in terms of probability, if the sample were to be repeated with a different, it may produce different results. Although this was acknowledged as a limitation in the methodology, it was part of the process of sampling and was recognised as a feature of a sample that could only be avoided if the whole population were to be sampled, which was more than likely to be unachievable. Denscombe (2007) referred to this as the ‘sampling error’, and this is acknowledged further in the analysis of the results.

3.7 Method

Twenty semi-structured interviews lasting approximately one hour formed the data collection method. Although Denscombe (2007) reflected on how research could be conducted through a range of methods, including postal questionnaires, documentary evidence, observations and internet-based questionnaires, I deemed the most effective method of gathering headteacher perceptions was through the semi-structured interview method. Indeed, Cohen et al. (2007) highlighted how the interview presence could help to clarify answers and draw further information from the respondent when compared to, for example, a questionnaire, as they argued that the interviewee was more likely to provide that information to an on-the-spot interviewer. It was also an opportunity, they stated, to control the setting to ensure an optimum environment for the interview, ensuring privacy without noise or external distractions.

Mason (2002) identified some core features of a semi-structured interviews, which were applicable to my study. These core features identified that there must be interaction in the exchange of dialogue, a relatively informal style, that it must be thematic, topic based, biographical or narrative in its approach, and finally that it must be operating from the perspective that knowledge was situated and it was contextual. Each of these features related to the planned interviews for this research as, perhaps essentially, there was an exchange of dialogue, in that I was asking prompting and probing questions which occurred in a relaxed, informal manner. Alongside this, the questions were biographical in nature as they sought to extract experiences and perspectives. In its very nature, the interviews were conducted with the understanding that the knowledge was contextual to individuals within their school settings.

The questions for the semi-structured interview were based on the research questions, which had been drawn from both data and literature which reflected the current situation with regard to headteacher recruitment and emotional preparation and support in headship. The interviews were semi-structured, in that the questions prepared were process questions (Kvale, 1996). Cohen et al. (2007, p.369) referred to these process questions whose purpose was to:

- introduce a topic or interview
- follow up on a topic or idea
- probe for further information or response
- ask respondents to specify and provide examples
- directly ask for information
- indirectly ask for information
- interpret respondents' replies

Throughout the interview, the planned questions were designed to guide the respondent through the topics into which I hoped to research. To facilitate this, the questions could be categorised as providing unstructured responses (Cohen et al., 2007), which should enable the respondent to answer and thus provide information in any manner that they were comfortable with. The questions, therefore, were probing questions. These could be compared with the structured response, through which the participant was limited in their reply through predetermined parameters in the questions. For this study, it was the perceptions and experiences of the headteacher that I was researching, therefore I could not pre-plan or preempt their responses to limit them through such structured questioning. The interview questions were drawn from the literature and were constructed so that they best fit the nature of the research. The interview questions were as follows:

Can to tell me about what motivated you to become a headteacher?

Now you are in the role, what do you find to be the most enjoyable aspects of headship? What are the least enjoyable aspects?

Could you tell me about the challenges you encounter through your role?

Is there an emotional impact of those challenges on you?

How do you manage those emotional impacts?

Can you recall any previous training or support that you have received which has helped prepare you for dealing and coping with the emotional aspect of headship?

Looking back on your headship, can you tell me about how you first experienced taking on the role of the headteacher?

What advice would you give to someone who was taking up his or her first primary headship?

Cohen et al. (2007) highlighted the beneficial factor of the unstructured form of response as providing freedom to the respondent to facilitate replies. The limitation of such a response, they argued, was that there was no option for quantifying the results. This would be acknowledged in the discussion of this study, but due to the qualitative nature of the research gathered, it was not deemed as a limitation for this particular study. Indeed, Mason (2000) argued that the epistemological approach to drawing knowledge from interviews, was that the conclusions and realities tended to be drawn more from a construction, rather than excavation, of knowledge through dialogue in which a shared understanding of meaning, perspectives and understandings were developed through contexts.

3.8 Research Management

3.8.1 Sampling

Many considerations must be taken in the management of the research. This was to be semi-structured interviews, through which I had gathered the perceptions or realities of twenty primary headteachers and then used a thematic approach to draw conclusions. A summary of the sample is provided below in Table 1:

Table 1 – Sample Summary

Headteacher reference number	Male/ Female	First headship Y/N	Less than 3 years in headship?	Urban/Rural school
1	M	N	N	R
2	F	Y	Y	R
3	F	Y	Y	R
4	F	Y	N	R
5	F	N	N	U
6	F	Y	Y	U
7	M	Y	N	U
8	F	Y	Y	U
9	M	Y	N	R
10	M	Y	N	R
11	F	Y	Y	U
12	M	N	N	R
13	F	Y	Y	U
14	M	N	N	U
15	M	Y	Y	U
16	M	N	N	U
17	F	Y	Y	U
18	F	Y	N	R
19	F	Y	Y	U
20	F	Y	N	U

The sample of headteachers was chosen through convenience of locality, therefore identifying headteachers in the West Midland area. Crabtree and Miller (1999) emphasised that when selecting the sample, consideration was made not only of what

to sample but also how. By selecting convenience of locality, they argued that this could be at the expense of information and credibility. To ensure that this was not applicable to this study, further consideration was made in reference to the context of the headteachers. All the selected participants led within the context of a state primary school, thus enabling contrast and comparison to be made between similar settings.

To interview a wider sample of headteachers, encompassing private, Secondary and Further Educational settings, would widen the scope of analysis and thus reduce both the clarity of analysis and generalisation of the results. A further consideration in regard to sampling was whether to include gender as an issue for analysis. However, when reflecting on the research questions, it became apparent that to include gender would not provide any further depth of understanding. To include gender as part of the research question maybe a recommendation for further study. Indeed, this was a first study and although gender was likely to be influential, this did not form a focus for this first study and a sample had been chosen to offer breadth of perception. Consequently, data was analysed with respect to these features.

However, although age had also been excluded as an issue from this study, and therefore would not be a category in the sampling, the length of headteacher service, or incumbency, was a contributing factor and was acknowledged as part of the sample. This related directly to the interview questions in the semi-structured interviews as well as providing a measure of analysis.

To summarise, sample selected was purposive to reflect a cross-section of primary headteachers that included maximum variation. This was intended to incorporate, and

indeed anticipate, opposing viewpoints and therefore facilitate a wide variation of responses.

3.8.2 Access and Position of Research

My access to the sample was managed through my professional role partly as a headteacher of a primary school and partly as researcher, therefore enabling access to a cluster of local headteachers. I acknowledged my role in the research, as although there was the element of convenience of locality in the sample, this impacted on the personal nature of the research, as the headteachers were local, and therefore this raised issues about the relationship between the researcher and the researched. This potential issue was acknowledged further in the discussion of the results alongside the recognised concern with regards to the interviewer effect when conducting interviews.

Further to this, I acknowledged my position in the research as an 'insider' through my role as a serving primary school headteacher. Floyd and Arthur (2012, p.4) defined an insider researcher as being:

> Being an insider means being embedded in a shared setting (Smyth and Holian 2008), emotionally connected to the research participants (Sikes 2008), with a 'feel for the game and the hidden rules' (Bourdieu 1988, 27).

Floyd and Arthur (2012) argued that each setting is unique, as each has a diverse sub-culture. Therefore, they claimed, there was an element of the researcher being both insider-outsider simultaneously within research. However, for this study, I placed myself as an insider researcher, as this reflected my knowledge of, and position within, these educational settings. Costley et al. (2010) referred to the shared understanding

and trust that was gained from conducting insider research. They reflected on the unique access that the researcher had to people and information which enhanced knowledge. For this study, my own knowledge as an headteacher was potentially influential in how the interviewees responded to questions of divulgent information. Whilst Costley et al. (2010) highlighted that this could result in a conflict of interest, lack of impartiality or bias, it was an aspect that, as researcher, I was keenly aware of and thus acknowledged as both a strength as well as a potential issue.

Jorgensen (1989, p.14) argued that insiders comprehend language and communicate meaning through their knowledge of situations that would not be possible as an outsider: ‘Insiders manage, manipulate and negotiate meanings in particular situations, intentionally and unintentionally obscuring, hiding or concealing these meanings further from the viewpoint of an outsider’. Although, as a serving headteacher, my research was from an insider standpoint, as, Jorgensen (1989) argued, it was possible to generate theoretical truths based upon realities of daily existence.

The respondents for the sample were identified through their role as primary headteachers in the West Midlands area. For Costley et al. (2010), the insider researcher’s most important aspect was their situatedness and context. My context as headteacher was acknowledged as part of my initial email, which also included a brief explanation of the study and their role in it should they wish to participate. The respondents who showed interest were then contacted via email to clarify that the interviews were anonymous, that they had the right to withdraw at any point and were

duly provided with an overview of the interview to enable them to consider the questions.

3.8.3 Ethics

Robson (2002) reflected on the importance of ethics and how this could be contrasted with morals. Both, he argued, were concerned with right and wrong actions that were taken. To elaborate further, Robson (2002, p.27) offered the following definitions '...ethics are usually taken as referring to general principles of what one ought to do whilst morals are usually taken as concerned with whether or not a specific act is consistent with accepted notions of what is right and wrong.'

This definition of ethics guided the research undertaken with regards to ethical considerations, many elements must be considered, especially due to the sensitive and potentially personal nature of the research, as it was drawing individual perceptions and experiences. In the management of the research, the BERA (2014) guidelines was followed. Alongside this, the University of Birmingham ethics form was reviewed, completed and agreed.

Underpinning this project was the BERA (2004) principles for ethical respect for all involved in the research. As recommended, all those involved in the research were fully informed of the process of which they were to be engaged. This included fully informing the participant of why their involvement was sought, how it was used and how and to whom it was reported (BERA, 2004).

As an insider researcher, it was recognised that the boundaries between the researcher and their personal and professional lives could become 'blurred' (Sikes and Potts, 2008, p.12). Indeed, as an insider researcher, fellow professionals were interviewed and their experiences analysed for the purpose of this study. Therefore, the ethical considerations regarding this were paramount. As Sikes and Potts (2012, p.12) succinctly reflected, 'regardless of the paths they take and the approaches they chose to use, their work should be, at all times and in all aspects, ethical.'

In further acknowledgement of this, Sikes and Potts (2008) highlighted how there could issues for insider researcher stemming from relationships already formed. These formed relationships Sikes and Potts (2018, p.7) argued could '…give rise to ethical dilemmas and, what is more, can provoke personal questioning and uncertainties, which maybe uncomfortable and difficult to deal with.'

This ethical consideration applied to both myself as interviewer and the headteachers as interviewees. Therefore, before conducting the interviews, the respondents were informed of the confidentiality of the interview and their anonymity as participants. As well as this they were informed of my professional role as a serving headteacher. They were also be informed of their right to withdraw from the interview process at any time.

3.8.4 Analysis of data

The research and conclusions of this study must be both valid and trustworthy. For validity, I had to prove that the findings were really about what they appeared to be about, in that the results and conclusions were able to answer the research questions

(Robson, 2002). To ensure this, several factors have been included in my research design. For example, to ensure validity of the semi structured interview, it was piloted and the planned questions reviewed. This ensured that the planned questions were effective in drawing the relevant information from the interviewee.

Transcript analysis following the interviews enabled respondent triangulation of data, thus enabling conclusions to be drawn out. This led to a thematic approach. However, there was recognised difficulty in analysing the data from an interview to ensure that, whist the interview was broken down and analysed in its categories and sections, a sense of holism from the interview was still maintained and the synergy from the interview as a whole was not lost (Cohen et al., 2007). Stages for interview analysis were offered from Cohen et al. (2007), which followed through, what they referred to as comparatively generalised stages that began with generating natural units of meaning that were then classified and categorised.

For this study, these stages were included in the analysis of the qualitative data gathered. Miles and Huberman (1994), however, provided a more detailed structure to follow in order to draw further analysis and conclusions from interview data. This was used to further explore and structure the results. These tactics, which included counting frequencies of occurrences, identifying and noting relations between variables and building a logical chain of occurrences, added depth of analysis to this study through data reduction which identified the key issues from the data. Alongside this a matrix through which the key themes were drawn up against the interviewee responses was analysed to establish whether there were patterns in the data. This structure of analysis enabled clarity to ensure validity and trustworthiness of results.

The research questions have been gathered from the literature and based upon recommendations from previous research undertaken by Crawford (2004, 2007a, 2007b). The recent data gathered by the National College and DFE also provided the elements of the research questions in regard to relevance and timeliness of the research.

In summary, the interpretivist knowledge gathered from my study was designed to provide understanding, rather than social action which would place it in the critical paradigm. Although, as previously highlighted, criticism has been directed at educational researchers who do not inform policy, this appears to rely heavily on positivist research, whereas Hammersley's (2002) argument highlighted how critical theory could alter the perception of the problem, or indeed theory, itself.

Another criticism levelled at researchers from Hillage et al.'s (1998) report was about the purpose of the research or, as was argued, the lack of purpose. However, justification of the research and the research paradigms used was centered on the evident statistics which revealed the difficulty schools were facing in recruiting headteachers. For example, the School Leadership Challenge 2022 (2016) reported that more than a 30% of all newly advertised primary school leadership jobs went unfilled in 2016. This was an evident problem that educational leaders have to face. As such, my research was intended to provide knowledge for understanding, albeit on a small scale.

Robson (2002) referred to generalisability and explained it as being the extent to which the findings of a study were more generally applicable outside the specific situation of the research. Although my own research will not be generalizable as it was a small-scale sample based upon the reflections of a cluster of headteachers, it could be relatable to an audience of professionals who wish to reflect on their own practice. Likewise, the conclusions drawn may provide messages for policy makers or, indeed, academics who are undertaking further research in the field. To disseminate the research, Hinton et al's (2011) D-Cubed dissemination framework will be used as guide to communicate the findings. The concept of engaged dissemination involves a planned process of understanding the potential audience. For the purpose of this study, the audience identified are serving headteachers and multi academy trust organisations. The engagement of this group has been possible through my role as my serving headteacher. The dissemination of the findings will be through distributing information, telling others about the project, others using the project outcomes, spreading and embedding the project outcomes, ongoing two-way process to bring about change (Hinton et al., 2011).

3.9 Summary

In this chapter, the overview of how the research has been conducted and subsequently analysed has been explained. My ontological position as researcher has been justified alongside my epistemological and methodological position in the context of the research. A summary of how the research was analysed with a view to provide further insight into the impact of emotions on headteachers has been presented.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings from the research have been presented. The aim was to use the research gathered to identify whether there was an emotional influence in managing headship, how this was managed and ultimately, how headteachers could be best supported in their role. The overarching Research Question 1 was reviewed first, with the results presented thematically using emergent themes supported by quotes from the semi-structured interviews. As previously highlighted, to maintain anonymity the participants were assigned alpha-numeric references from H1 to H20. Research Questions 1.1 to 1.4 concluded the findings and were presented as sub-questions.

Each further research sub-question was followed with an analysis and summary of the responses to provide a deeper understanding. To conclude, a thematic approach to the outcomes from the headteachers was drawn out and presented. The chapter concludes with an overall summary before moving to the analysis in the subsequent chapter.

4.2 Findings from the Overarching Research Question: *Is there an emotional impact in enacting headship?*

This draws on overall perceptions from primary headteachers to ascertain whether an emotional influence was perceived in enacting headship. For this, the following interview questions from the semi-structured interviews were asked (Appendix 1).

> Interview question 2:
>
> Now you are in the role, what do you find to be the most enjoyable aspects of headship? What are the least enjoyable aspects?
>
> Interview question 3:
>
> Could you tell me about the challenges you encounter through your role?
>
> Interview question 4:
>
> Is there an emotional impact of those challenges on you?

All twenty respondents strongly perceived that there was an emotional influence in enacting headship. Emerging themes were very evident in the core areas of emotional influence, with the headteachers' perceptions falling into three apparent themes as evident from the analysis. The themes each encompassed a specific area of emotional influence that was analysed accordingly and quotes which elaborated this were utilised. Contrasting opinions were sought. The main areas were pride, stress and anxiety.

4.2.1 Impact of the Emotion of Pride

The emotion of pride, for the purpose of these findings, was taken from Williams and DeStanos's (2008, p.1004) definition, 'Pride is a positive, self-conscious emotion arising from achievements that can be attributed to one's abilities or efforts.'

This referred to pride as a powerful emotion which provides a positive reaction to a specific achievement. This supports the findings as, for the purpose of this study, pride was derived from achievements that the headteachers described and specific outcomes which gave them positive emotions. Through the analysis of the transcripts, it became apparent that the majority of headteachers refer to pride, or in varying degree relate to the emotions derived from a sense of pride. For one headteacher, pride was derived from a sense of self-worth at doing a job with high moral standards:

> "If I can go home at the end of the day and think, I've done everything I can today, even when there's been difficulties or issues, I've treated people with courtesy and respect." (H14)

One headteacher referred to the emotion of pride directly, and acknowledged it as pivotal to their career choice, although linking it to a fear of failure if they attempted a different option:

> "It's that sense of pride, because if I'm honest, what else could I do?" (H4)

Whilst another response indicated the motivation to succeed:

> "I'm always very determined to do the best I can." (H17)

This was similar to another headteacher whose personal ambition to improve the school was high:

> “I’m here, I want to make this work. And it’s a bit of vanity, you know, I want it to be successful, I don’t want to see it fail. I’m doing the best I can.” (H15)

Many headteachers linked the sense of pride to the sense of achievement for students, which was more of an indirect reference, but they still took great pleasure in the outcome:

> “...because I try and make the school great for them, and if they can come to school happy and try to achieve that’s great for me.” (H1)

> “Drive to be successful, I’m learning, I can do it. A genuine belief that these kids need a champion for them who’s going to create something for them and make a difference.” (H15)

> “I thought, you know what, if I’m as good as I think I am, I’m going for it, so I came here, 24 years ago as a P.E teacher, and I’ve seen a total transformation, now the best school in R******, the fastest-growing school, the best SATs results. I’ve taken on over 47 children since September, it’s just growing and growing and growing.” (H7)

For others, this was described through responses from colleagues, parents or through community recognition:

> “And when people come in and say nice things. And the staff are great, you know, working with the staff, they’ll come back and they’ll say nice things.” (H8)

> “Being able to develop people, seeing the penny drop with people and seeing them as they become more skilled and proficient” (H14)

> “You can’t beat it on Sports Day, on high profile events when people come up to you and say what a brilliant school.” (H9)

> “…and with the assistant head we were a strong team, to be honest, and then we were really flying together, and there was a time, and we still feel it now at points, when you stand there and we’d say, ‘Are you trying to tell me that the bits are outstanding?’ because I’m a half glass full person, and I’d say ‘You know, I think I am’.” (H6)

Further analysis of the responses from the headteachers repeatedly shows that there was a powerful sense of pride in achieving success for pupils, developing their staff

team professionally and raising the status of their schools through external measures, whether through Ofsted inspections, sporting tournaments or through a drive to become an oversubscribed school. This emotional reward was a positive emotion, often described through ‘good days’, which help balance out the negative emotions which influence their experience of headship.

4.2.2 Impact of the Emotion of Stress

The operational definition, for the purpose of this study, was taken from Upadhaya’s definition (2017, p.33):

> Stress is a physical or emotional reaction / response to any kind of change which may be external, internal or both. External pressure for example can be due to job stress, competition, challenges or frequently changing government policies etc. Internal pressure is mainly due to negative thoughts, anxiety, and fear. There is an individual variation in stress response.

For the purpose of this study, this definition reviewed the external pressures which could be sources of stress as well as internal pressures linked to anxiety and fear. This correlated with this study as it combined the pressures and emotions which have been drawn from the findings.

Overwhelmingly, all twenty respondents referred to managing stressful emotions. They asserted that this was a major influence in enacting their role and one that they can be overwhelmed by. The following was a typical response describing how the day-to-day management of the school was difficult when combined with people’s expectation of the headteacher:

> “So it’s being bombarded by trivia, feeling people’s expectations of you, and when you don’t do what they think you should do, the harping and bitching, which you know goes on, and you just think “You come and try it fella, you come and sit here and you make the decisions because no matter what, you’re going to get stuff wrong.” It’s all about balance isn’t it? It’s what you’re doing all the time, and it’s the kind of, on the one hand the real variety of stuff, but you can lurch from the sublime to the ridiculous.” (H5)

Other responses describe the pressure that headteachers perceive and how it impacts emotionally:

> “There are moments when I go ‘Ah, no, this is madness’” (H2)

> “Your life was just work, I worked from seven in the morning till nine at night because there was always something to do. It had to be 24/7 because I was omnipresent in my little village school, I wasn’t switching off.” (H12)

> “You see, I can understand a head getting to the point when they get so stressed, they just walk out the door, I can see that and I can understand why people do that, especially if they’ve been beaten by a stick continually.” (H8)

> “That’s the damage it did to me, because in my last three years as head, I just crashed out.” (H10)

One headteacher referred to the overwhelming volume of information headteachers need to process and its impact on the levels of stress:

> “There’s a lack of capacity rather than a lack of competence, right, and people respond by being overwhelmed. There’s too much for them to take in and they respond to being overwhelmed by giving the impression of being incompetent and then they get stressed.” (H14)

Another headteacher listed the typical occurrences encountered which resulted in stress:

> “Staff incompetence. Staff absence. Kids grinding me down with the issues they bring in. Adults. Coming back after Easter we had three staff off Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and we just can’t get supply in.” (H15)

The following response contrasts the previous emotional rewards headteachers perceived from being a successful school in the community with the pressure to maintain that status and the community expectations of the headteacher:

> "You've got the children, then the parents, then the grandparents, then the community at large, it all depends on you. It's a big weight on your shoulders if you mess up." (H1)

> "I love it but then there's days when I do question my sanity. For the right person, if you're in it for the best interests of the children at heart and you're prepared to put the work in, but it's a fairly isolated position, with very little back up where there's lots of people who have an opinion of what you do, you're very public in terms of if somebody doesn't like you, you could be easily targeted. It's got a lot of downsides but then in a school like this you've got 250 upsides, you are making a difference." (H18)

The respondents cited many examples throughout the interviews of stressful situations that they faced, whether through task-based work load pressures or through managing difficult situations with parents or inspectors. In summary, it was undisputed that there was an emotional impact in their role through stress.

