**SCHOOL PRINCIPALS’ CAREER PATH:**

**Ireland, Cyprus and Malta Sample**

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D.Ed Thesis presented to Dublin City University, School of Education Studies as a requirement for the degree of

Doctor in Education

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**Declaration of Approval**

*I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor in Education is entirely my own work, that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.*

Signed:

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**Abstract**

Leadership studies have been conducted for decades; however one of the leading studies about principals’ career path belongs to Peter Ribbins who carried it out in the United Kingdom in 1997. After this research a collective research project involving Singapore, Hong Kong, Cyprus and Malta was carried out under the leadership of Peter Gronn and Peter Ribbins.

The purpose of this study is exploring principals’ career path as well as updating the previous research in Cyprus (Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003) and Malta (Bezzina & Cassar, 2003) in the same field. The study has been carried out in Ireland, Cyprus and Malta with fifteen primary school principals, five principals from each country. In order to have an in depth idea about their career development, one of the qualitative methods, the interview method, was used for gathering the data.

The analysis showed that the reasons for becoming a teacher are various; on the other hand the reasons for becoming a principal are similar. The majority of them wanted to become a principal to have power and because they believed they could manage the school better than the previous principals as they had the managerial skills to do the job. However there is no initial training to prepare the principals for the role. In terms of management they all stated that they are supportive, respectful, democratic, a role model, honest, collaborate and approachable and that they delegate, give responsibility and pay attention to good communication. Irish principals stated that they use these features in enabling more effecting teaching and learning. However both Cypriot and Maltese principals said bureaucracy and administrational work does not allow them to be involved in the teaching and learning process, and this is the reason that they cannot play an effective role in enabling better teaching and learning in the school. Their educational and managerial values include being democratic, collegial, a team worker, fair, transparent and respectful. However sometimes they experience difficulties in putting these values into practice. All of the principals stated that they dislike managerial tasks and bureaucracy as well as dealing with difficult people. On the other hand in spite of these difficulties, the majority of the principals stated they still enjoy principalship.

In conclusion the results show that the findings of this study correspond to previous research in Cyprus and Malta. However some differences were spotted. Results also show that principals experience similar challenges to those they stated in earlier studies.

These results can hopefully be used by policy makers to design new policies and improve the education of principals for the future.

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to explore Irish, Cypriot and Maltese primary school principals’ career path, how they are made and make themselves.

**Background**

In some countries, an essential linkage between leadership and learning can be understood to involve incumbent senior leaders in schools, enabling teachers to improve their practice by fostering and supporting continued teacher professional development (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Obviously, leadership is clearly becoming a more and more significant part of a teacher's professional life (Can, 2009). School leaders are capable of having significant positive effects on student learning and other important outcomes (Robinson et al. 2009; Silins & Mulford, 2002; Waters et al. 2003). Becoming a principal requires a long and difficult process. During the process, principals’ lifes are unavoidably affected. At the beginning it is necessary to socialize with the families, school and other reference groups. Then they seek advancement and in due course prepare for promotion to principalship. They develop their capacity and relationships with their peers and patrons. Finally they become principals and need to become familiar with the workplace norms of the school and community. Subsequently they develop confidence in their ability to manage the school. After around eight years they become very confident and competent. Experience and survival gives them a sense of control and the knowledge that they have already largely mastered the demands of principalship (Ribbins, 1999). Some believe that this makes them even more effective as leaders. After this stage, for some there is the prospect of disenchantment, at the pit of disillusion and loss of commitment which may stem from the previous phase. Some of them still look forward to new challenges to face for continuing professional development. After this stage, and after years, the final phase, leaving principalship arrives (Ribbins, 1999). Parkay and Hall (1992) grouped all these stages as survival, control, stability, educational leadership and professional actualization.

The process of principals’ professional development also includes promotion. McMahon (1999) cited promoting the continuing professional development of teachers as a priority for any government which aims to raise educational standard. As increasing educational standard is parallel with increasing school effectiveness, school leaders also undertake major roles such as guiding their schools through the challenges posed by an increasingly complex environment, including curriculum standard, achievement benchmarks, programmatic requirements and other policy directives from many sources which generate complicated and unpredictable requirements for schools. Principals must respond to increasing diversity in student characteristics, including; cultural background and immigration status, income disparities, physical and mental disabilities and variation in learning capacities (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

Principals and other senior staff, who have formal authority by virtue of their appointments, are leaders and may exercise leadership. The exercise of leadership by the principal thus involves making clear the meaning of activity in the school, by posing and securing answers to questions such as the following; What are the purposes of our school? How should we as educators work with students to reflect our purposes? What should be the relationship between our school and its local community? (Beare et al, 1997). Undoubtedly more effective leadership is possible with further studies and inferences through those studies. Unfortunately there is limited research about principals’, in other words, school leaders’ career progression and it is important to carry out additional research on school leadership, in a narrow sense principalship.