4.2.3 Impact of the Emotion of Anxiety

> Anxiety was a tense unsettling anticipation of a threatening but formless event: a feeling of uneasy suspense. It is a negative feeling so closely related to fear that in many circumstances the two terms are used interchangeably (Rachman, 2013, p.3)

The above quote has formed the operational definition of anxiety for this study. It emphasised the nervous tension experienced from fear of future events which are perceived to be negative, therefore the definition of anxiety supports the emotional impact described by headteachers in this study. The final emerging theme linking emotions was of anxiety. Through triangulation of data, this was a factor which

appeared in the majority of interviews. Headteachers typically described situations which resulted in them feeling anxious, or specifically referred to the emotion of fear whilst reflecting on the role of headship. This was particularly evident when the headteachers referred to their initial experience of headship.

The following responses describe the emotions prior to commencing their first headships:

> "Sleepless nights, thinking 'Oh my gosh, how do I do that?', and thinking so many unknowns when you take over, 'Will I know the passwords? What if the parents are difficult?'" (H2)
>
> "I didn't sleep the night before because I thought, 'Oh my God, this is my responsibility, it's not just the toilets or the staff, and it's all my responsibility. I remember a sense of dread.'" (H8)
>
> "I was scared witless. And I stood on the car park and I said 'This is mine, how frightening is that?' I looked around and thought, 'Gosh, if somebody falls, if somebody does something ...' all those things came to mind and I was really scared." (H4)
>
> "I got the headship then I went into panic, thinking, 'What have I done?' In terms of challenges here being overwhelming, a lot of them I just had no experience of, no experience." (H18)

Several headteachers also described the initial experiences of headship with anxiety:

> "I felt lost when I came in here, spent most of my time going, 'What do I do now?' I'd spent the summer worrying about the bigger picture, the school improvement plan, but until you're in you really don't know." (H9)
>
> "I think there's a huge difference between being a deputy and being a head in that all of a sudden the buck stops with you, and I think there's a huge shock when you suddenly come to that conclusion." (H13)
>
> "The decision will be mine, and that's a massive responsibility." (H18)

The typical responses above described the initial experiences of headship with anxiety, but also, there were examples whereby the headteachers described fear of failure in their current circumstances. For example:

> “I don’t know whether you ever get rid of self-doubt, I certainly don’t because you’re always questioning decisions and questioning why you’ve done something, whether you’ve made the right decision, so I don’t think self-doubt ever leaves you.” (H13)
>
> “I’m not one of those people who like to look silly, so I put on that face, ‘I’m fine with everything’, and when they’re (Local Authority) gone I think, ‘Oh my gosh I should have asked about ..., but I was too scared to ask.’” (H6)
>
> “One of the things of headteachers is that they are perfectionists and they are very thin-skinned, and I’ve been guilty of both those traits, as there is the outside criticism and being perceived as not being able to do the job by other people. That scares me.” (H6)

The response from one headteacher indicated that anxiety was centred on the fear of failing people:

> “And you’ve got, it’s almost a sacred trust, you’ve got people who depend on you, which can be quite a crushing burden to carry sometimes, that they depend on you. And the thing that worries me the most is failure – well not so much that − letting people down. If I let my kids and my staff down from my ineptitude or laziness or whatever, if I let them down, that’s what worries me the most.” (H14)
>
> “Things that worry me are things that affect the school and the responsibility I bear for the livelihood of fifty or so people. (H15)

For one headteacher, the anxiety came from the constant areas of responsibility that were difficult to manage:

> “It’s just constant little things and you’ve got to worry, you know, about meeting your health and safety guidelines, that’s the trouble with being a headteacher.” (H15)

Whilst the emotion of stress appears to be linked to overwhelming management of tasks and handling specific pressured situations, the emotion of anxiety appears anecdotally linked to the self-doubt of the headteacher and a lack of confidence in their ability to succeed in managing unknown situations.

4.2.4 Summary of overarching research question findings

This initial research question was designed to identify whether heads perceived an emotional impact through their role. There was a unanimous response of agreement from which it was then possible to draw the three key elements from the transcripts. There are evidently both positive and negative impacts of pride, anxiety and stress. From this, the additional research questions probe further to understand how these emotions are both successfully and unsuccessfully managed.

4.3 Findings from Research Question 1.1: *What do headteachers perceive to be the major sources of emotional investment in both the emotional costs and rewards of the role?*

This research question sought to delve further into the emotional impacts of headship to identify what are the influencing factors which cause the emotional costs and rewards. To gain this information, the following questions were used in the interview:

Interview Question 2: Now you are in the role, what do you find to be the most enjoyable aspects of headship? What are the least enjoyable aspects?

Interview Question 3: Could you tell me about the challenges you encounter through your role?

The findings were divided into the emotional rewards of the role and the emotional costs. Emerging themes were again very evident in the core areas of emotional

reward. The areas were analysed and segmented into core themes for the emotional rewards of the role. These were children, power and community. This is contrasted with the perceived emotional costs of the role, the emerging themes being people, Ofsted, managing policy and change, and visibility accountability and crisis management.

4.3.1 Review of the Emotional Rewards

There were strong emerging themes linking the rewards of headship. With two exceptions, the respondents referred directly to the rewards of working with children and the sense of fulfilment that this brought. Whilst a small number of headteachers also referred to the development of staff through facilitating additional training, providing pastoral support or professional opportunities, this was not an emerging theme. The sense of personal power to make changes was, however, a strong emerging theme when there was personal success. Although it wasn't a conclusive response, a final emerging theme was the achievement of the school through external measures or through a sense of community. Each theme was addressed in turn with examples of quotes from headteachers for illustration.

4.3.1.1 The Emotional Reward of Investment in Children

When asked what they perceived to be the emotional rewards of the role, 18 out of 20 headteachers responded that children were the greatest emotional rewards. For one headteacher, their position enabled them to provide children with experiences which enrich them was the emotional reward. The following headteacher's response describes this:

> “Giving the children opportunities as well, we’ve just done a canoeing trip and we’re planning a trip to London, so it’s giving children opportunities which they otherwise may not have.” (H2)

For the vast majority, watching children achieve and learn was perceived to be a source of great emotional reward. Typical responses were:

> “Seeing the children achieving, that’s the main bit, I want to see the buzz of the children and see how they’ll react.” (H1) “Oh, it’s always something well taught, when it just clicks with the kids, or stupid things like when they’re doing well at their SATs.” (H10)
>
> “The children. It’s the children, without a shadow of a doubt, the potential they have, the thirst and ambitions.” (H8)
>
> “It’s when they get it, oh, I don’t know, the ‘Hello Miss’ in the corridor. I like the staff too but it’s the children.” (H5)
>
> “Things centred around the kids, you know, seeing kids achieve, seeing kids being happy, seeing teachers teach in a way that really engages kids as genuine partners in learning.” (H14)

Two headteachers also recounted how their ambition was to make the school as good as possible for the children:

> “We’re working to support each other for the benefit of the children.” (H7)
>
> “I spoke to a pupil today about what was worrying her and she said this is the best school in the world, she’s seen other schools on television and they were nothing like this one. She was a looked-after girl with lots of issues and she felt safe here. And I think that’s what it’s about really.” (H6)

Eighteen out of the 20 headteachers interviewed gave a response typical of the responses above when they said that the strongest motivation for the role and the source of the greatest emotional reward was the children.

4.3.1.2 Review of the Emotional Rewards through power to make changes

Although no headteacher defined their experience and sense of fulfilment as 'power', in analysis, it is the source of emotional reward and pride through the ability to make a difference and an impact. This was not as prominent in the responses as the investment in the children, but the quotes below highlight the impact.

One headteacher referred directly to the element of control that a headteacher has:

> "I'd rather be in control of my own destiny than be controlled by somebody else. So, the one thing about being a headteacher is that you do have, not just an illusion of control, but a significant amount of control." (H14)

For other headteachers, it was the ability to make changes in school:

> "I can affect change; I can make a difference." (H18)
>
> "Just doing new ideas as well, like we've just had an awards grant and we can make changes. Being able to put in a new curriculum." (H2)

Whilst the following quotes described the power of the headteacher, this is also linked to the previous emotion of fear:

> "It's up to you, as head. It's true though, isn't it?" (H2)
>
> "As headteacher, you can make a difference to the whole lot, and part of me was like, yeah right, but you can, especially if you get the ethos right in school." (H8)

Although the following headteachers did not quote power as a source of emotional reward, the responses clearly depict the sense of pleasure derived from the ability to change the organisation:

> “I like the challenge, being the one who makes the decision.” (H9)
>
> “You get a taste for wanting to do things that perhaps you can’t do as an ordinary teacher, and influence things to a greater degree.” (H13)

Although no headteacher specifically defined themselves as powerful, the anecdotal responses described the ability to influence and change how the school is running, therefore giving the headteacher a sense of power. Whilst this was also evident as the source of fear, it clearly held positive influences as well for several headteachers. It was also possible to link this sense of power to the pressure of accountability within the emotional cost of anxiety and stress.

4.3.1.3 The Emotional Rewards through impact on the community

Placing the school as a successful hub in the community was a factor for headteachers which, when linked to the school’s achievements, gave them a positive impact.

One headteacher, who lived locally to the school, described this specifically:

> “I’m more emotionally attached now, it’s a bit of a case of, I suppose because I’m local, the public bit, that sense of pride.” (H4)

Another headteacher clearly perceived himself as a public figure and the sense of community pride is expressed:

> “I think I got my finger on the pulse very early, what the town needed. I want them to be proud of it. I wanted everybody to be successful and proud, I’ve lived here for 50 years, I’ve taught the parents of many of the kids who are here now and I probably went to school with their grandparents. This school will be the best having been the worst, and it’ll stay the best.” (H11)

For other headteachers, the satisfaction that the school is recognised publicly was a source of emotional reward:

> "We achieve now, the whole school." (H6)
>
> "If you've got the kudos in the school, and people know who you are and have confidence in you it transforms to the staff, the school and parents have confidence in you. That's why we're so popular, we exude that ethos and it has enabled the school to move forward." (H1)
>
> "When people say 'Oh, I know such and such and their child comes here and they're happy, it makes a difference and you think actually, that's nice isn't it." (H9)

For one headteacher, parental choice in the school was a contributing factor:

> "The thing is, a lot of parents around here could afford the private school but they choose not to, so that's great." (H3)

The above sample of quotes indicated how headteachers perceived the strength of the school in the community and, whilst this also appeared as a source of emotional cost when linked to the pressure of responsibility and public stature of the role, which will be discussed further, when the school was perceived to be successful it was a definite source of emotional reward.

4.3.1.4 Summary of the Emotional Rewards of Headship

Whilst the three main themes emerging from the positive emotional investment were the children, power and community, the overarching theme, however, was working with children. Each respondent perceived that children were the greatest source of emotional investment and although the majority were also able to give examples of emotional rewards from the power of decision making and the strength of the school in the community, they referred to children first. Alongside the three core themes

derived from the data, there were several references to the pleasure derived from developing staff members professionally:

> "Trying to develop the staff, seeing young teachers suddenly understand that teaching isn't about them, teaching isn't about performance. It's people, seeing people develop that gives me my greatest pleasure." (H14)

> "Empowering the staff to be stronger, giving them a sense of self-worth. It's about building people, it's great working with them." (H15)

In addition, a reference to the financial reward of the role made by one headteacher stating that it paid the mortgage. Another headteacher linked the financial reward with the fear of failure:

> "It's the pressure, you know, you're thinking 'I can't afford to lose my job, what if Ofsted come in, we're scuppered, we've had it and it will reflect on me?'" (H15)

However, these were insignificant negatives when compared to the overwhelming positive responses to the core themes of children, power and community.

4.3.2 Review of the Emotional Costs

Whilst all 20 of the headteachers, when asked, were able to provide examples of how they enjoyed the emotional rewards of the role, all 20 spoke far more freely and in greater detail of the emotional cost of the role. The question brought about more responses than the question on the emotional rewards of the role. Analysis appeared to demonstrate that the emotional cost, sourced from six main themes, was evident in the vast majority of interviewees. There were additional unique situations which were mentioned, but it was possible to reduce the information to the six categories. These sources of emotional cost were staffing, parents, Ofsted, demands and changing

policy, lack of personal praise and visible accountability of headship. Each theme was further explored.

4.3.2.1 The Emotional Costs of managing people

Either the management of staff or the interaction with parents was significant in the responses, with typical comments below. One headteacher recounted a conversation with a colleague prior to taking up her first headship, and at that point, her greatest concern was staff management:

> "There's the sudden staff management thing. And I remember someone saying to me, what's your worst worry, and I said 'Staffing', and they said 'Well, if it isn't you're probably doing something wrong.' And I think that's true, until you can get your right team in. I think staffing is a huge thing." (H2)

Several headteachers commented on the difficult situations they faced when following disciplinary procedures or management of absence with staff:

> "HR is my biggest bugbear. I have a secretary down at the moment, there's no way she's coming back, her husband will openly admit it, but I have to have an occupational report and another report, and another report. And where are we now, February? So I'm a man, woman, down and still I can't sack her, which is what I want to do on capability, on grounds of ill health, and I'm thinking, 'Why is everything taking so long" (H11)

> "And I find the pull going through capability, and you've got to do it quicker and quicker, and balancing that with the human effect. I know this person; they're paying a mortgage." (H8)

> "We'd been through six disciplinaries, lots of suspensions, lots of issues, really draining. I get cold sweats when I think about it." (H16)

Managing staff redundancy was also a cause of emotional cost:

> "Redundancy is causing me concern because I'm going to come under a massive amount of criticism when I'm trying to do the best I can, I find

that hard. It's also a completely new thing for me, sitting in redundancy meetings being fired questions." (H18)

The following response by a headteacher depicted the pressure that is felt when liaising with parents, either in support:

"We had a parent in tears because they hadn't got a place at the school so you're trying to comfort them. We had a parent in tears because she's found her children are unmanageable, so you have to provide parenting skills. You have to do an awful lot as well as educate the children, it's the whole social worker." (H2)

...or when managing confrontation:

"Three years of people who knew their rights, constant arguments and the Prep school next door sowing the seeds of discontent. Every week there was someone in to complain or somebody going to have a look at the school next door." (H12)

"Issues with parents, that's my biggest one, because they, I call them the royal They, got what they wanted last time through bullying, so that's their understanding of what to do. They have an awful lot of power, and with social media it's out there and it sticks." (H18)

One headteacher recounted prior experiences where he had encounters with parents which were another source of emotional cost through the fear of physical violence:

"I've been scared by parents who have threatened to come with baseball bats and get me. You know I've had to come to school and watch myself in the car park because they've said they were going to come and get me." (H14)

Headteachers also described the responsibility in ensuring staff well-being and the emotional cost that this can entail:

"In a small school, you can't really have difficult members of staff. We had one who was on medication, and that was a worry because you had to look after her welfare, make sure she didn't do anything to harm herself because she was at risk, so as a head, as well as the children you've got all the staff to worry about too." (H2)

> "Staffing at school, making sure they're happy and have got what they need to do it properly. And when they're ill it worries me, and when they're not happy, it worries me." (H1)
>
> "That's why I come in at six, so I can spend a degree of time doing what I need to do for me, because the rest of the time you're there for everyone else." (H0)

For one headteacher, ensuring that the staff wellbeing was high was at an emotional cost to themselves they prioritised support the staff team:

> "It's like containing it for the staff to keep them going, like 'Yeah!' Lots of praise. Constantly, like, 'What pressure do I need to absorb from everyone else?" (H15)

Managing people, whether staff or parents, was a predominant theme in the responses. Headteachers often referred to the challenges of managing difficult staff or parents, whether through management of absence or capability. Heads also appear to take on the responsibility for staff well-being, with several referring to the responsibility of ensuring that their staff were safe and happy.

4.3.2.2 The Emotional Cost of Ofsted

The vast majority of headteachers referred to the Ofsted inspection process during the interview. This was invariably linked to a negative sense of pressure and a source of emotional cost.

The following quotes are from headteachers in post in a school previously judged outstanding, who described the challenge of maintaining the 'outstanding' judgement:

> "Are we as good as we could be? The threat of Ofsted, but it's an outstanding school, so the first challenge is to be an outstanding school

> and how am I going to fare doing that? Everything is far from outstanding at all times." (H9)
>
> "I think the pressures here are still there but this being an outstanding school, the pressure to keep it there is the pressure. And the most worrying bit about that is the lack of control because I know what we do here is a cut above but I also know it very much depends on who we get that depends on the outcome of the inspection. So, to me the system isn't clear cut." (H16)

Typically, headteachers described the perceived emotional costs in waiting for an Ofsted inspection. The following quotes are typical:

> "I'm petrified of Ofsted. We're massively overdue so we're just waiting." (H3) "With the looming Ofsted and that, at the moment that is a real challenge, we just want it over with and ensuring everything is up to date. At the moment, we all feel the pressure of it." (H2)
>
> "Ofsted are so data driven and then with no notice inspections you have a great big sword of Damocles hanging over your head and if you don't get good you go into requires improvement." (H1)
>
> "Ofsted itself is just a constant build up and build up and build up and who do they think they are anyway, coming into schools and judging in a day." (H11)
>
> "We've got to provide and education and we're going to get beaten by the Ofsted stick." (H18)

Almost all head teachers referred to Ofsted at some point during the interview. Headteachers who mentioned Ofsted did so with negative connotations. Headteachers described awaiting the inspection visit with fear or with dread. This was regardless of what Ofsted category their school was placed in. Whilst there were no positive references to headteachers in regard to waiting for the next inspection, one headteacher did make reference to a previous positive experience of inspection when in post as a deputy headteacher:

> "We went through a really successful inspection in the previous school, so I took a lot of confidence in that, but you weren't on your own." (H9)

However, the headteacher subsequently emphasised the pressure of waiting for an inspection in the role of headteacher.

For another headteacher, the challenge and 'buzz' of an inspection was an element he sought to promote in school:

> "I've always enjoyed inspections, good intellectual challenge, because I like being in the heat of battle, it's when you've got time to reflect you worry, but once you're active you don't give a monkey's, I love it, love the challenge, trying to outflank the buggers, you know, it's really, it's good fun. I always stress inspections as being good fun, because they are, actually." (H14)

4.3.2.3 The Emotional Cost of Policy and Inspection

Separate to the specific mention of Ofsted, another core theme which emerged from the data was the challenge of keeping up to date with changing policy in addition to changing government and local authority audit and inspection materials. Headteachers perceived the cost of emotional influence in managing these changes and through the challenge of keeping themselves and their schools up to date.

A typical response from headteachers who felt the pressure of keeping themselves up to date is as follows:

> "Trying to keep up with government changes, especially at the moment, new Ofsted, new ideas, new EYFS, so it's having time to make sure you can keep up to date with training." (H2)
>
> "The goal posts aren't just moving, they're completely changing." (H2)

Another headteacher, new to the post, articulated how all headteachers, experienced or new, were in a similar position as everything had changed for everyone:

> “We’re all in the same boat, with people who’ve been in the boat for years and the ones who are completely new to this, it’s all new anyway and we’re shooting in the dark, there isn’t anyone of us who isn’t.” (H18)

For other headteachers, the external demands from the local authority and agencies, and adopting new policies were overwhelming for them:

> “You’ve got so much to know; finance, admin, safeguarding. You can’t know it all.” (H2)
>
> “Political pressure, not being able to affect enough change outside politics to do what we want.” (H15)
>
> “But there are some days when you have HMI, local authority, blah-di-blah, and everyone wants something and they come in and they’ll say ‘Why haven’t you done ..?’ and I’ll say ‘Because I’ve done everything you asked me to, so sometimes there just aren’t enough days in the week.”(H8)

Responses from headteachers evidently depict that managing the changing administrative policies, which impact on external audits and inspections, is a challenge for the majority of them. This is an evident source of emotional cost.

4.3.2.4 The Emotional Cost of Visible Accountability/ Leading Crisis Management

The final theme to emerge from the question on sources of emotional cost, was the pressure headteachers perceived from being visibly accountable in the role, especially through both crisis and low-level decision making during the day-to-day management of a school.

From the transcripts, this was clearly linked to the high standard of ability and attitude that they perceive others seek in them. The following headteacher shared his experience as the following:

> "For me, one of the biggest things, being truthful, is being something to everyone. Because if you are visible, that role model angle, you've got to do the right thing all the time, so if you do something you've got to be the best, so if I do an assembly or a bit of teaching you've got to be almost unassailable on every front." (H9)

For other headteachers, having to respond to the needs of the staff, parents and pupils at all times was emotionally exhausting:

> "Headship did and can consume me. I can feel it sometimes creeping in. It's easy before you know it to do this 'one last email', and before you know it it's ten o'clock every night, which is madness." (H16)
>
> "Different people, on different occasions at different times, we all acknowledge that it's a tough job emotionally, and people I talk to are lonely enough to acknowledge that." (H14)
>
> "That's one of the biggest emotional burdens, because if someone brings something to your door, that's the biggest thing in their life, but she, he, is one of only seven or eight for you, and I think the flow of information is exhausting." (H9)

The role of the headteacher as decision maker in times of challenge or crisis situations was also a cause of emotional cost:

> "Crisis management was difficult, looking after the needs to the staff, everybody." (H6)

The unpredictability of the role and the expectations of others appear to be summarised from the above quotes, which were typical responses. This, headteachers responded, was a great challenge of the role and carried an emotional cost.

4.3.3 Summary of research questions

This research question was designed to find out the sources perceived by headteachers to provide emotional rewards and emotional costs. The themes derived from emotional reward were three core themes of children, power and community. In contrast, there were four themes regarding emotional cost, but the content of each theme was much greater as respondents invariably talked in greater length and at greater depth on the emotional challenges and the cost of the role. In contrast to the rewards of the role, the challenge of managing adults, whether staff or parents, was a strong theme with many different examples and anecdotes provided. Alongside this, the fast changes in external influences, in inspection, bureaucracy and accountability constituted a strong theme from the interviews which heads found extremely challenging.

Although the core categories for emotional cost are listed above, another subtheme which did arise was the emotional impact of managing difficult Child Protection cases, which are harrowing. One headteacher shared her experiences:

> "We have a large cohort that are on Child Protection, Child in Need, so we've got that, plus you get to know all the emotional needs of the staff, and at times you feel like an emotional sponge that can't be wrung out because you can't share it with anyone, because everything comes with confidentiality, which is quite right. Sometimes all you want to do is cry. Or hit something." (H8)

> "I think Child Protection, all the issues around there, nothing prepares you for it, because you sit in a conference and you hear what happened to those children, and I defy anyone not to be affected because you just can't. And there's an emotional toll in that." (H8)

4.4 Further Findings from Research Question 1; *If so, to what extent are headteachers managing the emotional demands and how are they being most effectively supported?*

Research Questions 1.1 to 1.3 are set out to summarise the findings from Research Question 1, to now seek to identify the sources of support and the changing impact of headship throughout their career. Further to this will also be the most and least effective management strategies for emotional demands and the most effective support methods.

4.4.1 Findings from Research Question *1.2; What are the coping strategies used most effectively by headteachers to manage the emotional impact of the role including self-management of emotions?*

This question was derived to see how headteachers cope with the emotional influence of the role. This is important in ascertaining how headteachers employ strategies to cope with the emotional cost of the role as they evidently have a negative influence. The 20 headteachers in this study were asked the following question in the interview:

> Interview Question 5: How do you manage those emotional impacts?

This interview question was posed to all respondents and the headteachers were all able to describe their methods of managing the emotional impacts. Not all were

successful methods of coping. Hence, the two main themes which emerged are Coping and Not Coping. Each theme is broken into sub-themes for further analysis.

4.4.2 The Outcomes of Headteachers Not Coping with Emotional Cost

The first area for analysis is where headteachers do not cope with the effects of emotional cost. This theme was further broken down into subthemes of insomnia, illness and a negative work life balance.

4.4.2.1 Insomnia as an outcome of Not Coping

The first theme to emerge from the data was insomnia. Headteachers typically described difficulty sleeping, or waking in the night, and perceived these to be a result of stress or fear through their role.

> "I can see why people don't have good sleep, because your brain is full of everything, and I'm quite good at shutting everything off but I'll wake in the middle of the night and get up and I'll put the sport on and watch it for an hour, it relaxes me again. That is out there. And it's a sign of stress, I mean, I don't think I get stressed as a person but clearly I must do… I keep a little pad by the side of the bed and I write little notes to myself, that's not right, that's not right at all." (H11)

> "It affects my sleeping more than anything, so I try and rest when I can." (H9)

One headteacher described how she clearly struggled with sleep and insomnia explained as follows:

> "I have weeks where I can't sleep but I tend to sleep too much, rather than too little. So, at the weekends, if I'm not coming in, which is most weekends at the moment, I will just sleep for those two days, which is not very good is it?" (H3) However, for one headteacher sleep was not affected as he was so exhausted from the role:

> "Sleep? I'm absolutely knackered, I'm chin strapped by the end of it!" (H15)

4.4.2.2 Illness as an outcome of Not Coping

One head recounted how she looked back at a photograph taken of herself after an extremely challenging period at school:

> "On the first day of the holidays we went to Alton Towers and I look at the pictures and see myself and I looked so ill." (H4)

Whilst several headteachers recounted health problems as depicted below by one headteacher:

> "I sleep much less in term time and I have health problems." (H7)

Other headteachers described this in more detail, explaining that, whilst they would send home staff members if they were ill, they felt it difficult to leave the school themselves. Typical responses were summarised by the headteachers below:

> "That's why heads tend to drive themselves into the ground, because they know that if they're ill, the school stops, which is why heads tend to say 'I'm all right, I can cope' when really they should go home." (H10)

> "Well, I've had a really bad week and I came in when I was ill, had the Thursday off and I shouldn't have come in but came back on Friday because I had lesson obs." (H14)

One headteacher shared a more vivid account of mental illness through stress, which resulted in her walking out of school:

> "It was a Friday. I just couldn't face it any more. I felt like I couldn't deal with it, so I just got up and walked out. Had a breakdown I suppose. I took the Monday off then they had me back in by the Tuesday." (H20)

4.4.2.3 Work-life balance as an outcome of Not Coping

One method of coping, which is ineffectual for well-being, is creating a negative work-life balance. Headteachers who were under workload pressure described how they would work long hours and through weekends to cope. Typical responses include the following:

> "Basically, I just work. So, I haven't got a good work-life balance at all. I'm here a lot. I work Saturdays, I work Sundays and I'm here holidays and that. It's not great. It's not great but it gets it done." (H3)
>
> "I get in here for six in the morning, I go home at five, and I do that because I have a young family." (H15)
>
> "It's work-life balance. My wife often tells me how many hours I've worked. A few weeks ago, she told me I'd worked a 76-hour week, that's not work life balance." (H1)

However, in contrast, one headteacher perceived that he coped well with work-life balance:

> "I do believe that some headteachers use their workload as an excuse. I do choose to come in early, I'm in here at 7:30, and I can't tell you how much work I get done in that time. I generally leave by five and I don't take work home and I don't work weekends and I think, 'If you can't get it done in those ten hours then sort your life out!'" (H11)

Another headteacher recognised that long hours were an emotional cost and specifically tried to manage this:

> "I've known heads work till two, three in the morning and they can't make a decision, and I've always vowed I'll never be like that, there'd be a cut-off time because then you can't function." (H8)

Likewise, another headteacher had deliberate strategies to ensure that he didn't overwhelm himself.

> "I try and leave it here or I'll think, 'I'll work Saturday afternoon and try and do it', then I'll switch off, otherwise it overruns into your daily life, when you're with your kids. It can flare but it depends what you're dealing with at a certain time." (H9)

One headteacher described how he had learnt from previous experience in headship to manage his work-life balance:

> "Last time I worked myself silly. I barely saw my children. At the end of it I nearly burned myself out, and no one thanked me for doing it. So now I think I'll do the best I can, I'll work as hard as I can and I'll keep a work-life balance and if people are unhappy, fine, I'll go. But I'm not willing to compromise life with what people won't appreciate anyway. (H16)

4.4.3 Summary of Outcomes of Not Coping

Following on from the analysis of the emotional impact of headship to the sources of emotional cost, it is less surprising that headteachers do not always cope with the situations and the challenges that they clearly described. The themes of insomnia, illness and negative work-life balance are evident outcomes of how headteachers do not cope with the role.

4.4.4 Coping Mechanisms to manage the Emotional Impact of Headship

Counteracting the insomnia, illness and work-life balance, are the situations described where headteachers do cope. When asked, although headteachers gave examples of the negative emotional impacts, they also clearly articulated methods that they employed which successfully enabled them to manage. These, once again, are grouped into themes which emerged from the data as exercise, socialising, compartmentalising and the very strong theme of self-management of emotions.

4.4.4.1 Exercise as a Coping Strategy

When asked how they cope with the emotional impact of headship, the majority of headteachers listed exercise as one of the most important relaxing strategies.

A headteacher described how she used exercise as a method to help her cope emotionally:

> "I just go for a swim, I find the first four or five lengths, everything around school is just mulling over, and then you can't think about anything, and then you just swim." (H8)
>
> "I go to the gym every day, for my clarity." (H18)

Whilst this was a typical response detailing the calming effects of exercise, one headteacher used exercise through music:

> "I played in a brass band, I sat in the back with this tuba breathing deeply like yoga exercises, and that helped me a lot." (H12)

For another, cycling was the coping mechanism as it focused him on endurance:

> "Think I just endured. I used to cycle every day. I do less now but I used to find that exercise definitely helped. But I'm a very keen cyclist and one of the things with long distance cycling, as you're to-ing and fro-ing, is you have to endure pain. And what you have to understand sometimes in this job, is if you want to create anything, you have to endure pain. And it's your capacity to endure, at the same time as trying to learn as a real key point. I wouldn't be here now, if I wasn't like an old punchy boxer. I've taken my beatings but I keep coming back for more. And eventually you learn." (H14)

Opting to exercise as a coping mechanism appears to be an extremely popular and effective method of managing the role of headship and was evident in the majority of headteacher interviews.

4.4.4.2 Socialising as a Coping Strategy

Again, another popular method of coping was socialising with others, whether family or friends:

> "When I get home, I've got stuff I can do, I can play golf, I can go horse racing with other heads, funnily enough we have this law that we can only have 20 minutes work talk in the car then work-schmurk. End of. We don't talk about it again." (H11)
>
> "I've got a friend who's a teacher and the message, 'Pub', works quite well." (H8)
>
> "I make sure I spend time with my children. Weekends, I keep for my girls." (H16)

4.4.4.3 Self-management of emotions as a Coping Strategy

Whilst headteachers identify exercise and socialising as effective coping mechanisms when out of school, what appear to be the strongest coping mechanisms for headteachers whilst managing the school day, is the self-management of emotions, which is linked to the ability to compartmentalise and maintain a perspective on events and circumstances as they arose throughout the day.

Headteachers often referred to the ability to keep in perspective what could be perceived as a crisis or the build-up of stressful situations, in order to manage them effectively. This enabled the headteachers to maintain a state of calm and supported their ability to relax when away from the situations. Typical responses were as follows:

> "I'm pretty good at compartmentalising my life, so literally, when I get in my car and drive home, I can forget about most things." (H11)
>
> "I've got a long commute in, an hour to get my head around what I've got coming up in the day and then an hour switching off on my way home." (H16)

> “I’m happy with the good and the bad because I’ve got a very analytical mind, so therefore I can dissect it down. If something is worrying me, I can think, ‘Right, what’s the main cause of this, why am I worrying about it now?’” (H1)

However, as previously explored, the role of the headteacher also brought great emotional cost through the both the expectations the headteachers have for themselves, and also from the perceptions of the role of the headteacher by others. Headteachers perceived that they required great levels of self-control and this, in turn, required the self-management of emotions.

> “I’m a really resilient character. I’m quite pragmatic about a lot of stuff. But I’m a stress eater, my BMI is way too high. Put music on, so if I’m struggling in the morning I listen to music. I can grab a coffee; I can go have a laugh.” (H15)

One headteacher described the extreme level of self-control she required to conduct her role, perceiving that she adopted a new persona when she assumed the role:

> “I leave the real me at the door. I’m very sensitive, I haven’t got a lot of confidence yet I can come in a do the leadership day, where I had to sit in front of all those headteachers and speak and I can do that if I’m in professional mode. I can do lots of things in professional mode that I can’t do in real life.” (H6)

The requirement for a level of emotional intelligence was highlighted by one headteacher:

> “Well I think, to be quite honest, the job requires an immense amount of emotional intelligence, most of which I ain’t got in that sense, in terms of intra-personal rather than inter-personal intelligence. There’s the two differences, you got to have the inter-personal intelligence and you’ve also got the intra-personal intelligence, haven’t you?” (H14)

When analysing their leadership behaviour, almost all headteachers described how they ensured that their professional attitude and behaviour did not always relate to their true emotions at all time:

> "That's one of the biggest challenges, when you come in on a Monday morning and feel as crap as the next person, but it's almost as if you're not allowed to show that. It's acting with bells on." (H9)
>
> "I'd get here at 8 and have to put on a professional face which was 'I'm here, I can cope, I'm smiling.'" (H6)
>
> "You constantly have to adjust who you are and remain relentlessly cheerful and no matter what, how you're feeling inside and fed up with people you are, you can't let them know." (H5)
>
> "Trying to give the impression that the swan on the water is all fine." (H15)

This was further clarified by one headteacher who described what he perceived would happen if he let his true feelings be evident:

> "It makes me analyse my own emotional intelligence. I think it's quite a good skill to have as a head because when you're crumbling underneath you need to be seen to remain calm and together. Otherwise there would be panic through the school. It's how you set the emotional tone, the emotional ethos." (H9)

For many headteachers, they had to appear stronger emotionally than they perceived themselves in reality, or whilst at home:

> "Actually, as a head, there's a human cost as well, but you're supposed to be devoid of that, you know, cut off your human-ness. Well I don't know many people who can, I find that difficult." (H8)
>
> "I'm hopeless in real life, I cry at the slightest thing, but I toughen up here, you relate to it in a different way." (H5)

Another headteacher described how he controls his emotions to give the staff the support that they required:

> "I guess with me, I have words with myself; 'Be a leader, be a leader'. It's when you feel under pressure and they need a leader, so I say 'Go on then, be a headteacher'. I often say that to myself, 'Go on, be a headteacher.'" (H15)

One headteacher reflected that he perceived his lack of ability to self-manage his emotions and maintain a sense of perspective as reason why he struggled in his career as a headteacher:

> "I just think it was personal weakness, I was so driven that I couldn't, you know, I had this thing, where I came from, what I wanted to do, that I didn't see things compartmentally. So, in fact it was just a personality trait, it just wasn't suited to me personally." (H12)

Headteachers perceived as essential their own ability to control fear and stress, to 'step up' to the role of headship and then the self-control to compartmentalise and manage the overwhelming stresses throughout the day to keep a perspective.

4.4.5 Summary of Outcomes of Not Coping and Coping Strategies

Whilst the evident areas of insomnia and ill health along with negative work-life balance in which headteachers do not cope with the pressures are inhibiting, they appear to balance these out with coping mechanisms of exercise and socialising. The self-management of emotions is perceived evident in enabling headteachers to complete the day-today role of the headteacher.

However, two headteachers also described how they used prescribed medication to cope with the emotional costs of the role:

> "I'm on tablets to help me cope, you know, just to keep things under control. Half the heads I know are on them too." (H20)

> "I've had depression, anxiety, stress in my third and fourth year, so I had lots of time off and I'm on lots of tablets, because that sort of thing is recurrent, well not recurrent, underneath, so that always makes me doubt myself." (H3)

4.5 Findings from Research Question 1.3; *What sources of support or training have headteachers received which have supported them in the emotional management of their role?*

This sub-question was designed to ascertain what external sources of support were utilised by headteachers which they have drawn upon to enable them to cope.

From the interview schedule, the following question was asked of the 20 headteachers:

Interview question 6: *Who supports you in your role?*

Interview question 7: *Can you recall any previous training or support that you have received which has helped prepare you for dealing and coping with the emotional aspect of headship?*

4.5.1 External Support Strategies which headteachers utilise

The external support that headteachers drew upon appeared to fall into four themes of family, colleagues, networks of headteachers and, to a lesser degree, the local authority support.

4.5.1.1 Family as an External Support Mechanism

Having family members at home, someone to either share emotional burdens with, or someone who has their wellbeing in mind, was the greatest external support.

> "I switch off when I go home. My husband's not a teacher and he doesn't like talking about work, but if I've had a bad day and I go home and rant it off, he will listen to me for a few minutes and then go, 'OK, enough, have a glass of wine.'" (H2)

> "I have a very supportive partner who knows if I'm stressed, knows how to deal with the pressures, coming from an NHS background, and she knows when I have to stop work, and she's very forceful about it, she makes me." (H1)

4.5.1.2 Network of Headteachers as an External Support Mechanism

Many headteachers described how they relied on the support of their network of headteachers, or friends who were headteachers to support and guide them in their role. Many sought the advice of these headteachers when in need of professional support.

> "It's important to have those other heads to confide in if you need to get something off your chest. They ask my advice, I ask theirs." (H11)

> "Having the other heads to phone makes a difference, I've got a network, which makes a massive difference." (H3)

> "You can share your problems with other heads, things like the budget or staffing." (H1)

> "They will help you; they are my biggest source of support I think, the local heads, in terms of 'Oh God, this has just happened, what are we going to do about it?'" (H18)

For one headteacher, who felt the support of other colleagues profoundly, it was the other headteachers that she would rely on if she was in great need:

> "I went to the new headteachers' briefing last year and they were OK in terms of giving me information. The only good thing to come out of there was actually getting to know some of the other headteachers, and there's a couple I go and visit regularly. And we get together and have a coffee and we just talk, and that's the most valuable thing. And knowing that there's someone there if I panic." (H6)

Headteachers also recalled how they contacted previous headteachers for support:

> "I speak to my last boss, I offload or rant. Not that I need him to come and say I'm doing a great job, but he can say 'Yeah, it's hard isn't it?' I go and meet another head on my way home, have a chat about business or not. That's OK." (H15)

In an extreme case, one headteacher recounted how a headteacher had greatly supported him through a difficult time:

> "There were a couple of mornings when I just sat in a car park on my way to work and phoned my previous head, who was great and said. 'You can't go in, this is horrendous!' And on one occasion he came to see me in the car park and on the other occasion I went to see him before I went in. I think on one occasion I phoned in sick and went home. I came close to ditching the profession altogether. I didn't know who I was." (H16)

4.5.1.3 Colleagues as External Mechanisms

To a lesser degree than external headteachers, the respondents also recognised the emotional support that they received from colleagues within their staff team.

For one headteacher, she was emotionally supported by administrating staff who identified when she was struggling following challenging situations:

> "I'm lucky because I've got my office girls, who are brilliant, who can read the situation and even if they just come in, give me a cup of coffee, pull the blinds down for two minutes. You just need someone there to pick up on no, you're not all right." (H8)

Again, another headteacher acknowledged that it was his teaching assistants within school who identified times that he needed emotional support:

> "There's a few TAs with high emotional intelligence who spot when you're tired or you're looking a bit ..., which I didn't expect." (H9)

For many other headteachers, the support of a deputy headteacher or the senior leadership team provided a support within school. The following headteachers' responses were typical:

> "I've got a great deputy who I can drip-feed to. She comes in early as well so at six o'clock we can sit and talk through a lot of fatalistic trench humour as well, because that's how it's got to be. You laugh about it." (H15)

> "I think what lightened the load a bit was a strong leadership team and supportive staff, that's what made it a bit more manageable." (H4)

However, in contrast to this, headteachers described how they didn't seek the support of their deputy headteachers or senior leaders as they felt it unfair to burden them with additional responsibility. A typical response is as follows:

> "I'm on my own here, I've got a deputy and he's very good, but I'm conscious that when he's in class he is 100% in the classroom and it's not fair to burden him with the things in here." (H9)

Another headteacher of a small school coped without a deputy headteacher:

> "It falls on my shoulders, I have a SENCo but she's a fulltime teacher, so I don't want to offload on her. I haven't got a deputy head." (H2)

For one headteacher, the social company of colleagues was a support:

> "It's quite a lonely place. The doors always open so when people come in and say 'have you got a minute?' I say, 'I've always got a minute for you.'" (H15)

The necessity for support was concluded by one headteacher:

> "I think, a lot of the time, where heads succeed is where they have got experienced heads who they can phone to, who they can trust. Because the key issue in this job, what you've got, is you don't want people tittle-tattling to the office, you know, the gossip mongers. You're prey for so much gossip and reputations can be lost, you know, like that because of gossip and what have you, rather than genuinely, so you need people you can trust and can talk to about issues." (H14)

4.5.1.4 Formal Support as an External Mechanisms

Whilst this was not a strong theme which emerged, several headteachers made reference to the formal partnering of headteachers with mentors when they first took up the role. This was not found to be an effective method of support by headteachers. This was due to either a contrast in personal educational philosophies, as one headteacher made reference to:

> "When I was a new head I was assigned somebody, I met him once, we had a disagreement, his philosophies were different to mine, I refused to see him again because I thought, 'You know what, he's not going to support me, as in the support that I need', so I told County 'No, not interested.'" (H11)

Or through lack of time rather than contrasting opinions:

> "People say, 'Oh, you know, we'll pair you up with a headteacher', yeah, I had someone phone me once." (H8)
>
> "When I became a headteacher, I was told I'd have a mentor head, but unfortunately the mentor head was a lovely lady but her school was 15 miles away, so to pop round to her school and sit down and talk to her was not an option, plus the only time we could communicate was five or six at night, by which time the problem was solved." (H1)
>
> "I was given a local authority head, I had one telephone call last October." (H8)

However, one headteacher found the support of both her assigned mentor and School Improvement Partner (SIP) valuable:

> "I did have a mentor. I knew her anyway and she was a good egg and in my first year I was able to contact her regularly and I had a SIP who I saw a lot of." (H18)

For another headteacher, there was no external support. Indeed, he summarised how he perceived headteachers to be distanced by the Local Authority in challenging circumstances:

> "There's no help. You might have colleagues you can off-load on if you trust them enough. Yes, there is a counselling service but in terms of the system, there's nothing in the system that supports headteachers in that way. And actually, I've talked to headteachers and if you listen to headteachers you realise you're not the only one thinking and feeling like that. It's a common feeling amongst heads. Particularly heads in challenging circumstances. Because you're very much on your own. The local authority, the SIPs want to distance themselves. You know, you're the captain of the Titanic and you're heading towards an iceberg or you've hit the iceberg and you're beginning to sink. The Local Authority aren't rowing over to you with some golden kit to fix the hull, they're actually standing on another ship and noting the degree of descent." (H14)

4.5.2 Summary of External Support for Coping Mechanisms

In seeking external support for coping with the emotional challenges of headship, the overwhelming source of support and referred to by the vast majority of headteachers, was the support of fellow headteachers. Headteachers perceived that they could share and understand the challenges faced with other headteachers. Whilst support was given from colleagues within school, this was a theme from the data which was evident but not a strong theme which applied to the majority of respondents. Seeking support internally was more difficult for headteachers who perceived that they were unable to share with colleagues the complete depth of their fear or stress concerning situations and this would be a burden to them or may change the perceptions of their capability as a headteacher. Whilst formal external support is offered to headteachers new to

their posts, this was not perceived as an effective source of support through lack of personal trust or through limiting time commitments.