**Context**

It is important to attribute this study to fundamental research in the field as well as limiting the scope of it. There are various branches of research in the field on educational leadership. Whilst some of them focus on effectiveness in the organisation, others aim to explore principals’ career development to have an in-depth idea of what school principals’ experience. Admittedly it is essential to narrow the purpose of this study, in order to describe the basis of the research.

One of the most important studies in the field is probably Peter Ribbins’ leadership study which was presented at National Conference of the British Educational Administration Society in the University of Oxford (Ribbins, 1997). This study has been influential on many other studies in the field. In 2003, a collective research project was carried out under the leadership of Peter Gronn and Peter Ribbins in four island states: Singapore (Chew at al. 2003), Hong Kong (Wong & Ng, 2003), Cyprus (Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003) and Malta (Bezzina & Cassar, 2003) to explore school principals’ career development. These studies aimed to investigate principals’ career path under these themes:

* The influence of environment on principals’ careers
* The influences which shaped their value
* Their reasons for becoming teachers
* Their career before the principalship
* Their reasons for becoming school principals
* How they went about becoming principal
* How well prepared they felt
* Their views on the principalship and influences which have shaped them
* The evolving role of the principal
* Their level of involvement in issues (Bezzina & Cassar, 2003; Chew et al, 2003; Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003; Wong & Ng, 2003).

I am inspired by Peter Ribbins’s leadership study of 1997 with school principals, that was extended to different countries such as; Singapore, Hong Kong, Cyprus and Malta and aim to update the studies in Cyprus and Malta which were carried out by Pashiardis and Ribbins (2003) and Bezzina and Cassar (2003) approximately a decade ago. On the other hand, I am also aiming to carry out this study in Ireland to explore career development of Irish school principals.

**My Background**

I graduated as a pre-school teacher and continued my education by doing a master’s degree about social status of pre-school children in kindergardens. Then I worked in Near East University as an assistant lecturer and gave courses on classroom management and school experience. After a year I applied for a teaching role with the Ministry of Education in Cyprus and worked in three different schools as a pre-school teacher. In order to continue my professional development I decided on doing a doctorate in education and moved to Dublin.

In Cyprus there is a big deficiency in leadership studies as well as educational reforms. While I was teaching in North Cyprus, I observed that educational aims change as a result of the political point of view of the party in power and unfortunately there is no consistency in education policy as the power party changes after the elections. On the other hand, unfortunately the universities in North Cyprus do not have educational leadership programmes or even courses to support teachers and principals during their career. Furthermore, promotions are given on basis of applicants’ ages and political parties, which bring arise to unmotivated teachers (Turkish Cypriot Teachers’ Union, 2011; 2012).

Considering my country’s problems in educational leadership and lack of leadership programmes in the universities, I decided to complete this study for the benefit of myself and my country. After reading about studies in other countries, I also wanted to update the previous research and then apply the same topic to Ireland. I believe this study will be beneficial to the Cypriot education system and educational leadership studies in Cyprus. Not only that, but also updating previous studies in Cyprus and Malta will enlighten the existing situation and will prove whether earlier studies have been effective on the educational systems in those countries. On the other hand, carrying out this study in Ireland will also enable the observation of the Irish school principals’ career paths and will add a new study to the Irish context.

**Aim of the Study**

This study was inspired by the initial studies of educational leadership by Peter Ribbins (1997). The purpose of this study is to explore principals’ career path, how they are made and make themselves. This is an updated study of a part of a collective research project that was led by Gronn and Ribbins (2003) in Cyprus and Malta, but now also included Ireland. This study aims to update previous studies in Cyprus (Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003) and Malta (Bezzina & Cassar, 2003) as well as applying it to the Irish context.

**Research Questions**

The overarching research question is:

* How school principals are made and make themselves?

The research question will be addressed by focusing on the following questions:

* What are the reasons for becoming a teacher?
* What are the reasons for becoming a principal?
* How the respondents went about becoming a school principal?
* How well prepared they felt?
* What is their vision for the school?
* What are their educational and managerial values?
* How they manage people, resources and external relationships?
* What part they play in enabling better teaching and learning?
* How they evaluate themselves as an educational leader?
* What are the difficulties they face and how they perceive principalship?
* What are the differences between Irish, Cypriot and Maltese principals in terms of their career path?
* What are the differences between the previous studies in Cyprus and Malta and this study, in terms of the outcome?

Following a review of relevant literature, it became essential to understand school principals’ career development and compare the previous research results with this study’s results, in order to understand how and if previous research was effective in leadership studies.