Lack of personal praise was an element which became apparent in the analysis of transcripts, which indicated a lack of support for headteachers, which, although it did not form an emerging theme, was notable in the responses. Headteachers commented at various stages of interview that there was a lack of support which might have helped their self-esteem.

The following response was provided by a headteacher highlighting the comparison with the support he provided colleagues with and what he received back:

> "So, coming back to this emotional bank account, you know, you invest and you make a withdrawal, you do it with staff and you do it with kids and the important thing is who's investing in headteachers? Well actually nobody invests in you. A good school adviser could do it, and I've had some decent ones, a bad school adviser is incapable of doing it." (H14)

This lack of personal support and praise was also evident in other responses whereby headteachers described how they support their staff but do not receive support themselves:

> "It's the disadvantage of being a head, you always say to your staff 'Oh well done, well done' but you might get a bit of a compliment there, 'Oh, this looks good' but no, not really." (H2)
>
> "Nobody ever says 'Well done!', you can praise them to kingdom come, but no one ever says 'Well done.'" (H1)

4.5.3 Support for Headteachers from Preparation for Headship

The second section to the research question seeking to identify how headteachers cope with the emotional challenges of headship, was to identify how headteachers were prepared for headship.

Emerging from the data were themes. The first and strongest theme was that nothing prepared them for headship. Whilst this was acknowledged by the vast majority of headteachers, past experience of being a deputy headteacher and of completing the National Professional Qualification for Leadership course were factors in the preparation for headship. These were deemed as both positive and negative experiences from contrasting interviewees.

4.5.3.1 Review of Lack of Preparation

Almost all respondents recalled that they were unprepared for the realities of headship, despite previous experience as a deputy headteacher, as the reality of the role required experience of the day-to-day management of situations that could not be prepared for. One headteacher described how the range of headteacher responsibilities included buildings and maintenance, which was a new experience:

> "When you're with other new heads you could laugh about things like where the boiler is, but when you're in school it's not funny, because you've got to deal with it. And you're like, 'I don't know, I really don't know, but I will find out.'" (H8)

Another provided a similar response:

> "To be quite honest, the thing was, when I got the acting head post and I remember sitting in the office and I remember, people who I'd said hello

> to in the past came to me with problems I knew nothing about, like the site manager would say, 'There's an issue with the boiler', say, or 'There's an issue with this ...'. I had to learn about health and safety, the office manager would come to me with a problem I knew nothing about." (H14)

Other responses simply summarised that nothing prepares you for headship and the range of roles and responsibility it brought. Responses included:

> "I went on a course, preparing for headship, which was useful in that you talk to other people who are in the same thing, but nothing prepares you for your first post." (H13)
>
> "I think nothing prepares you for the real thing, you've just got to go in open-minded." (H4)
>
> "I think there's a huge difference between being a head [with] a deputy and being a head in that all of a sudden the buck stops with you and I think there's a huge shock when you come to that conclusion." (H13)
>
> "I was teacher in charge, which I almost like a headship, but until you become a head, you don't realise what was missing in terms of budget management, the really overarching strategic parts." (H16)

4.5.4 Deputy Headship as Preparation for Headship

Responses from headteachers differed on how the role as deputy prepared them for headship, with some respondents recalling that their experience gave them good preparation:

> "Luckily I had six years with a good headteacher, but actually there wasn't a lot of professional development material." (H8)
>
> "The only person I actually got help from was my headteacher, he was brilliant, he would let you run with a project, with all the pressures and budgets, but you knew in the background he was there to support you. It was a nice little learning curve." (H1)
>
> "When I was deputy of a bigger school I had a really good head there and he let me take on leadership strategies, so I'd say in terms of bringing others on, I'll give them opportunities and never stifle them, and I'll let them do it in their own way because that's how I learnt and you have to be brave to do it." (H16)

Whilst others claimed that they learnt how ‘not to do it’ from headteachers that they were under:

> “Deputy didn’t put me off because it’s finding out about things and learning from them and thinking how you would or wouldn’t do things and the pressures of headship need to be shared, you can’t do it on your own.” (H8)

> “Mine was fine because I was a deputy here, I had two ineffectual heads, shouldn’t have got the job, and leant massively on me. I did 70% of the job for the first one, I had so much experience there.” (H11)

4.5.5 NPQH as Preparation for Headship

A large group of the headteachers interviewed had completed the headship qualification NPQH. Although there were aspects of the course which headteachers perceived useful in preparing them, the majority felt that it did not prepare them. A typical response from headteachers were as follows:

> “It was trivial coaching, it did not in any way prepare you for headship. It did nothing to say ‘This is what it’s going to be like.’” (H1)

> “Nobody at any stage, including NPQH, prepared you for it.” (H8)

> “Helpful? No, if I’m being really honest, I think nothing prepares you for the real thing. There’s lots of coaching and how to respond to the press but really, when those things happen, you’re seeking guidance from the LA.” (H4)

> “I did NPQH but I didn’t find it particularly helpful if I’m honest. I did it because I had to.” (H5)

However, one headteacher found aspects useful in developing leadership skills:

> “When I did my skills analysis as part of NPQH, when you did, what was it, the 360, I found that really interesting and really valuable.” (H9)

For another headteacher it gave him a sense of achievement and credibility, which he found valuable:

> "I wanted to finish NPQH as it would give me confidence. I know you only feel inferior at your own consent, if anyone wants to make you feel inferior. So it was really important for me to have the external validation of NPQH. So that was important and it helped me prepare. It's (NPQH) a bit like your driving test, it gives you an understanding of how things work, but it doesn't prepare you for driving." (H15)

4.5.6 Summary of Support Mechanisms for Headteachers

To summarise how headteachers perceived themselves to be effectively supported, it appears that there is no preparation method which they deem to be effective. Whilst it was evident that although headteachers claimed to have been prepared through deputy headship, these headteachers then claimed that even this did not prepare them for the reality or the magnitude of the post. Headteachers who have completed NQPH did not find that this prepared them for headship, even though three headteachers found elements of the training useful. When this is combined with effective methods of support, the two most effective sources of external support are family and a network of chosen headteachers, whilst effective strategies adopted by headteachers to cope are exercise and the self-management of emotions.Negative coping methods were perceived to be insomnia and a negative work-life balance, whilst ineffective support methods were NPQH and the formal mentoring by headteachers.

4.6 Findings from Research Question 1.4: *Do headteachers perceive, or anticipate, that the emotional cost of leadership has changed as they have progressed through Earley and Weindling's (2007) stages of leadership?*

This sub-question has been posed to ascertain whether the emotional challenges alter as headteachers progress through their career, indeed, from before they have become incumbent in their first post. For this, although all headteachers were able to describe the first year in headship, the responses varied according to how long the headteacher was in post and whether this was their first headship. The analysis for this sub-question is based on Earley and Weindling's Stages of Headship (2007, p.4):

Stage 0 - Preparation prior to headship
Stage 1 - Entry and encounter (first months)
Stage 2 - Taking hold (3 to 12 months)
Stage 3 - Reshaping (second year)
Stage 4 - Refinement (years 3 to 4)
Stage 5 - Consolidation (years 5 to 7)
Stage 6 - Plateau (years 8 and onwards)

Further to this, analysis of the data has been segmented to provide deeper understanding of the interviewee's motivation and ambition for headship, and their experiences in their first months and year. For longer serving headteachers, whether their experiences over their career changed, and for new headteachers, whether they perceive their experiences will change have been analysed. Finally, for all respondents, whether they perceive they will remain in the profession has been analysed.

4.6.1 Motivation and Ambition for Headship

4.6.1.1 Stage 0 - Preparation

The vast majority of headteachers claimed they had no ambition or indeed, desire to be a headteacher. This was very clearly stated by the overwhelming majority as a small sample of quotes below depict:

> "I don't think I ever set out and thought, 'I want to be a headteacher.'" (H8)
>
> "I never planned, ever, to be a teacher let alone a headteacher." (H2)
>
> "I never had any desire to do anything like school leadership." (H5)
>
> "I don't think I ever set out thinking I want to be a head. I wanted to be a really good teacher, then I wanted to make a difference to Special Needs kids and kids who'd missed out on things in life." (H8)
>
> "After a year she said, 'What's your ambition? Someone like you should be a headteacher.' And I said 'No, I never want to be a headteacher, I really do not want to be, I just don't think I'd enjoy that final responsibility, and I like teaching.' So I have never seen it as an ambition, although I am an ambitious person." (H6)

However, in contrast, two headteachers recalled an ambition and a goal to be a headteacher that they had set themselves early in their teaching career:

> "I have to go back a while. I ran a business with my father, I was at the rock-face of management, so I'd already been in management. So, once I'd gone into teaching I quickly realized I wanted to be a head, because although I'd enjoyed teaching I'd missed that management aspect." (H2)

Another headteacher described his tremendous determination in his early career:

> "I was 28, I was on a mission, I didn't care." (H3)

Whilst another headteacher gained motivation and confidence to do the role through experience as a deputy:

> "It was like a jigsaw, I started to think, 'You know what, if I was in charge I would do it this way,' so I gleaned the best things and the worst things and when the headship came up I got it, rightly so, and the school has gone from strength to strength." (H11)

For another, although she had no specific desire to be a headteacher, she described a determination to move forward professionally and to seek new opportunities, which led her to headship:

> "I do always think 'What's next?' yes that, that's what I do, I'm always thinking what's next. I'd like to be one of those content people, but I never am. So, I work really hard at whatever I'm doing, because then you know it's going to open doors for you." (H6)

4.6.2 Summary of Stage 0

For the majority of headteachers, there was no ambition to be a headteacher. Moreover, their motivation derived from circumstances and either a negative or a plateauing experience as deputy, as summarized by the two following quotes. One headteacher described her experiences after her headteacher handed in her notice to leave her post:

> "Everyone was like 'Are you going to apply? Are you going to apply?' And I was like, definitely not… but then something clicked and I thought, 'Well what if someone comes in and, you know, it becomes unbearable?' And I thought, 'I know the school, I know the staff, it might be better in that lead position rather than take a backward step.'" (H4)

This experience was shared by another headteacher:

> "My head then left and the person they employed was not someone I could work with. I knew that very quickly. I wasn't going to be able to manage. The only way I could open my scope was headship, which wasn't something I was planning on doing because I'm a teacher, it's what I do well. If I can't be a teacher, you put me in an office where I don't know what I'm doing." (H18)

Another headteacher's experiences were similar after her previous school was taken over by an academy:

> "School went through a very difficult period where our headteacher, shall we say, was forced to leave… and the school had to be taken over by an academy and it became very clear it wasn't the place I wanted to be, so it became, 'OK, are you ready for headship now?'" (H8)

> "I was in quite a low point in my previous school to be honest, and I just thought, 'I need to leave now,' and it was either a deputy in another school or a headship." (H6)

Other headteachers described how the decision was made for them as they were moved to acting head roles:

> "The head went off with stress and I had to do the acting head's job." (H1)

A similar experience was shared by another interviewee:

> "I didn't have any choice really, one day I wasn't and the next I was." (H3)

The two experiences of ambitious headteachers are in the minority, as they specifically selected a career path to lead them to headship rather than taking career opportunities with no ambition for headship, yet ultimately leading them to the position which reflected the experiences of the majority of headteachers.

4.6.3 Early Headship

4.6.3.1 Stages 1 and 2: Entry and Encounter, and Taking Hold

Prior to commencing their first role as headteacher, the vast majority of respondents described fear, as previously analysed. However, for a group of headteachers, there was also an element of naivety which enabled them to take greater enjoyment in the first terms. The following quotes depict this:

> "I enjoyed that first term. I think I spent most of it in a bubble really. Either you didn't know what was going on or people protected you from it, because they knew." (H9)

Headteachers who were at these early stages of headship were able to perceive what they required to perform their role and reflect on what they had achieved. Responses typical to the following indicate a sense of early confidence in role:

> "Have inner confidence in your ability and even though you get challenged and even though you have doubts about individual things you may do and decisions you may take, questioning your own ability." (H10)

> "I became more confident as deputy and I'm becoming more confident as the head." (H9)

This stage appears to have a stronger element of enjoyment. Balanced with a prevailing sense of fear, was also the excitement and element of pride in the first successes of headship and the reality that they were actually in post and doing the job. The emotional impact on reflection, for headteachers was reduced by naivety through which they did not yet grasp the scale of the role and the challenges which were yet to arise.

4.6.4 Experiences of Headship over the Years

4.6.4.1 Stages 3-4; Reshaping and Refinement

For six headteachers who were in post for several years, they described the continued challenge of the role and how they had to keep learning and adjusting to 'keep up' with government policy. The reality of the role of headship was also a factor once the initial naivety had passed. This changing experience over the years in post was described in detail by one headteacher:

> "Day one on the job was exciting, so like 'Yes! I've got there at last and look at me, I'm a headteacher!' Month one, you're thinking, 'Where did this rock face come from?' and six months down the line you're thinking, 'It's about making steady progress, because no one told me all this was going to be there,' totally, totally unprepared for it, or adequately prepared. Anyway, years down the line, different matters, and I'm still learning. I wouldn't say it's a rock face any more but it's still a slope and I'm still making progress up." (H1)

For another long-serving headteacher, although the elements of headship became familiar, the fear from self-doubt remained:

> "I don't think the self-doubt ever leaves you. In terms of the 'Oh my God, I can't do this', that wears off, because you realise that you are actually doing it. So it's a gradual easing of that self-doubt, but it never actually leaves you, I don't think. Never left me." (H13)

4.6.5 Established Headship

4.6.5.1 Stage 5-8; Consolidation and Plateau

The majority of the headteachers interviewed were in the early stages of their career. However, the minority of the headteachers who were near retirement or more

established in their schools were able to provide insight into stages 5-8 of the Career Stages. Every headteacher at this stage indicated that the challenges they faced were still changing, as they were for any headteacher, but their management of situations was supported by past experience. One headteacher who was near retirement emphasized this:

> "Experience. Having met situations like it before. Using the skills that you develop over time, interpersonal skills, problem solving. But yes, it's gradually over time you come across traumas and situations that you've dealt with and some you do well and some you do badly." (H13)

One headteacher, who had left the profession, very clearly reflected on his experiences after plateauing in his role:

> "I get very involved in what I do and I just can't shut off. So in fact it was a personality trait so it's better if I don't do that sort of thing. So you have to say, 'Well actually, yes I did well in a small school and I did well in the other one, but when I settled down and grew up a bit and thought about things, it just wasn't suited to me personally, I couldn't switch off.'" (H10)

Another headteacher recalled his changing experience as a headteacher, reflecting on his first experiences:

> "So, when it was a common sense decision, you know, 'The boilers aren't working,' 'Well ring somebody bloody up then, you know, what shall I do?' but then other things I'd have to bide my time while I sought advice. I spent a lot of my time on the phone asking people. And I think, a lot of the time, where heads succeed is where they have got experienced heads who they can phone, who they can trust. Because the key issue in this job, what you've got, is you don't want people tittle-tattling to the office, you know, the gossip-mongers. You're prey for so much gossip and reputations can be lost, you know, like that, because of gossip and what-have-you, rather than genuinely, so you need people you can trust and can talk to about issues." (H14)

4.6.5.2 Career Expectations for Stage 8

Through their discussion, several headteachers discussed their expectations for their career progression. It was evident that very few headteachers shared any further ambition to move to a larger school, moreover, they appeared to question how long they could remain in their role:

> "I do ask myself the question whether I'll stay in it long term, it takes an awful lot out of you, I just hope that if I was unhappy I'd have the confidence to change. When you say, 'I'd stay in the job,' I think it wouldn't take much, and I've seen other heads with difficult Ofsted's, difficult Chair of the Governors, resilience goes out the window." (H9)

As the above quote highlighted, headteachers who had been in the role for several years related to colleagues whom they had seen face extreme challenges in their roles. This appeared to be a warning for headteachers in post as they referred to it as something that could happen to them:

> "It doesn't feel a good job to be in. It's disenchanted really." (H4)

One headteacher, however, did make reference to the idea of moving schools:

> "I think it's good to move, I hope it will be easier in five years." (H1)

Whilst another headteacher directly referred to an ambitious career move:

> "Now I think, what would my next step be? Obviously, a bigger school, but actually I'd quite like to be an advisor… and also the dreaded Ofsted inspector, I'd quite like to do that in the future… I work really hard at whatever I'm doing because it's going to open doors for you. I work hard because I'm a hard worker but also I'm thinking about my next job." (H6)

4.3.1 *Summary of Answers to Career Stage Research Questions*

The majority of the headteachers interviewed were in the early stages of their career, but from the overall responses it was apparent that whilst the emotional impact of headship is still omnipresent at the latter stages of their career, how it is managed and the experience gained provides headteachers with a greater level of self-confidence to manage the “traumas and situations” experienced. Whilst headteachers who were at stages 5-8 held this level of confidence in managing situations, headteachers at the earlier stages perceived that they were quickly gaining confidence and learning through the role.

Career ambition, either for the role of headteacher or for next career moves was not a strong theme, with the vast majority of headteachers saying they had no initial aspiration for headship and once in post, only one headteacher shared any ambition for career progression.

4.7 Summary

All the twenty headteachers interviewed stated that there was a powerful emotional influence on headship. The research questions also sought to identify the main sources of emotional investment and cost. Whilst respondents talked at length about the emotional costs of the role depicted for this study through emergent themes of fear and stress, there were also the emotional rewards from the emergent themes of pride, children and community. Managing government policy, working with people, and the pressure of inspection were described as the main sources of emotional cost, whilst developing children, enhancing the school and community as well as gaining a sense of pride were the main sources of emotional reward.

Research Questions 1.1 to 1.4 sought to identify how headteachers cope with the emotional influence, and how they are more effectively supported. When asked what their coping strategies to manage the emotional cost of the role, all headteachers were able to relate a method which they used, either to manage stressful situations on a short-term basis, e.g. working long hours, or long-term coping methods e.g. exercise, socialising, family time. To varying degrees, all respondents referred to a method of self-management of emotions, through which they were able to contain their emotions and respond to situations with a calm level of control, which disguised their true emotions. Alongside this, and extremely evident through the transcripts, was the ability to maintain a sense of perspective on situations.

One headteacher's comment, when referring to a successful headteacher, was:

> "… a headteacher who is still in the job." (H8)

This implied that to face the day-to-day challenges, a person who is in the role is succeeding in that they are able to stay in the role day-to-day.

As headteachers moved through their career, their self-awareness and their knowledge of their boundaries and their own strength to face challenges increases. This, headteachers responded, was based on experience and having faced challenges the same or similar in the past.

This study also intended to find out about what additional support, both from formal structured and informal support, the respondents regarded as most important in supporting them in the post. Structured, formal support, such as NPQH and mentoring

programmes were perceived to have very little effectiveness in both the preparation for and support once in role. The vast majority of headteachers perceived that their most effective method of support was through personal trust established with colleagues to whom they could turn to if they needed advice.

As a final question, headteachers were asked for their opinion on advice they would offer new or aspiring headteachers. Four headteachers highlighted that the candidate must be ready for the role, knowing what they are stepping up to:

> "Don't do it until you're 100% ready, and don't until you're sure you've had the ability to do a lot of the job before you do it." (H9)
>
> "Think carefully about it." (H6)
>
> "Make it achievable and try not to panic." (H2)
>
> "Take your time. Give yourself time to get to know the school, give yourself time to say, 'Right, I've got enough information now to make decisions.'" (H13)

For others, it was the quick identification of informal support once in post through the identification of a colleague that they could trust:

> "Find a confidant of your own choice that you feel comfortable with, because if you offload, you will feel better." (H11)
>
> "Go out and find a head, someone who's got time, so you've got someone you can offload to immediately, because otherwise, if you're out there by yourself, you're going to struggle, really going to struggle." (H1)

Other headteachers emphasised the need to find coping strategies and support outside school through family and friends:

> "I think you need a very secure home life. A partner who's very supportive because it takes it out of you, physically and mentally, emotionally it takes it out of you and if you haven't got that support it must be difficult." (H6)

> “Make sure you’ve got a life outside, because you can get consumed by it. And remember, it’s just a job.” (H5)

The emergent themes in all of the research questions in this chapter form the basis for discussion in the following chapter. This will address each research question in turn and discuss the findings with reference to the literature review that informs this study. A model of the findings will be presented to further demonstrate the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

The discussion of the findings presented in this chapter will address each research question in turn. Furthermore, the research questions will be analysed individually, drawing information from them and relating this to the literature on each theme, as reviewed in the Literature Review, Chapter 2. The study will then draw conclusions which will represented in Fig.1, the model which represented the progression of primary headteachers through their accession to headship and the subsequent influencing emotions and coping mechanisms. This will be presented in the following chapter along with recommendations for further study.

This study has sought to identify whether there is an emotional impact on primary headteachers through performing their role. Further to this, sub-questions have asked to investigate what the sources of emotional cost and reward are, and which coping strategies primary headteachers deem to be most effective. Subsequently, an analysis of primary headteachers through their career stages has been explored to find out whether the emotional impact of headship alters over time.

5.2 Overarching Research Question: Is there an emotional impact in enacting headship?

The findings from this study clearly demonstrated that there is an emotional impact in performing headship. The respondents strongly agreed that there was an emotional impact to headship which could be both rewarding but also have great emotional cost. Crawford (2007a) highlighted the notion that emotions are difficult to analyse in others, as they can be projected through different sources, or social defiance, rather establishing an understanding of their true source, the primary headteachers interviewed for this study were very articulate and clear in defining the emotional impact of headship. The 'perennial mystery' of emotions for Russell and Lemay (2000) is simplified for this study, as the human subjects, being primary headteachers, are reflecting on their own emotions and the cause and maintenance of those emotions rather than a deeper understanding of the emotion itself.

Overwhelmingly, the impact of emotions on the role of the headteacher seemed to confirm the findings of Crawford (2004), whose concept was that headteachers' experience of emotion in their daily interactions impacted directly on their approach to leadership. The findings, in greater depth, revealed that there are three elements to the emotional impact of headship. In the next chapter, the model proposed by the outcomes of this study represented this and is a representation of the pathways that lead to headship then the subsequent challenges and rewards of the role. These were the emotional reward of pride, and the emotional costs of anxiety and stress. These three elements have formed the overarching themes for this study. When the respondents were probed on their role as headteacher throughout the range of

interview questions, these elements emerged as core themes to which the anecdotal accounts of events or scenarios described were able to be related.

For the purpose of this study, anxiety was defined as a negative emotion derived from performing headship which causes primary headteachers to be afraid whilst in their role. It was apparent from interviewing the primary headteachers that there were more negative than positive emotions. Whilst the definition of pride was narrow, the narrative drawn from the primary headteachers clearly linked through the sources of emotion to give a sense of pride. This could be applied to a personal pride in their own success, formed from pride in the achievements of the children and staff as well as pride in the overall success of the school. It was the pride of 'doing a good job'.

As Crawford (2004, 2007a) mentions, the understanding and analysis in literature of emotions overwhelmingly referred to an association of negativity, as emotions are linked to occasions of failure or 'burnout', where headteachers have left the profession. However, the crucial element to this study was the positive emotion of pride. Primary headteachers conclusively referred to positive emotions that they experience, and the pleasure that they drew from the job. Without that, they emphasised, they would not be in post. This was in agreement with the claims of Earley and Weindling (2007), Southworth (1998), and Harris et al. (2003), that there was great personal pride and satisfaction which was experienced alongside the powerful demands of the profession.

Although primary headteachers made reference to the positive elements of headship, overwhelmingly the emotions to be managed were the negative emotions of stress and anxiety. The primary headteachers clearly articulated the emotion of anxiety,

referring to feelings of self-doubt or a sense of dread. Anxiety was associated with situations where primary headteachers felt they were not coping, or didn't know if they were going to cope. Primary headteachers overwhelmingly referred to an element of anxiety at regular stages throughout their incumbency. However, Beatty and Brew (2004) claimed that headteachers may associate such an emotion with shame and therefore suppress it. Thus, primary headteachers who were experiencing anxiety may not have voiced it.

Alongside this emotion of anxiety was the emotion of stress. This was linked to situations where primary headteachers faced tasks or challenges which they coped with by applying intense time management strategies. Whilst the emotion of anxiety was linked to self-doubt, stress, for the purpose of this study, is linked to the volume of tasks or workload which has to be managed. Stress and the management of stress was referred to in the literature, with Gronn (2003) defining it as 'greedy work', in relation to the management of people and tasks in a chaotic environment.

5.2.1 Summary

This study found that primary headteachers underwent great emotional impact when performing headship. This was regardless of which career stage or, indeed, which school they were at. Overwhelmingly, all primary headteachers experienced the positive emotion of pride which gave them pleasure and reward in the role. Many primary headteachers specifically claimed that the positive emotions and the sense of enjoyment balanced out the negative emotions which were a great cost to them.

The findings of this study support the prior research and studies made by Crawford (2004, 2007a, 2007b), Gronn (2003) and Beatty (2002), in their claims that the impact of emotions on headteachers directly affects them in their role. However, this study has highlighted the overwhelming influence of the positive emotions to make the role sustainable.

5.3 Research Question 1.1: *What do headteachers perceive to be the major sources of emotional investment in both the cost and rewards of the role?*

The second research question probed respondents further as to what the sources of emotional cost and reward were perceived to be.

5.2.2 The Emotional Costs of Headship

5.2.2.1 Accountability

Primary headteachers responded that they perceived being the decision maker and the public accountability of the position as emotional cost, whilst also being a source of pride when there was a positive outcome for the school. This study adds to previous research (Beatty, 2002; Crawford, 2004; Leithwood and Beatty, 2008; Morrison and Ecclestone, 2011) who argued that there was a whirl of unpredictability in the role of the headteacher, which can be chaotic. For the respondents in this study, the very accountability of being the headteacher, the decision maker in that unpredictable chaos that can unfurl in a day, brought with it the emotional cost of being ready and prepared to respond to the unknown, whilst also carrying the expectations of the staff and the community.

Whilst the primary headteachers in this study responded that they felt the overwhelming pressure of accountability for the safety and day-to-day running of the school, thus keeping it a calm and functioning organisation, several primary headteachers also responded that they had accountability for standards and progress. This accountability for the academic success of the school was mirrored in the NCSL (2008) paper, whereby the headteacher was second only to the class teacher as an influence on pupil learning.

For Wallace's (2001) 'transformational leadership' to occur, the accountability of the headteacher was immense as the headteacher was the 'driving force', however unobtrusive, in affecting change. Likewise, for Fullan's (2003) argument that adaptive change can occur, it was the headteacher who had the power, and was thus accountable for those changes. For the primary headteachers in this study, the power and the accountability were strong elements in the emotional cost of headship. Indeed, some primary headteachers felt the persona of Grint's (1999) 'talisman' of leadership and the subsequent weight of accountability and, perhaps more importantly, expectation placed upon them.

5.2.2.2 OFSTED

For the primary headteachers in this study, the ultimate measure was Ofsted. Regardless of what category of school they taught in, primary headteachers appeared to operate under a fear of inspection. This entailed elements of both fear and stress, as the consequences of failing an Ofsted were related to, whether loss of position, or

the perceived shame that they would experience through such a public failure. If Ofsted's (2010) definition of categories was combined with the weight of accountability and perceived responsibility to the school community, then the headteacher of a school in Special Measures or Requires Improvement may have the criticism of professional failure applied directly to themselves. This may provide further insight into why the responses relating to an Ofsted visit were so negative and revealed so much fear.

5.2.2.3 Change in Policy

Other elements of emotional cost came from both the governmental bureaucracy and rapidly changing policy. Primary headteachers described the difficulty in managing the fast-paced change in government curriculum and standards. The findings from this area of study concurred with the statements made by the DfE (2015), whereby the nature of school and school leadership was rapidly changing, and leadership of those schools had to adapt at the same, if not a quicker pace. This study supports both Crawford (2002) and Gronn's (2000) claim that leadership must be able to adapt to change, in that it must be fluid and dynamic. For the primary headteachers in this study, the constant change in their leadership role and the standards that they must adhere to were difficulties, thus becoming an emotional cost, as they struggled to maintain the workload and deal with the fear of failure from not being up-to-date with knowledge.

Primary headteachers interviewed appeared to experience challenge from these rapid changes, with many venting frustration that they could not keep up with changing

policy and initiative, or that the expectation on them to deliver this was not realistic within their professional capacity. Responses revealed that there was a great challenge in learning and then implementing the new expectations or in applying policy. They perceived that this was an emotional cost, as they felt incapable of maintaining their personal level of knowledge, which they perceived to be necessary in order to lead a staff team and maintain credibility. This was a cause of fear, as it led to a sensation of self-doubt and a perceived professional failure. This sense from colleagues of perceived failure was referenced by Southworth (1998) in his argument that leadership was judged not only through external measurement, such as Ofsted, but also, more importantly, by teachers. This study revealed that an emotional cost to primary headteachers was maintaining credibility and respect from their staff teams, as they appeared to value this judgement from colleagues.

This study also seemed to indicate that the changing policy and the fear and doubt of professional integrity it brought, was a direct cause of emotional stress. The constantly changing and updating of government policy and procedure was an immediate increase in managerial workload, which primary headteachers found stressful to manage. This was regardless of which career stage the headteacher was at, as the changes applied to all schools and school leaders regardless of experience in post. Whilst the changing nature of headship was recognised in the literature (Bennett et al., 2003; Crawford, 2002; DfE, 2015) study added to the list the direct emotional cost of those changes on incumbent headteachers as the expectations on them change.

5.2.2.4 Managing People

Several primary headteachers interviewed indicated that managing people, whether staff or parents, was one of the greatest challenges of the role. For some, the lack of experience in dealing with Human Resources issues placed them in an extremely difficult position, as they felt unqualified to deal with certain situations. This supported Bennett et al.'s (2003) concern that headship encompassed many more roles and responsibilities than are encompassed in the Teaching Standards (2011). The difficulty experienced in managing people supports Morrison and Ecclestone's (2011) study, in which they argued that emotional ability was required to succeed in headship, and moreover, to even obtain a position in leadership emotional empathy and understanding was required.

The complexity in managing and liaising with groups and individuals appeared to be an area of emotional cost for the vast majority of respondents, regardless of school or years in post. This added further to Crawford's (2004, 2007a, 2007b) research, in which she argued that the numerous social interactions woven through the various levels of the everyday life of a headteacher each invoked an emotional response. For the primary headteachers in this study, whilst these interactions formed a response of pride and pleasure when they were positive, when the conversations and interactions were challenging and difficult, they became a source of emotional cost. When there was a negative reaction, these interactions were a source of ongoing stress for primary headteachers, as they brought an element of fear and self-doubt when primary headteachers perceived that managing the situation was beyond their capability and capacity for HR problems.

5.2.3 Summary

The responses received from the respondents in this section point to the need to review the capacity of primary headteachers to perform their role under the constantly changing bureaucracy alongside the method of inspection of primary headteachers. The analysis of responses clearly indicated that primary headteachers experience the emotional pressure of managing a 'chaotic' organisation, whilst being accountable for every aspect and carrying the expectations of a community. Alongside this, there was the fear of inspection, the outcomes of which are public, thus elevating the associated stress of ensuring the school was performing at the highest standard.

For the primary headteachers in this study, it was perceived that the rapidly shifting policy and procedures under which they operate causes great emotional stress, as they find it challenging to stay abreast of the knowledge, which they perceived was essential for maintaining a position of respect and influence in school. Alongside this, the accountability of the headteacher for academic standards in the school was also a source of emotional cost as there was a frustration at the school's capacity and reach to influence change. This indicated that primary headteachers who were inexperienced, or in a school in challenging circumstances without the effective support that they require, would be more likely to leave the profession. Likewise, schools who are in challenging circumstances with low attaining intakes of pupils will possibly find it more difficult to attract a wide field of candidates to fill headship vacancies.

Primary headteachers appeared to in part embrace the power their role provides. However, it was perceived that the overwhelming accountability and the expectations of others are a great emotional cost. The resulting impact of anxiety and stress on primary headteachers often resulted in insomnia, illness or negative work-life balance. Each of these could be extremely detrimental to the effectiveness of the headteacher and the likeliness of the headteacher remaining in post.

Indeed, as the analysis of respondents demonstrated, that the emotional cost of the accountability, OFSTED and managing people, were greater than the emotional rewards. This was a finely balanced model which could be overwhelming if one element of either emotional fear or emotional stress outbalanced the emotional rewards. This fine balance emphasised the necessity of the coping mechanisms which were keeping primary headteachers in the profession.

5.3 Mechanisms of Support including RQ 1.2 and 1.3

> 1.2 *What are the coping strategies used most effectively by headteachers to manage the emotional impact of the role including self-management of emotions?*
>
> And
>
> 1.3 *What sources of support or training have headteachers received which have supported them in the emotional management of their role?*

The responses from the primary headteachers clearly demonstrated similarities of experience of both effective and non-effective support. These were subsequently analysed with a breakdown into the two elements of Formal and Informal support. For the purpose of this study, the formal support was support which had been externally

organised by an institution or company, which primary headteachers either buy into or are assigned through their Local Authority. Informal support was the headteacher's individual coping mechanism which they assigned and managed themselves.

5.3.1 Informal Support

The mechanisms which primary headteachers described could be categorised into two elements of 'coping' and 'not-coping'. This was articulated by primary headteachers when they described how they coped with the emotional stress and the emotional fear of the role. There were clearly defined categories of strategies primary headteachers employed, which then enabled them to manage the immediate stress and the demands of the role. Alongside this there were mechanisms which enabled teachers to cope with the emotional demands and costs on a long-term basis.

5.3.1.1 Self-Management of Emotions

As described in the sources of emotional cost, primary headteachers managed organisations which were 'chaotic', in that events and crisis situations occurred which were not planned for. Primary headteachers had to be responsive and act with rational thought and initiative. In their response to questions, they described how they coped with this unpredictable and demanding role.

Primary headteachers were unanimous in their responses that there was a strong element of emotional control. They clearly describe the self-management of emotions as being core to their remaining in the role. Virtually all primary headteachers responded that they had to have strong mental ability to remain calm and present the

persona of the headteacher that people needed to see. This self-management of emotions, so clearly described in the findings, agreed with Morrison and Ecclestone's (2011) claim that emotional intelligence was a factor in why some primary headteachers excel and some leave the profession. Indeed, this study also supported Allen's (2009) argument that when talent-spotting future leaders, emotional intelligence was pivotal, as it would sustain them in their profession.

Whilst for Goleman (2003) the school leader required powerful emotional intelligence to monitor and control the feelings of others, this study also claimed that primary headteachers require a powerful ability to manage their own feelings in order to influence the feelings of others and the dynamics and anxiety levels of the school community. This, the primary headteachers perceived, was an ability to remain calm, positive and in control, even when they felt scared or dejected, regardless of the situation. Indeed, this was raised further in the literature by Zapf (2002) who argued that stress occurred when negative emotions are concealed by the need to display positive emotions.

The primary headteachers in this study overwhelmingly declared that their principal coping strategy for maintaining the role and the 'figurehead' of the headteacher in school, when they encountered challenging situations or were internally struggling with scenarios, was to conceal their true emotions and present the positive persona. This, Zapf (2002) stated, results in stress. This was further supported by Crawford's study (2004) through which headteachers interviewed declared that they needed to manage and contain their emotions.

The concealing of emotions to manage and regulate others was defined by Hochschild (1983) as ‘emotional labour’. This study added to the contributions from Beatty (2002, 2005), Leithwood and Beatty (2008), Crawford (2004) and Morrison and Ecclestone (2011) who supported Hochschild’s (1983) definition further, to argue that the primary role of the school leader enabling them to support the staff team was primarily to identify their own emotions and subsequently to control and possibly to conceal them. The study concluded that the subsequent energy used to manage and maintain this process in the turbulent environment of a school was great, thus supporting Hochschild’s (1983) claim that emotional labour was required.

For many primary headteachers who recounted how they managed the organisation most effectively by suppressing and controlling their own emotions, this would be defined by Beatty (2002) as ‘emotional silence’. Many primary headteachers described how, even when they were in crisis or experiencing great fear or doubt, they did not let it become apparent to others, out of fear that it would then be a cause of fear and doubt across their team. Beatty (2002) argued that this was the worst example of controlling emotions as it was linked to rationality, since the headteacher suppressed emotions to present the illusion of being rational and to ‘wrestle’ the emotions back into containment rather than engage with them.

Whilst this study agreed that the containment of emotions was apparent, and indeed core, to the primary headteachers’ every day coping mechanisms, the reflections of the primary headteachers in this study imply that it was to maintain calm and the aura of control and therefore confidence, which, in turn, enables the team to cope with the situations. Several primary headteachers gave examples of their experience of

working under primary headteachers who panicked and displayed emotion and self-doubt publicly, and the fear and uncertainty that then emanated throughout the staff. Indeed, the primary headteachers in this study perceived that they do not portray their 'true self', describing that they manage situations in their workplace through the self-management of emotions, not allowing themselves to be overwhelmed by fear and self-doubt, moreover, leading by portraying a strong aura of calm and control.

Beatty and Brew (2004) argued that this control of emotions would not lead to trusting relationships and 'transformational leadership'. However, the perception of the primary headteachers in this study was that trusting relationships arise from presenting the persona of the headteacher in charge who was able to cope with situations and therefore created the calm environment which led to trust and faith in the school leader. For the primary headteachers in this study, it was only though the creation of a different persona that they perceived they could cope in the role and be a serving headteacher. However, the aspects of emotional control that the primary headteachers described were in the suppression of their own negative emotions, for example either on a Monday morning when they deliberately portrayed a positive presence in school, or in a challenging and potentially confrontational situation when they portrayed a strong, calm presence to manage the environment and defuse conflict. In contrast, primary headteachers did not recount scenarios in which they were concealing positive emotions.

5.3.1.2 Exercise and social support

Whilst the immediate coping mechanism was the informal strategy of the self-management of emotions, the primary headteachers also described strategies which supported them over an extended period of time, helping them to remain in the post and cope with the emotional fear and emotional stress of the role. These strategies were selected by the respondents as mechanisms through which they could cope with the emotions using strategies for maintaining a sense of calm. A high proportion of respondents reflected that they used exercise as a coping mechanism, as the rhythm and physical activity helped them to 'switch off' from the stress and fear of the role.

Other respondents recalled that they relied on social interaction and the support of family or friends to cope. Whilst there were primary headteachers who shared their experiences and the stress and fear of the situations encountered through their work, there were other primary headteachers who found that their coping was most effective if they did not recount their experiences, instead many described that they would step into their 'other self' on leaving work.

5.3.2 Formal Support Mechanisms of NPQH and Mentoring

There were two formal mechanisms of support which primary headteachers referred to in this study, the National Professional Qualification for Headship and the formal mentoring partnership structured through the Local Authority, whereby newly appointed headteachers were provided with an experienced headteacher from whom they can seek support.

For the primary headteachers in this study, neither of these gave effective emotional support. A small minority of primary headteachers revealed that the task-based informative aspect of the NPQH programme was beneficial, but many either had not completed the programme, were appointed to headship before the programme began or had not opted to complete it. Those who had completed it did not find that it supported them to cope with the emotional impact of headship. Cowie and Crawford's (2009) study found that NPQH instilled a sense of principled identity in new headteachers through networking with other aspiring leaders. This study also supports the notion that it was through the discussion and collaborative learning aspect of professional development which NPQH became most effective.

The majority of the primary headteachers in this study did not respond that any formal methods of preparation were effective, moreover they recounted the self-sought support from other headteachers in their network was most beneficial in providing both information and emotional support, which agreed with the studies by Earley and Weindling (2007) and Harris et al. (2003). In addition, Lewis and Murphy's (2008) claimed that the most valued professional development opportunity for headteachers was through networking and school visit opportunities was in line with the findings of this study.

A crucial aspect of the network of support was that the primary headteachers were able to identify other headteachers who they respect rather than having them assigned through the authority. The findings of this study did not recount any positive or beneficial outcomes from the formal partnership of headteachers, either due to a conflict of educational belief, locality or lack of time. This supports Earley et al.'s (1996)

argument that for effective support to occur, there must be shared belief and critical friendship, which this study found to be lacking in the formal mechanism of support. However, the primary headteachers recounted that through attending local meetings of heads they were able to form extremely positive relationships and develop trust between heads. The overwhelming majority of primary headteachers found this informal support mechanism vital.

Recommendations already existing in the literature (Harris et al., 2003; Southworth 1998) also implied that critical friends and learning communities were the most effective method of support for headteachers. This study supported this recommendation, as the findings clearly indicated that the primary headteachers sought the critical friends and learning communities as a crucial mechanism of support, but however, only when they were self-sought and not formally assigned to them. The mutual trust, which Harris et al. (2003) referred to as essential in the formation of effective critical friends, was also apparent in the findings from this study. Cowie and Crawford (2009) argued that formally formed communities may be less open to change or indeed question new ideas. This study argued that in addition to Cowie and Crawford's (2009) claims, those formal support mechanisms are also less likely to support headteachers emotionally, as mutual trust was not a prerequisite.

Primary headteachers in this study referred to occasions of self-doubt and fear at times in their incumbency. The majority of primary headteachers, when asked about their coping mechanism in managing this fear, responded that they sought the advice of other trusted headteachers. Earley et al. (1996) referred to a critical friend as someone who would listen and support the process of sound decision making, not being afraid

to say what they think, and maintaining high expectations. The findings of this study clearly demonstrated that primary headteachers needed the critical friend to be someone to whom they could share their fears and self-doubt.

5.3.3 Summary

In summary, primary headteachers have had to employ coping mechanisms which support them both through the short-term crisis situations which arise in the school day, and the long-term coping strategies which enable them to remain in their role. This short-term coping mechanism was the self-management of emotion, requiring emotional labour (Hochchild, 1983), which involved suppressing emotions to portray a calm and in-control persona in order to control the emotional climate of the workplace. There was a high level of emotional stress attached to this process, resulting in potential 'burnout' (Crawford, 2004), and to control this and maintain wellbeing, headteachers then employ long term coping strategies to manage their emotions when the school day has concluded. These involved relaxation and 'switch off' techniques which appeared to be contained exercise and socialising. This study supported the literature on the impact of coping with emotions in a leadership position, but further emphasised the need primary headteachers perceived to contain their own emotions in order to affect the outcomes of situations and the emotional responses in others.

Formal mechanisms to support for headteachers were not well received by the respondents in this study. NPQH, when completed, was not perceived to prepare them for the realities of the role. Formal partnership did not have mutual trust and respect

at its core, therefore when primary headteachers suffered self-doubt and fear, they identified and actively sought the advice of colleagues who often became friends. The literature clearly revealed the need for networking and the role of critical friends, however, this study indicated that primary headteachers have formed their own constructive networks of support which were not formally assigned.

This study found that there were mechanisms of support which primary headteachers adopted. These were finely balanced in their effect. This study asks whether, if one aspect of that self-identified and sought support was not effective, how long the headteacher can remain in their post before 'burn out'.

5.4 The Emotional Rewards of Headship

5.4.1 Children

Whilst there were two core elements of emotional cost drawn from the analysis, there was one strand representing emotional reward, which was clearly defined as children. However, this element of reward was described as very powerful by the primary headteachers and was sufficient to draw them to the role and it was a counterbalance to the negative emotions of stress and anxiety. Respondents described the rewards involved in working with children and seeing the impact that they have on the success of the child. Providing opportunities which directly impacted on the children's enjoyment of school was also a factor. For some primary headteachers, the very nature of school was being with children and this was the core element of emotional reward.

5.4.2 Power

The second source of reward was power. Although no headteacher directly referred to this as ‘power’, it was evident from analysis of the quotes and transcripts that primary headteachers derived pleasure in the power to influence and affect change. This was through either policy, decision making or through the ability to impact on the philosophy and development of the school. The ability to directly affect the day-to-day or the long term running and direction of a school was a great source of emotional reward for primary headteachers. This, in turn, was linked to the pride in any success as an outcome of interventions or change led by the headteacher. As Morrison and Ecclestone (2011) claimed, the headteacher was the ‘vanguard’ for impacting on change. This study supported the research presented by NCSL (2008), Southworth (1998), Harris et al. (2003) and Crawford (2004), that it was the very power of headteachers and their ability to affect change and impact on the direction of the school, which was the major influence on the success of the school. Indeed, the respondents in this study held their own perceptions that their quality of leadership impacts directly on the motivation and quality of teaching, thus supporting Harris et al.’s (2003) claim.

This notion of ‘power’ related to Fullan’s (2003) study of leadership and the ability to affect change. The primary headteachers in this study were not defining themselves as ‘saviour’ leaders, according to Fullan’s (2003) definition, moreover they were reflecting on the satisfaction that they felt in their own ability to make changes. This study supported Wallace’s (2001) theories on transformational leadership as the

headteachers' transcripts describe them working alongside their staff teams where successful change occurs.

The findings related to this research question show that whilst primary headteachers don't relate directly to the notion of power, headteachers do relate to Fullan's (2002) mind-set of leadership as they were shaping the organisation and leading new knowledge. The research from Crawford (2002), Wallace (2003) and Fullan (2002) condemned charismatic leadership, since this appeared to carry with it the element of recklessness, as risks taken may be based on false optimism. This study supported the argument that the charismatic, all powerful 'super head' was a negative connotation, as the primary headteachers in this study did not define themselves as powerful, even though, through the nature of their job description, they were. Allen's (2009) definition of the 20th century's 'aspiring but arrogant' leader was not apparent in the responses for analysis in this study. Moreover, the primary headteachers' responses indicated that Allen's (2009) 21st century model was more applicable for analysis as it related to social and emotional qualities as well as the task-based ones.

In the analysis of power, the vast majority of respondents perceived that they gained emotional pleasure and reward through the ability to make changes and direct the organisation to improve the outcomes for children and staff development. This supported Fullan's (2002) 'moral purpose' in defining the actions and mind-sets of a leader.

Further analysis of responses revealed that whilst this power to fulfil personal pride in the success of the school was an emotional reward, when inadequate teaching was

observed or when the school was experiencing difficulties, this became a negative emotional cost to headteachers. Whilst primary headteachers gained reward from their influential position, there was also a great emotional cost when there was a negative or stressful situation. This related directly to the accountability of the headteacher, which was another theme emerging from the analysis.

5.4.3 Community

Community was the final core theme. Primary headteachers perceived the school to be crucial to the community, as the success of a school impacted directly on a community. External accolades and awards, such as when Ofsted praised the school, therefore supported the community further and this was also a source of emotional reward.

Whilst the sources of emotional reward also included the success of the school as well as the power to influence the direction of the school and the management of the staff team, this was not defined as predominant. For some respondents, the positive aspects of being with a staff team and enabling their development professionally were an emotional reward. There was also an element of social enjoyment at school, as the role was described by primary headteachers to be a 'lonely place'. Flintham (2003) claimed that loneliness and isolation was a contributing factor to headteachers leaving the profession early. This study supported that claim but acknowledged that primary headteachers themselves recognised this and actively sought company to enable them to gain emotional rewards and enjoyment in their role.

5.4.4 Summary

The analysis of this study clearly defined the core elements of emotional reward. The primary headteachers in the study overwhelmingly responded that they did the job for the children, that it was the pleasure that they gained from watching their success, which was enough to counterbalance the emotional costs. Whilst the literature recognised that there was emotional reward (Earley and Weindling 2007, Harris et al. 2003, Southworth 1998), this study recognised that the emotional reward of leadership could be broken down into further strands of community and power as its source of emotional reward. The impact of a successful school in its community was a direct reflection on the success of the headteacher. This was then recognised publicly, through formal inspection, informal feedback or events involving the community such as sporting events and became a great source of emotional reward.

Primary headteachers recognised that their role was powerful, in that they have the ability to make changes and alter the direction of the school's development. For many, this was a great source of emotional reward leading to pride, as they enjoyed the ability to make those changes. However, both the emotional rewards of community and power also become a great source of emotional cost when the school was perceived to be failing, or unpopular decisions by the headteacher were made.

5.5 Research Question 1.4: *Do headteachers perceive, or anticipate, that the emotional cost of leadership has changed as they have progressed through Earley and Weindling's (2007) Stages of Leadership?*

This study has utilised the career models as set out by Earley and Weindling (2007) and Gronn (1999), as it sought to identify whether the emotional impact of headship alters throughout the careers of headteachers.

For Gronn and Ribbins (1996), the career trajectory of leaders was important, as there appeared to be an area for exploration in how individuals develop into leaders throughout their lives. Whilst this study was interested in the respondents' rise to headship, many primary headteachers reflected in detail on their personal challenges and abilities which, they deemed, enabled them to succeed. For example, the majority of primary headteachers cited their personal ability to conceal emotions to manage the situation that they faced. Also, many primary headteachers reflected that they perceived themselves to be stepping into the role of the headteacher and leaving their 'true self' behind as they enter work.

Tracking through Earley and Weindling's (2007) longitudinal study of secondary headteachers, in which school leaders appeared to transition through similar stages and experience similar challenges, this was apparent in this study. The concept of pre-headship was clearly articulated through the respondents in this study, with the overwhelming majority forming negative associations with headship and perceiving that it was not something that they aspired to. Experienced primary headteachers reflected on the success of headship in reshaping the organisation. However, the

career stage did not diminish the emotional impact of headship over time in post. Whilst they appeared able to apply additional experience and knowledge to a situation, the emotional impact and the necessity for coping strategies remained constant regardless of career stage.

The findings indicated that, whilst primary headteachers reflected on either the initial fear or initial reward of headship, the changing landscape of educational policy and practice results in change for all school leaders as they adapt their schools accordingly. However, the primary headteachers who were in the plateau stage (Earley and Weindling, 2007) appeared able to apply prior knowledge of managing conflict situations and experience of coping mechanisms to their role and therefore it could be assumed that they were able to cope more effectively. However, the primary headteachers also perceived that they still experienced stress in adapting to changing policy as they also had to instigate change in their schools, which they found challenging.

This study was interested in the career stages of headteachers, both in Gronn's (1999) and Earley and Weindling's (2007) studies, as it sought to identify the move between Stage 0 and Stage 1 in Earley and Weindling's (2007) model or the Accession to Incumbency stage in Gronn's (1999) model. For Gronn (1999), the Accession stage was where the promotion was sought and headship was aspired to. However, this study found that overwhelmingly, the transition from deputy head to headteacher was almost by default. Respondents revealed that, in the majority, they did not seek headship. Moreover, many declared that they did not aspire to become a headteacher

and that during their formation stage, Stage 0, they did not seek headship as it did not appear to be an appealing role when they observed the stress and the responsibility.

The analysis of this study has found that there were four core areas of transition to headship and movement from accession to incumbency. These transition stages have depicted in this study as being ‘Ambition’, ‘Circumstance’, ‘Plateau’ and ‘Frying Pan’. ‘Ambition’ was defined as ‘leaders who perceive themselves to be headteachers and seek promotion’. ‘Circumstance’ was a change in role which results in being in the post of headteacher, for example Acting Headteacher or a new Head of School status. ‘Plateau’ was when the only perceived career option remaining was headship. ‘Frying Pan’ describes the situation whereby a new headteacher was appointed and the serving deputy was in disagreement or opposes new decisions, therefore opting for headship to ‘leap’ from the school, from the phrase ‘out of the frying pan, into the fire’.

The vast majority of primary headteachers in this study described their rise to headship as the best option they perceived to escape a newly appointed headteacher, hence they took the ‘frying pan’ route to move from accession to headship. This study agreed with Gronn’s (1999) career stages. However, as the focus of the accession stage for the headteacher in this study was not to position themselves ready for promotion, they sought to remain as deputy and only moved when the status quo of the school changed and forced them to leave.

A small minority of primary headteachers responded that they had always sought headship and had perceived themselves to be ambitious. However, these, compared to the primary headteachers in post through circumstance or through a plateau move,

were in the minority. It was the ambitious primary headteachers who fit Gronn's (1999) career model, and there were only two in this study who appeared, or perceived themselves, to be ambitious in their aspirations for headship.

This study further sought to ascertain headteachers' experience of leadership whilst in the post of Deputy Headteacher, or in Earley and Weindling's (2007) Stage 0, or Pre-Headship stage. This information was sought to provide further insight into why the post of Headteacher was not an appealing choice. This supported the importance of Gronn's (1999) life stories and provided information around the experience and perceptions of deputy headteachers who had the potential opportunities of headship ahead of them. Relating to this, there were contrasting experiences of leadership as a deputy headteacher for the respondents of this study. Some described the failings of their headteachers, whether through inability to maintain emotional stability in the environment or through a lack of effectiveness. However, many described headteachers who had actively supported them by providing leadership opportunities in school, and then guided them through the process. Whether the experience as a deputy observing headship was positive or negative, the outcome appears to be the same, in that the serving deputy headteachers did not seek headship and therefore had no intention to move from Gronn's (1999) Accession to Incumbency stage. This impacted on the recruitment of headteachers because, for effective recruitment to occur, the post must be perceived as desirable to the potential candidates and the findings from this study indicated that it was not.

This lack of aspiration for headship also became applicable when the final stages of headship were reviewed. For Gronn (1999), divestiture occurred when the individual

moved away from the post to either retirement or a new position. The same was applicable in Early and Weindling's (2007) model as the headteachers followed the 'plateau' stage they either moved to a new post or left the profession. As a person sought a new position they were described as 'enchanted' and the cycle of headship begins again. As with the recruitment of headteachers, the disenchantment of serving headteachers impacted on the retention crisis

The findings of this study revealed that primary headteachers did not appear to be actively planning a succession move to a new headship. The majority had arrived in their current position through a forced progression rather than an actively sought move. Indeed, the vast majority of primary headteachers were in their first headship with no plans for a move to their second headship. This study, whilst supporting the career progression stages, also provided additional insight into the primary headteachers who were in post either at, or moving towards, the plateau stage without the ambition to move to commence a new headship. This study strongly agreed with Earley and Weindling (2007) that headteachers can leave the profession disenchanted, and that this can happen at any stage of their career. For Earley and Weindling (2007), headteachers appear to have a 'shelf-life'. This study indicated that the vast majority perceive this of themselves. It can be assumed that primary headteachers who do not have ambition deem themselves to be in post with no desire to strive towards new headship, or to remain 'enchanted', and therefore perceived themselves to have a 'shelf-life'.

5.5.1 Summary

The career stages of a headteacher, as depicted by Gronn (1999) and Earley and Weindling (2007) have provided theoretical models, and a research base to the findings of this study. Of particular importance to this study, was the move from Gronn's (1999) Formation to Accession stages, alongside Earley and Weindling's Pre-Headship to the Stage 1 Entry and Encounter stage. This was because of the apparent recruitment and retention crisis, as evident in the Policy Exchange (2014) as well as a previously predicted crisis as argued by Rhodes et al. (2008). For Leithwood et al. (2008) careful and planned leadership succession was core to a school's successful development. This study has identified that serving deputy headteachers were not seeking to move to the Accession stage, and therefore was not an effective Pre-headship or preparation stage. Serving primary headteachers were not seeking further promotions, and moreover, their remaining in their post was not secure as the balance between the emotion cost and the coping mechanism can easily be unbalanced. This would place them in danger of Leithwood et al.'s (2008) unplanned succession situation, which became detrimental to the success of the school.

This study has sought to add knowledge to support the recruitment and retention of primary headteachers through understanding and thus enabling them to cope with the emotional cost of headship. If primary headteachers were emotionally positive in their post and outwardly thriving, then it could be argued that for the observing deputies, the post becomes more appealing and they may be more inclined to seek headship and, in the process, prepare themselves.

The findings do not indicate that the emotional impact of headship lessens sufficiently over time for primary headteachers to aspire to remain or seek further challenges in a new school. At each of Earley and Weindling's (2007) stages, headteachers still managed change and uncertainty as a result of rapidly changing government policy and standards. Therefore, whilst they may be better prepared to apply experience from previous challenges to new situations, the emotional impact of fear and stress still remained at high levels regardless of the career stage. This also became relevant when seeking to support primary headteachers in remaining in the profession rather than impacting negatively on the retention crisis.

5.6 Summary and emergent overarching themes

This study provided information which has supported, and concurred with, many views expressed in the literature. However, this study also pointed to some new findings which contribute to knowledge on the emotional impact of headship which in turn supported the recruitment and retention of primary headteachers. This section will present three broader themes that emerged from the preceding discussion. These three broader, overarching themes, will encapsulate the findings across all the research questions.

5.6.1 Emotional resilience

The first overarching theme was the element of emotional resilience and the self-management of emotions. This underpinned all aspects of the coping systems primary headteachers used to remain in the post, and which they perceived enabled them to effectively lead the school team on a day-to-day basis, as well as in times of crisis.

The accumulation of emotional impact on primary headteachers was great indeed, as a result of a variety of factors explored in this study. Fundamental to the headteacher coping in the post appears to be their ability to self-manage their own emotions, both as an immediate reaction and also with a view to long term coping strategies.

5.6.2 Strategic planning for deputies

The second overarching theme to be drawn from this study was the requirement for further strategic planning for succession to support the recruitment and retention of primary headteachers. It was apparent from this study that the post of headteacher was not aspired to. Primary headteachers interviewed overwhelmingly did not seek the position of headteacher as part of an aspirational career plan. They appeared to have accessed the position as a last option to avoid a newly appointed headteacher or school system. Therefore, a wide scale review of deputy headteacher perceptions of headship should be captured and documented to provide a further insight into what inspires and what demotivates potential future headteachers.

5.6.3 Peer support

The third and final overarching theme emanating from this study was the importance of self-sought peer support for headteachers. Whilst there were formal support mechanisms such as NPQH and Local Authority mentoring, these were not deemed to be fully effective or indeed well-received mechanisms of support for serving headteachers. Primary headteachers in this study sought support from colleagues through whom they sought company and shared positive experiences of the role of headship. Even when there were difficult circumstances, the primary headteachers

appeared to seek each other's support on a level that they did not perceive themselves able to with colleagues in school. Therefore, it was imperative that this vital line of support, which headteachers sought, received formal acknowledgement and a review of best practice to ensure that primary headteachers are fully supported and can lead effectively.

The next chapter, Conclusion and Recommendations, will present the overall conclusions drawn from the findings of the study in relation to the main aims and the conceptual framework drawn from the literature review. It will also include the contribution to knowledge derived from the study and provide recommendations to support Fig.1 on the emotional impact of headship.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The respondents in this study generally expressed their challenges in managing the emotional impact of the role and the lack of effective external preparation or coping mechanisms. Therefore, this study identified areas perceived as needing further improvement to better support primary headteachers in their role and to entice and prepare future leaders to take on headship under the overarching themes of Emotional Resilience, Strategic Planning for Deputies and Peer support. This, in turn, would support the recruitment and retention of primary headteachers. The potential contribution of this study to the knowledge of emotional impact on leadership will also be forwarded. A model for the identification of the impact and influence of emotions on headship is also presented as the original contribution for knowledge from this study. Limitations of this study will be made explicit and areas for further research will also be explored.

6.2 Implications of the study and recommendations

The study agreed with the findings from Beatty (2002), Gronn (2003) and Crawford (2004) that the experience of emotions directly impacts on approaches to leadership. To further support these findings, the study presented a model which outlined the impacts of headship and presented the emotional influences under the reasons for

seeking headship (Fig 1). This model was designed to add further detail to Gronn's (1999) and Earley and Weindling's (2007) career stages. The model, presented below, provided the original contribution to knowledge in the support of the conclusion as it drew the structure from the findings of this study.

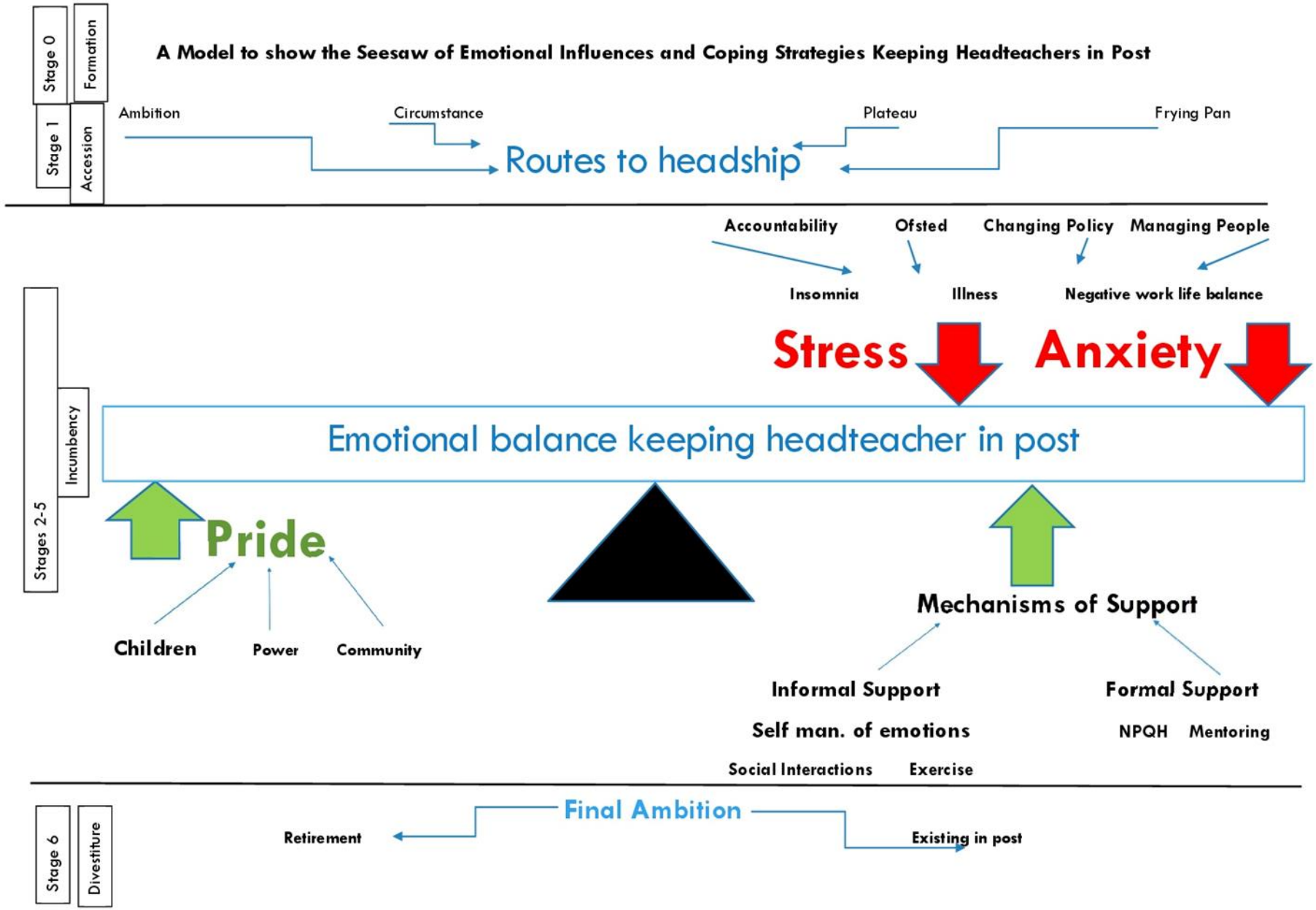

Fig.1 – Emotional Impact on Headship Model

Fig.1 represented an overview of the analysis from the study. It represented the headteacher in post at the centre of the model depicted as a balance. Above the headteacher in post are the four main factors which influenced the headteachers in this study to make the transition to headship from deputy headship; Ambition, Circumstance, Plateau and Frying Pan. Presented on either side of the model are the chronology of headship as described by Gronn (1999) and Earley and Weindling (2007) which provides the overview of the stages of headship alongside the model from this study.

6.2.1 Strategic Planning for Deputies

Fig 1 presented the routes to headship. If the findings of this study were applied to the leadership recruitment crisis, then the experience of primary headteachers does not present a positive model for deputy headteachers. Therefore, they will become less likely to make the transition from the Accession to Incumbency stage (Gronn, 1999). Headteachers reported that they did not desire the role whilst in post as a deputy. Therefore, as depicted in Fig 1, their transition was often through the 'Frying Pan' move, whereby they were unhappy in their current role due to changes in school management, often following the appointment of a new headteacher. Further to this, they perceived that they had to leave their post as deputy and the only option appeared to be the role of headteacher, hence the stage 'out of the frying pan into the fire'.

Whilst Fig 1 presented the various routes to headship that the respondents followed, it was apparent that the vast majority did not actively seek headship as a desired career path. This was evident either through Circumstance route to headship, for

example, as a result of events such as the formation of an academy chain which may have resulted in the secondment, or through the long-term illness of their headteacher resulting in an immediate transition to acting headship. An alternative route was through the Plateau stage, whereby deputy headteachers reached the point of their career which they perceived 'plateaued' out. From this point they believed that the only career opportunity available was headship, although there was reluctance to do this.

Therefore, the study contributes knowledge to the literature on the current recruitment crisis as presented in Fig.1. It was evident that unless headship was perceived as a desirable career choice, the current recruitment crisis will continue until deputy headteachers actively seek headship and were effectively prepared for the role.

6.2.2 Emotional Resilience

This study found that primary headteachers in the role were 'succeeding' because they have employed strategies to cope with the emotional cost, thus enabling them to manage the requirements of the role. However, as already presented, Fig 1 was a very balanced model relying on highly effective coping strategies. Therefore, in agreement with and building upon Allen's (2009) argument that the 21st century model of leadership should incorporate social and emotional qualities as well as task based responsibilities, the findings of this study strongly argued that the emotional support for primary headteachers should be extended to include strategies to support the development of the management of emotions, and the subsequent coping strategies. It was evident from this study that the knowledge and skills gained from formal mechanisms of support through NPQH or through support from Local Authority was

lacking the actual strategies for coping with the emotional cost of headship and the subsequent anxiety and stress that primary headteachers experienced. Based on the model drawn from the findings, his study therefore strongly recommended that the National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers (DfE 2015) were reviewed, to factor in an emotional aspect to support; in particular, the following standards:

> Demonstrate optimistic personal behaviour, positive relationships and attitudes towards their pupils and staff, and towards parents, governors and members of the local community
>
> Create an ethos within which all staff are motivated and supported to develop their own skills and subject knowledge, and to support each other.
>
> Provide a safe, calm and well-ordered environment for all pupils and staff, focused on safeguarding pupils and developing their exemplary behaviour in school and in the wider society.
>
> (DfE 2015)

Drawing conclusions from the model Fig.1 provided by findings as stated, this study recommended the following additional standard:

> Understands the impact of emotions on both themselves and others in their establishment and can self-manage their own emotions to support their emotional wellbeing and that of their staff.

In this study primary headteachers have talked in detail about the emotional impact of their role. Without dispute, primary headteachers experience anxiety and stress alongside positive emotions of pride (Flintham, 2003; Gronn, 2003). The apparent sources of stress and anxiety were linked to the external pressure on the role through Ofsted inspections, community expectations and parental expectations. When the school was experiencing successful outcomes, then the external pressures and measures could form pride, which helped to motivate primary headteachers to remain in post. When the school was experiencing challenge, then this became a contributing

factor to the intense stress and anxiety that primary headteachers experienced, which provided further insight into the headteacher recruitment crisis.

As evidenced in Fig.1, the emotion of pride, derived from the rewards of the role, balances the negative emotions of anxiety and stress, and was mostly powerful enough to retain primary headteachers. This adds knowledge to Earley and Weindling (2007), Southworth (1998) and Harris et al.'s (2003) arguments that there was great personal satisfaction and pride in the rewards to be gained from the role. However, the model was finely balanced. If one strand of emotion overpowered the positive rewards of the role, then the headteacher was in danger of 'stumbling' (Grint, 1999) from the profession. This also applied to the mechanisms of support. If the mechanism failed, or the negative emotion could not be managed through the preferred coping strategy, then the self-management of emotions was not effective and once more the headteacher was in danger of leaving the profession.

It was evident that primary headteachers felt isolated and alone in the profession, especially when facing challenges and experiencing emotional strain. Therefore, it was imperative that there was an external support mechanism which was automatic in reviewing the wellbeing and the emotional resilience of headteacher to enable them to continue in the role. The proposed amendment to the headteacher standard would recognise the importance and wider implications of headteacher wellbeing.

6.2.3 Peer Support

In this study, primary headteachers did not report that they used wellbeing programmes or other formal methods of support when their role was difficult. This study presented further insight into the support that primary headteachers seek when the emotional cost was outweighing the emotional reward. To further support the retention of primary headteachers who may be in danger of 'stumbling' from the profession, this study recommended that the formal methods of supporting primary headteachers through both NPQH and through providing mentors were reviewed. However, alongside this recommendation, this study strongly argued that it should be mandatory for Governing Bodies and Multi-Academy Trust organisations to consider the emotional wellbeing of primary headteachers. In agreement with Beatty and Brew (2004), this study recognised that primary headteachers may experience shame in acknowledging emotions, especially if they were negative. Therefore, the opportunity to discuss and acknowledge emotional awareness and wellbeing should be automatically provided within the cycle of continuing professional development.

Outweighing formal mechanisms of support, the majority of primary headteachers in this study indicated that their most effective professional support was through informal contact with other headteachers whom they identified as people they could trust. Therefore, this study recommends that alongside the opportunity for emotional wellbeing and awareness, Governing Bodies and Multi Academy Trust Organisations must ensure headteachers have identified a professional friend and were strongly encouraged to network.

Whilst primary headteachers who had completed aspects of NPQH reported that their professional development was supported in varying degrees of success, it was the communication with peers which provided them with the greatest level of professional development and support. This provided further support to the argument that Governing Bodies or Multi Academy Trust Organisations must be responsible for ensuring the effective professional development of headteachers through networking opportunities.

6.2.4 Summary of Recommendations

This study was intended to investigate and gauge the perceived emotional impact of headship in England. It has attempted to gather perceptions and information to make judgements and to help inform decisions about future support methods as well as preparation and development of deputy headteachers who may be future school leaders. This study has formulated an additional standard recognising the importance of emotional coping mechanisms and the self-management of emotions and recommends that this be incorporated into the National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers in Headship (DfE 2015). The semi-structured interviews alongside the theoretical models provided by both Gronn (1999) and Earley and Weindling (2007) helped in gaining perceptions from the respondents which fitted the purpose of this study.

The study clearly indicated that serving deputy headteachers did not wish to become headteachers as the perception of headship was not desirable. Therefore, the recruitment crisis will not be abated until the post of headship and the elements of

emotional reward as well as the emotional costs were more fully understood by deputy headteachers. The study has proved that there was a need for greater understanding of emotional cost and effective coping strategies which, if shared with deputies aspiring to be headteachers, would provide greater support and entice more candidates to the post.

Consideration of primary headteachers in post and their emotional resilience and wellbeing was also a crucial factor in abating the recruitment crisis. To retain serving primary headteachers, support and acknowledgement of the emotional costs of the role needs to be formally addressed in the recommended additional headteacher standard. As a result, this would be addressed by the headteacher's supervising body, whether Governing Body or Multi Academy Trust. Subsequent peer support and nurture would be a positive outcome to support and retain primary headteachers.

It was very evident from the findings and the analysis in this study that primary headteachers were crucial to the success of a school, and therefore for the education of children in their care, so ensuring that primary headteachers are motivated and positive should be a priority which is beyond debate.

6.3 Areas for further research

This study has presented research from semi-structured interviews with serving Primary School headteachers. However, Fig.1, the model produced from the findings, clearly highlighted the balance between the emotional costs, which result in anxiety and stress, and the emotional rewards, which keep the headteacher in post. As

portrayed in Fig.1, pride has the power to overcome anxiety, and provides the incentive and motivation to pursue success despite short term losses (Williams and DeSteno, 2008, p.1008). Yet this was very finely balanced so that it was often unbalanced and crisis occurs. The primary headteachers interviewed often recounted situations where they have felt that they haven't coped and it has impacted on their health and wellbeing. Therefore, this study recommends that a study of headteachers who were no longer in post be an area for further research. This would provide further knowledge of factors which tip the balance of coping and result in headteachers leaving the profession. With this knowledge, greater insight into targeted support for primary headteachers to enable them to cope in difficulty would be presented.

An additional area for further research recommended by this study was the factors which either motivate or dissuade potential primary headteachers from seeking headship. This study highlighted that there were barriers perceived by deputy headteachers at the accession stage which stopped them from aspiring to headship. Further study in this area would provide insight into how future candidates for headship can be supported and motivated to apply for headship positions, thus making the field of candidates for headship broader, and increasing the likelihood of suitable and ultimately successful headteachers being appointed.

Fig 1, the contribution to knowledge from this study, provided an indicative overview of the emotional costs and rewards involved in headship. It was intended that this provided an overview to further improve the balance between emotional cost and emotional reward to improve the emotional wellbeing of serving and aspiring primary

headteachers, thus keeping them in their post. It was proposed as a model to support further study.

6.4 Limitations of the study

As indicated in the research chapter, a number of limitations relating to the study were acknowledged, including the small-scale nature of the interviews. However, the research and analysis of this study was carried out with an awareness of the limitations of using the perceptions of the twenty primary school headteachers. The study supported both Silverman's (2014) and Lamont and White's (2005) arguments that small-scale studies can provide a depth in the reflection of the contextual dimensions, for the purpose of this study it has influenced the context of understanding the emotional impact of headship.

The nature of sample, being serving primary headteachers within the West Midlands area was also acknowledged as a limitation as this only gathering the perspectives within one locality and subsequently two local authorities. Due to the nature of headship and the rapidly changing policy, which has been reviewed as part of this study, this posed a limitation to be considered as the interview was likely to reflect headteachers were coping on that particular day. Often, this was dependent on the specific pressures of the role which can change dramatically over a short period of time. However, the sample of primary headteachers was deemed broad enough for the purposes of the study to provide an analysis of the research questions. This then allowed for the range of potential limitations of responses due to the pressure of the

role. Indeed, the range of responses reflected the various emotional costs and rewards of the role.

As a serving headteacher, the researcher's 'self' could be seen as also a potential limitation. In the analysis of insider research, the potential limitations through conflict of interest or lack of subjectivity resulting in a lack of impartiality were acknowledged in the research (Costley et al., 2010; Jorgenson, 1989; Sikes and Potts, 2008). However, as Sikes and Potts (2008, p.12) argued, 'research from the inside can be scholarly and rigorous'. Therefore, every effort was taken to ensure an objective stance was taken by the researcher which was supported by an interview schedule designed to allow the respondents to provide their own reflections.

6.5 Summary

The study has provided some insights into the emotional impact of headship and the coping strategies most effectively used by current primary headteachers in England. It has added to existing studies on emotional intelligence and emotional impact of headship, as well as contributing a review of the current educational landscape for educational policy and inspection. The study confirms the notion that there was a strong emotional impact and influences experienced by primary headteachers enacting their role. The study has added to the knowledge that primary headteachers experience negative emotional cost, and that their most effective method of coping was through the immediate mechanism of the self-management of their own emotions, which instantly enables them to manage the crisis situations that they regularly face. Therefore, the overarching recommendation from this study was that the current

National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers were adapted accordingly, to recognise that the trait a successful headteacher was an awareness of their own emotions and their ability to control those emotions whilst, crucially, having the ability to apply their own coping strategies to alleviate the anxiety and stress of the role. Subsequently, local organisations must ensure that the review of the headteacher's emotional wellbeing becomes mandatory.

The emotional wellbeing and coping strategies cannot be left to chance or for individual headteachers to manage themselves. Formal recognition of the emotional cost of headship needs to be considered as an on-going concern, both nationally by recognising it in the National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers, and locally by Governing Bodies and Academy Trust leadership by incorporating it into the cycle of headteacher professional development. In the case of this study, recommendations will be forwarded to the Department for Education as well as the National College.

As an insider researcher, this study has supported my own understanding and personal perceptions into the role of the headteachers. Costley et al. (2010, p.28) argued that, as an insider 'there is a sense in which your main responsibility is to you, for your organisation and/or professional organization and to also adopt an appropriate approach to collecting data from colleagues that feels right for you and does not impose on others.'

The above quote reflected my personal reflections on my own learning as a researcher throughout this study. I began with a focus of interest, which then developed into the overarching research question. With the progression of the interviews, I was able to

develop my knowledge and experience of insider research, as I was able to visit serving primary headteachers in their schools. It became a common feature that the headteachers were able to literally close the door temporarily on the day-to-day running of the school and reflect of their own experiences of headship. Several remarked on how rare an opportunity it was to reflect on their personal experiences in such a manner. As a researcher, the skill of listening and well-timed probing questions was one which I developed further throughout the research. Indeed, the opportunity to interview headteachers and gather their reflections and experiences was a privilege and their collective responses have informed the conclusions of this study.

My research developed my own understanding and allowed me to further develop knowledge of the emotions and coping strategies involved in headship which, in turn, will inform my profession. I intend to use Hinton et al's (2011, p.9) engaged dissemination method through:

> Distributing project products or information
> Telling others about the project
> Others using the project outcomes
> Spreading and embedding project impact
> An ongoing two-way process aimed at bringing about change

Through my network of primary headteachers and Multi Academy Trust organisations, I will have opportunity to share and professionally discuss the outcomes of my study. Through my role as a headteacher, I will be actively applying the findings of my study to my own staff team to identify and coach future leaders.

As this study has been undertaken, the notion of emotion and wellbeing has become more prominent in the media. Therefore, I have been able to reflect with great interest on the research and theoretical thinking around emotions and the impact on headship and indeed, on my own headship, in particular the notion of the self-management of emotions as this appears to be key in enabling primary headteachers to negotiate the turbulent nature of schools.

Overall, headship has proved to be a rewarding as well as demanding role. Through their duty of care, governments and local organisations have a moral obligation to support serving and aspiring primary headteachers. This will ensure that current and future generations of children were able to attend schools with excellent and sustainable leadership.

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Appendix 1

Interview Schedule

The interview questions are drawn from the literature and are constructed so that they best fit the nature of the research and are as follows;

Can to tell me about what motivated you to become a headteacher?

Now you are in the role, what do you find to be the most enjoyable aspects of headship? What are the least enjoyable aspects?

Could you tell me about the challenges you encounter through your role?

Is there an emotional impact of those challenges on you?

How do you manage those emotional impacts?

Can you recall any previous training or support that you have received which has helped prepare you for dealing and coping with the emotional aspect of headship?

Looking back on your headship, can you tell me about how you first experienced taking on the role of the headteacher?

What advice would you give to someone who was taking up his or her first primary headship?

Appendix 2

Interview Transcript – Headteacher 14

C; If could start by asking you about motivated you to become a headteacher in the first place?

M; That's a difficult one. Partly I've worked for various headteachers, some good some bad, and I through to myself why would I want to work for someone I don't respect and who manages people in a way I don't like, so I'd rather be in control of my own destiny than be controlled by somebody else. So the one thing about being a headteacher is that you do have, not just an illusion of control but a significant amount of control, which should be good for your mental health. Because all the research suggests, doesn't it, the research suggests that people who develop mental health problems are the people at the bottom of the pecking order, so to speak, and the people with the lowest mental health problems are the people with the most challenging jobs and it's not the level of challenge you have in the job it's about the level of control you have in it that affects your mental health. But the stress issue, you know I mean its stress, stress is about, stress isn't really the problem, because if you're in control, stress doesn't really do much to you because you're in control of your health. It becomes pinnacle to your health when you're out of control. Which is where arbitrarily set targets and very high levels of accountability for headteachers, particularly if you're in a school going through a difficult period, that's when you're out of control and that's where some of the biggest issues for headteachers, I think arise.

C; I understand that you've been a headteacher for sixteen years, what have been the highpoints, what gives you that buzz? What are the most enjoyable aspects?

M; Things centred around kids, you know, seeing kids achieve, seeing kids being happy seeing teachers teach in a way that really engages kids as genuine partners in learning. Trying to develop, .seeing young teachers suddenly understand that teaching isn't about them, teaching isn't about performance, and my advice is in lesson observations, teach less, you're teaching too much because the work's got to be done by the kids. So the kids develop and progress in a whole myriad of ways, in football or singing or Spanish, or achieving in maths or English. And also being able to develop people, seeing the penny drop with people and seeing them become more skilled and proficient. And then get people to come back, after they've left, because they realise what they've left behind. Some (laughs) obviously because some I've had issues with, some I've had to go down capability route, and they're not going to come back and say thanks for dismissing me, but actually they should, because I've helped them get out of a job they weren't suited for. But for people to come back as say, you know, we recognise the work you've done, and carry on to have successful careers, so it's people, seeing the people develop, nothing to do with positions, league tables or anything like that, it's people, it's seeing people develop that gives me the greatest pleasure.

C; Do you mind me asking what the least enjoyable aspect is? What the worst part is?

M; Well at the moment, at the moment nothing. As I say, at the moment. I'm 55 now, I've come to the end, I was going to say life then, but you know what I mean, probably true as well though. But compared to facing, well what scares me most is old age, not being able to do the job because I'm old and can't face the job and of having a useful role in life later on. What scared me in the past has been, I think, well one of the things of headteachers is that they are perfectionists and they are very thin skinned and I've been guilty of both those traits as is the outside criticism and being perceived as not being able to do the job by other people. That scares me, in terms of, I've been scared by parents who have threatened to come with baseball bats and get me, you know I've had to come to school and watch myself in the car park because they've said they were going to come and get me. On a physical level I've been frightened but nothing in the job actually.

C; What about when you were a new head, what was your experience like when you took on the role of the headteacher?

M; To be quite honest, the thing was, when I got the acting head post and I remember sitting in the office and I remember, people who I'd said hello to in the past came to me with problems I knew nothing about, like the site manager would say there's an issue with the boiler say, or there's an issue with this, I had to learn about health and safety, office manager would come to me with a problem.

C; Did you give them an answer there and then?

M; Well, what I did was, no, well some things you make a decision on because people were coming to you for a decision, some of which they could work it out for themselves, and it was pretty much a common sense decision, so when it was a common sense decision, you know, the boilers aren't working, well ring somebody bloody up then, you know, what shall I do, but then other things I'd have to bide my time while I sought advice. I spent a lot of my time on the phone asking people. And I think, a lot of the time, where heads succeed is where they have got experienced heads who they can phone to, who they can trust. Because the key issue in this job, what you've got, is you don't want people tittle-tattling to the office, you know, the gossip mongers. You're prey for so much gossip and reputations can be lost, you know, like that because of gossip and what have you, rather than genuinely, so you need people you can trust and can talk to about issues.

C; like network I suppose

M; That's a key thing, but then how do you provide new heads with that network because there were people I'd phone up to ask that I knew but I couldn't ask them some things because I felt too embarrassed to ask, whereas really I needed somebody who I could absolutely trust with my life.

C; someone ask the most basic questions of, I suppose

M; Yes, that's what you need, someone you can absolutely trust, who's got the experience, because I speak to people on the phone, from the office over various matters. And then, the things that worry me at the moment, when I say nothing, I'm being taken to an industrial tribunal and that worries me, but actually turning up to the tribunal and seeing this woman face to face doesn't worry me but actually losing it and having a cost to the school, worries me. So things that worry me are things that affect the school and the responsibility I bear for the livelihood of fifty or so people. You know, the cuts worry me, I've got people who rely on this place for their income. Have I got to make people redundant, that worries me.

C; Is there an emotional impact of that challenge on you? How do you manage it?

M; I've got better as I've got older. I'm articulating that worry now, but what I've learnt, I mean certain things for example this tribunal, I'm speaking about that now, but there's nothing I can do. The cuts, I'll worry about them when it happens. Previously, when I was younger, I'd take all these worries home with me and spend nights, you know, with these spinning round my head but you realise it's a waste of effort, and eventually makes you less effective at your job. And there's nothing you can do about it. That's one of the greatest gifts to behold, to know what you can and can't do and what's worth worrying about and what you can change and what you can't.

C; Is there any training or support that helps you manage that emotional aspect?

M; No. There's no help. You might have colleagues you can off load on if you trust them enough. Yes, there is a counselling service but in terms of the system, there's nothing in the system that supported headteachers in that way. And actually I've talked to headteachers and if you listen to headteachers you realise you're not the only one think and feeling like that. It's a common feeling amongst heads. Particularly heads in challenging circumstances. Because you're very much on your own. The local authority, the SIPs want to distance themselves. You know, you're the captain of Titanic and your heading towards an ice berg or you've hit the iceberg and your beginning to sink. The local authority aren't rowing over to you with some golden kit to fix the hull they're actually standing on another ship and noting the degree of descent. Because actually, the ability of the local authority to intervene and improve things is actually very weak. One of the benefits of going into a category you get this free seminar from HMI, good bloke actually, when I went along to see him, good bloke, and he said watch the cavalry, because your job now is to be the gate keeper. Because you'll get the cavalry ride over the horizon to come and rescue you and there'll be hordes of them. And if they ride into your village they'll trample your huts into the ground and bugger off over the other side having just crushed people. And I could see that in school after school after school. Local authorities tend to employ people who are perceived as experts, rather than people who are co-learners, who've had some experience, who can work alongside you. So your job as head is to be gatekeeper, to keep people at arm's length, which is easier in some circumstances than others. I see

a lot of heads now getting themselves into trouble, personnel issues, reviews, we all get into trouble with staff because we manage people. You can't avoid that, but they get themselves into real problems because they're turning to face the authority rather than turning to face their organisation. SO local authority comes, we want this data, we want that, we want this, and you might have three of four different people coming to the organisation wanting different things, staff are spinning like button tops and the head's under pressure and turning on the staff. One thing I've learnt, well always been, is that you don't turn on your staff, you back them. A bit like Alex Ferguson, you see him on telly, Man U have had a bad game, he takes it on the chin, but he won't blame it on any players, it might well be a different team that turns out the next Saturday, because he's dealt with that internally, because externally you don't turn on your troops. You find so many heads now that are doing that because they're so lonely. And actually the local authority, the way it's set up isn't supportive, the phrase I've used is a rope supports a hanging man, because that's the way the local authority supports you, because they're being judged by their masters, the DFE, and they don't want to be perceived as a local authority that's got schools in categories, as failing, so it's in their interests to keep you at arm's length, if you like.

C; Do you think that any headteachers ever voice that they are lonely, that it is a scary job, is that conversation ever had? The emotional side, is it ever acknowledged?

M; Different people, on different occasions at different times, we all acknowledge that it's a tough job emotionally, and people I talk to that are lonely enough acknowledge that. And then people you see, that I can emphasise with, are going through low points,

who will be more open about it because they're under incredible pressure and stress. And of course, because at the end of the day, the success or otherwise of a school depends on the quality of the leadership and I'm saying that with very big inverted commas and a very big underline, because actually, the success or quality of a school, in my opinion, depends in the quality of the intake. If you look at Field's latest stuff on child poverty, where he talks about the 0-5 being a key, what we call the Foundation stage, the biggest determining factor is economic and social conditions, end of, end of, but it's a fact that's being denied by the school improvement movement, the English speaking world in the last 20 years and somehow to isolate school improvement from the context that it sits is madness. Because schools are actually very complex organisations and my view very much is challenge, particularly schools in inner city communities with social deprivation schools become overwhelmed by the challenge. There's a lack of capacity rather than a lack of competence, right, and people respond to being overwhelmed. There's too much information, there's too much for them to take in and they respond to being overwhelmed by giving the impression of being incompetent and they get stressed. Where really what you need to be doing, what made a difference to me when making sense of this organisation, taking this organisation forward from, basically a category to satisfactory, because it was a category as soon as I took it over, even though there was no such thing as a category then, it was serious weaknesses then, and we got told eighteen months after the OfSTED, that even though they didn't have the category at the time, they retrospectively applied it, then we were satisfactory, then a whole number of circumstances changed and we went down to inadequate

(Phone call from teaching assistant stops interview)

People have been really low mate, can't shake it off. Well I've had a really bad week, and I came in when I was ill and had the Thursday off and I shouldn't have come in but I came back on the Friday because I had lesson obs. The key thing, the key thing to this job mate, is, and there's a lot of heads in this job who aren't people people, if that makes sense, and this job's a relationships job. Clear systems for learning and all the rest of it but it's about motivating and managing people, it's not about sitting at your computer counting your level 4s, you know, the head was in his counting house, counting out his 4s (laughs), do you know what I mean? You've got to deal with people. Because I'm not being cynical, but in that interaction there (refers to the phone call with teaching assistant) I bought something there. It's like when you're dealing with kids, I'm always saying to my staff, kids have got an emotional bank account, and what you do is you invest in it by recognising them, speaking to them, not patronising them or praising them, but just noticing them as people.

C; But who puts the pennies in the headteacher's emotional bank account?

M; Nobody. Nobody. And at some point you've got to make a withdrawal. And the same with staff. One of the big things you find, is if you change the planning proforma, you may as well throw a hand grenade in the bloody staffroom, and I've done it a few times, but what you're doing with the planning, is actually trying to change the way people think. You think you're just changing a piece of paper, you're not, you're changing the thinking processes, right, they've got used to thinking in a certain way. So going back to this emotional bank account, you know, very rarely, do I stand,

because I listen to people, do I stand in position, because I have to have all the teachers together because I made the changes in the grid method, we still use it now and it's a good method, but I have to stand in front of the teachers and say one, this isn't for ever, it's a trial period and we'll give it three months and I know you don't like it but you're going to have to trust me here, I think this is a good thing to do. Now you can only do that, and get people to buy into it if you've got the moral authority as well as the technical authority, you know, people respect the fact that you can go into a classroom and teach, so they know you know what you're on about. But also the moral authority so they know you're not someone who's always pushing them around. It's like with kids isn't it, the teacher who's always shouting is the weakest teacher, whereas all teachers need the nuclear bomb but once in a blue moon, so it has an impact. So coming back to this emotional bank account, you know you invest and you make a withdrawal, you do it with staff and you do it with kids and the important thing is who's investing in headteachers? Well actually nobody invests in you. A good school advisor could do it, and I've had some decent ones, a bad school adviser is incapable of doing it. There's a whole system, going back to this head's in his counting house, well local authorities have often been taken over by bean counters. The data people are running the show no because that's how you demonstrate, because that's how OfSTED justify your existence, rather than people who understand how people work, the psychology of people, and have an understanding of systems rather than blame. Because one of the things is blame, it's very much a blame culture, the whole thing is blame, you know, it's the leadership to blame, school's gone down the pan, weak leadership, oh that head. And then that ball starts rolling, you know, in my own organisation I've had concerns regarding a NQT. It's very easy to get sucked into the negative, because I've had some negative vibes from people, and I'm noticing some

negative things myself. But the problem is, when you start thinking about that person in a negative way, you only spot things that substantiate that negative view, and you're only going one bloody way mate. And at some point, if it is capability, you have to go down that route, because you have to, but you have to be more positive with people. Head's aren't positively managed, in my view.

C; Do you think headteachers, do you as yourself, invest in yourself?

M; Well I think, to be quite honest, the job requires an immense amount of emotional intelligence, most of which I ain't got in that sense, in terms of intra personal rather than inter personal intelligence, there's the two differences, you got to have the interpersonal intelligence and you've also got the intrapersonal intelligence, haven't you. And for a lot of, well not a lot of heads, people vary, we're all different, I personally would find, well Sarah would say, I'm too negative about the organisation. I never see the 'goods', it's almost as though I'm too scared to see the goods, because the rug could be pulled from underneath your feet. I can't, I find that very difficult. Sometimes I can take satisfaction from, I mean like XXXXX there, who was just on the phone, I took pleasure in that because I know we've done the right thing there and I think I came into this job to help, not to hinder. In terms of who tells you you do a good job? Occasionally you get some nice feedback, but nothing systematic, one of my senior managers, they always take the pee out of him because he's always saying nice things to me (laughs), and the banter is, you know, he's creeping, I play up to it as well, but I'd like to think he meant it, but he worked in different organisations, and his view is he feels more valued here, that he did in previous organisations, not all of them, so when

I get that kind of feedback, I'm getting a lot of my satisfaction from the people related issues. And at the end of the day you can talk about this business of standards, standards standards, you know, we've got to raise, well yes we have, but standards are for academic skill and reading, writing arithmetic whatever, are embodied within a human being, so standards are about human beings. The key to people, is getting them to feel confident about potential. You get kids to believe in themselves and you challenge them in the right way, and same with staff, you can really move things. You don't do that by being critical of people. And similarly, if you looked at heads, if I was to have any say in running a wider group, educational system, you know I'm too long in the tooth for it now and I certainly wouldn't want to work for a local authority in the current climate, then the key thing I would be doing, would be looking after my people, number one, looking after my heads. If I was the leader of education in Sxxxxxxx I would be visiting every school at least once a year. You've got a 100 schools, and asking 'how are you?', just sitting in. It's like Montgomery with the 8th army, he gave all the troops the impression he knew about their family history. I heard a story about Brighouse, Brighouse pulled up outside a school in Brum, allegedly, phoned back to the office, they'd have a file, get the SP on what they knew about the person's lives, they've just had a divorce, or they've just done this or that, the deputy's been there 17 years, so he'd get himself briefed with the people, then he'd go in, and he'd go in with the view of dealing with them as a human being. The only time I've ever had the lead person in Sxxxxxx in, is two times, once to tell me I had a task group, and the second time to tell me I was being put into an intensive school in the black country challenge, both of which were put across as punitive, and really, I almost saw this as an attempt to break my spirit, because actually, some of the support they put in is about breaking Headteacher's spirit. A mate of mine had the fortune, you know, led his school into a

category and led it out again, great bloke, but he went to the free seminar from HMI, and HMI said, as they walked in an sat down, there's two types of people in this situation, there's those people who when the going gets tough, they ain't going to cope, they're going, and there's the people, like yourselves, who are going to change it, because you've come to change it and you're staying. And that's never been recognised by the local authority and the fact it they've got to see heads as part of the solution not part of the problem. That's the issue, fix the blame. Fix the problem not fix the blame and it's very easy to blame somebody. I read a Brighouse book, said you can be successful in one organisation not another and he made the point in the book about a head of a small school, an outstanding school and went to a larger organisation and failed. Went off with stress or something, but it all went wrong for the individual, because success is contextualised. And I guy I was at a meeting with the other week from Wolverhampton made a very sensible point, just because you're an outstanding head, number one, doesn't mean you'll be an outstanding head in a school you're going to support. Number two, it doesn't necessarily mean that you actually are an outstanding head because you could be lucky enough to be at the conflux of a variety of things that have come together and happened. And equally, you know, equally as has happened to me you could be at the conflux of a series of negative things that happened, that came together, one of which was my own inexperience, do you know what I mean, and understanding, I needed help understanding, so there was an element of my own competence in there. It was I didn't know stuff, not that I was incapable of learning. But those come together, something goes tits up and you look bad.

C; How do you manage that? You as a person? What are your coping mechanisms with getting through the hard parts of headship like that?

M; Don't know mate. Think I just endured. I used to cycle every day. I do less now but I used to find that exercise definitely helped. But I'm a very keen cyclist and one of the things with long distance cycling, as you're to-ing and fro-ing, is you have to endure pain. And what you have to understanding, sometimes in this job, is if you want to create anything, you have to endure pain. And it's your capacity to endure, at the same time as trying to learn as a real key point. I wouldn't be here now, I wasn't like an old punchy boxer, I've taken my beatings but I keep coming back for more. And eventually you learn.

C; Did you know that was going to happen before you went into headship?

M; No, no.

C; What kind of mind-set did you go into headship with?

M; I went into it with, because I'd only been out the classroom, I was deputy head before I was acting head, for a term and a half. And then they didn't appoint, so I was acting head for a year. And then eventually got the substantive headship. So I've had

a very unusual path to headship. I came very quickly into it, so in some ways I was naïve. A chance arose so I took it, you know, I had a go.

C; Do you think you saw the bigger picture before you jumped?

M; No. no. I think actually, if I was back, if I was that young, a man with hair and a waist line in my thirties, knowing what I know now, would I have gone into headship? Probably not. Probably not. The position I'm in now, I'm enjoying the job now, but I'm very aware that it could go wrong at any time, because it's that, but I'm enjoying the job now, but getting to where I am now worth what I went through emotionally, getting through those difficult times? No. Well I certainly wouldn't have taken on this school. The previous head, I remember her saying to me, I didn't understand it at the time, she felt, because she left for a bigger school, and she knew the quality of teaching, but I didn't, because I didn't realise how poor the material of the team I was working with was, in terms of their psychology, their attitude to the children was appalling, their understanding of what teaching was. There were too many people incompetent. And she said to me, I mean, I didn't understand, a friend of mine went from acting headship to headship and he had a nervous breakdown, was one of her parting shots, and I thought whoa, I didn't really understand what that meant but now looking back, one of the reasons she got out was not just to go to a bigger school, she knew, it was going to hit the fan here, in terms of the human material of the teachers and the behaviour of the children at the time, which was outstanding at the last OfSTED, was appalling. She was dropping me in, she hadn't meant to, I've got a lot of time for her, but she was dropping me into a very difficult situation, but I had no inkling about how difficult

the situation was. The local authority at the time, which was the previous regime didn't know the schools well so had no inkling. I remember an advisor at the time coming to see me just before OfSTED and saying this is a good school, if it wasn't a good school don't you think the local authority would know and would have done something about it? Oh yeah, yeah. She then went back to her school which was in measures and I was then asked to take it over. It was really interesting I was asked, by the way, it was because I'd had a relatively successful OfSTED here and then HMI had come back and unknown to us had retrospectively applied serious weaknesses, no-one had told me, I got a phone call out the blue, no-one had told me, that they were coming in to do a two day monitoring of my OfSTED action plan, didn't even know what was happening, no expectation. Guy called XXXXX, nice bloke actually, enjoyed it, because I've always enjoyed inspections, good intellectual challenge, because I like being in the heat of battle, it's when you've got time to reflect you worry, but once you active you don't give a monkeys, I love it, love the challenge, trying to out flank the buggers, you know, it's really, it's good fun. I always stress inspections as being good fun, because they are, actually.

C; you get the buzz then

M; Oh yeah, yeah, I enjoy it. I like the buzz. I'm very short term in that, I find the longer term planning for improvement, something I've had to learn more about. But then you get good people, you free them up and get them moving it's a snowball that starts rolling. Because good people start behaving well and they train other good people, and things happen irrespective of you. It's like when you've got a class of kids, kids

will learn irrespective of you, you just create the environment for them to learn in, and that's when teachings at its best and you intervene at the key moments. And the key thing about teaching and with headship is timing. When do you intervene? When do you decide I'm going to do something about this? So they asked me to take over this school, they came down from the local authority. I remember having a meeting at the training TDC, the heads of school improvement at the time, and they wanted an answer on whether I'd take over XXXXX. I said no, because I said if I take over XXXX my school'll go tits up. I didn't say it in that form of English, of course, so I stayed here. Stayed here and we eventually got a satisfactory OfSTED in 2000, and then went into a category in 2005, and then had a satisfactory OfSTED then a good OfSTED. Really interesting if you stand back. They guy who did take it over, a headteacher I won't name, used to run discos for us, went from his school to XXXX, didn't want the substantive job, so they eventually sorted XXXX out, he got them out of a category, they put a new head in, he went back to his previous post, hadn't been there for 18 months and, of course his school went into a category. Where've you been? And what happened to him? They got rid of him. Unbelievable. And there was a guy, great bloke, head, he got a job with the local authority and made the mistake of saying September he'd got an OfSTED coming. Said I'll just stay and see the OfSTED through, local authority said ok. Has the OfSTED goes into measures. Because he's deferred the authority job till the January he's got no local authority job. They put the pressure on him, pulled the local authority job, must have cut him a deal and off he goes. It's just unbelievable. So you're treating headteachers like football managers. Hire or fire. The only difference is football managers, particularly premiership managers, get heavily remunerated. It's a hire or fire culture, that head's crap, let's get rid. And the local authority sometimes, well I don't think, some people have got the

skills, if you're lucky enough to get an advisor who's got those sorts of skills, like I had to sit down with and NQT yesterday, gave him a satisfactory, going to pass him, but said to him, these are the things you need to improve, these are the things you need to do. In fact I gave him a harsh message, because if he doesn't improve in two terms, I'm in the difficult position where me and you are going to have a major problem. But, you can do it because this is what you have to do.

C; you were saying to him you believe in him

M; Yes, I was saying I believe, look, you've done all these good things, this is your area of weakness, this is what you need to do, this is how I'm going to help you. They haven't got that capacity to help, to relate to heads. They haven't got that capacity. Because I think they're so busy justifying their existence, it's so mad, they're lost in it because their jobs are on the line, well I won't go there, but in theory a SIPs job, if they're misjudged a school a SIPs job should be a the line, and the senior people in the authority who've misjudged schools, they're still in post and I'm getting, well, that's a bit of the aside, but there you go.

C; What advice you would you a new head taking on their first headship?

M; Well, I said this before, there's two bits, well three key bits of advice, have somebody you can trust, who isn't going to judge you and isn't going to tittle tattle to anybody, who can keep it confidential, who you can off load to and who may be able

to give you some advice about what to do and who at the very least they don't know, not someone who'll come up with the solution because that's not going to help you. Someone who can sit beside you whilst you grapple with the problem. Secondly, don't mix up your sense of self with the organisation. Disentangle your sense of self because the organisation and judgements about the organisation especially the school are not judgments about you as a person. It's very easy, you know, you attack my school and I bleed. That's happened to heads of outstanding schools, get very precious about the organisation. The school isn't you. And thirdly you've got to have a very strict demarcation line on work and non-working life and my strong advice to anyone would be to put a working day in and then don't take work home. I think, because once you take work home that's when. You know, you hear stories about heads got themselves into trouble, emailing staff on a Sunday night. You don't want to be thinking about problems at work, and emailing people on a Sunday night, that's just bloody stupid, so think about work in a working day. Because that means, it's the advice I gave to the NQT actually, because that means come in, you know, I'm in here at quarter to seven every morning and I'll leave probably most days, well I say most days, somewhere between four thirty and six, if I've got a meeting it might be later, but when I go home I go home. And occasionally you have to take work with you if you get behind with stuff but 90% of the time you go home, so in a sense you shed the skin of work. And probably the fourth tip, because I said three but I've got four, is try, because there's that quote isn't there, only worry about the things you can do something about, and try and compartmentalise your worry, because if you've got a big issue coming up you can't do anything about it for three months, well you put it in a box, put the lid on it and leave it there. And if you can't change something, don't worry about it. All you can do is respond with key principles, and you've got to have some key principles, morals,

because this job is a moral job. You're dealing with human beings here, you're dealing with people's lives. It's about treating people in a moral way. There's a moral purpose to this job. I'm not a religious man, I'm an atheist, I was born a Catholic but I decided I was an atheist at the age of twelve, much to my parents' dismay, and I'm not just an atheist I'm an anti-God atheist, if God existed I'd shot him would be one of my favourite quotes, so it's not about religion, but there is a moral purpose because what you're doing here is building a community. And you've got, it's almost a sacred trust, you've got people who depend on you, which can be quite a crushing burden to carry sometimes, that they depend on you. And the key thing, you asked me this before, what worries me the most, well failure, well not so much that, letting people down. If I let down my kids and my staff, from my ineptitude or laziness or whatever, if I let them down, that's what worries me the most. If I can go home at the end of the day and think, I've done everything I can today, even when there's been difficulties or issues, I've treated people with courtesy and respect and I've not bullied or brutalised anybody, I treated people, if I've got to get rid of a member of staff and it's fair, it's clear it's transparent and I divorced the act from the person, as you do when kids misbehave. So, there you go.

C; Thank you very much