**Methodology**

The data gathering was carried out by using the interview method which is one of the qualitative methods. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (Kvale, 1996). Interviews enable participants to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view. In this sense the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embedding is inescapable (Cohen et al, 2000). In this research the open ended interview method was used in which the interviewer allows the interviewee the freedom to speak and to ascribe meanings while bearing in mind the broader aims of the project (Silverman, 2008).

Regarding the purpose of this study, principals were asked questions about the reasons for becoming educators, their career before the principalship, reasons for becoming school principals, how they went about becoming principal, how well prepared they felt, their views on principalship including their vision and values, the evolving role of principal and the level of involvement in issues. The rationale for choosing this approach is having in-depth understanding on interviewees’ experiences, which is required to understand career paths of school principals, the aim of this study**.** On the other hand, because this is an update study, I wanted being loyal to the original research of Peter Ribbins.

**Outline of the Study**

This study sets out to understand primary school principals’ career development. It is important to contextualize what leadership studies were carried out in Ireland, Cyprus and Malta to understand how leadership studies are important in these countries. Chapter 2 provides a contextual framework of leadership studies in Ireland, Cyprus and Malta. Chapter 3 includes the review of academic literature on leadership studies in the world and related studies about career development. It indicates initial leadership studies, educational leadership, leadership models and research on school principals’ career development, whilst Chapter 4 develops a rationale for the selection of the interview method and describes the research design and approach. Chapter 5 presents findings of the study and finally Chapter 6 includes a discussion and conclusions.

**Chapter 2: An Overview of Leadership Studies in Ireland, Cyprus and Malta**

**Introduction**

This study sets out to understand primary school principals’ career paths. The study focuses on principals in three different countries: Ireland, Cyprus and Malta. Therefore it is essential to know the contextual background of these countries.

This chapter introduces educational background and leadership studies in the Irish, Cypriot and Maltese contexts. In order to reach all the important studies in the Cyprit and Maltese context, the researcher has contacted Petros Pahiardis and Christopher Bezzina who are the leading researchers in those countries.

**Education and Professional Training in Ireland**

The twenty first century Irish education system consists of state-funded primary schools, special schools and private primary schools. State funded schools include religious schools, non-denominational schools, multi-denominational schools and Gaelscoileanna which is Irish medium schools (Education in Ireland, 2011).

Children are not obliged to attend school until the age of six, but due to an increase in women’s labour force, 65% of four year olds and most five year olds are enrolled in the infant classes in primary schools. State funded education in Ireland is available at all levels, unless parents decide to send their child to private institutions. Pre-school education is usually provided by privately funded childcare facilities. However The [Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme](http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/pre_school_education_and_childcare/early_childhood_care_and_education_scheme.html) supplies free early childcare and education for pre-school aged children (Citizens Information, 2011).

Primary schools operate an eight-year programme, consisting of two kindergarden years, followed by classes of one to six. The primary education system emphasizes a child-centred approach and is founded on the belief that high quality education enables children to realize their potential as individuals and to live their lives to the fullest capability appropriate to their particular stages of development (Education Ireland, 2011). The aims of the curriculum are to ensure that all children are provided with learning opportunities that recognize and celebrate their uniqueness, develop their full potential and prepare them to meet the challenges of the twenty first century. The curriculum aims to foster the development of key skills in communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, inquiry, investigation and analysis, and social and personal awareness and interaction. The curriculum also emphasizes the need for greater attention to be paid to students with special educational needs and emphasizes the importance of achieving functional literacy and numeracy (Education Ireland, 2011).

During the nineteenth century classes were taught in English and this caused the downplaying of Irish as the native tongue. In the twentieth century, after Ireland gained its independence from Britain, there was a clamor to restore the teaching of Irish once again in schools at all levels which was one of the biggest reforms in Irish education. Irish educational reforms continued after independence from Britain and in 1998, the INTO the teachers union funded a committee for the study of literacy issues in Ireland. In the same year, the Ministry of Education and Science announced that the government had prioritized the need of special education students. There would be trained teachers available and the support and infrastructure to serve their needs (State University, 2011). More recently, the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act of 2004 aimed at providing a legislative framework for the provision of services to children with special needs, including those in the age range from birth to six years, and at bringing essential clarification to the role of the State and its various agencies in the provision of services (Garrouste, 2010).

In Ireland the system of teacher training differs between primary and secondary level for school teachers. Typically secondary level teachers complete a primary degree at university and then follow up with the Postgraduate Diploma in Education or Higher Diploma in Education (secondary) again at university. Primary school teachers complete a three year programme, leading to a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree, at one of the five teacher training colleges; The Church of Ireland College of Education, St. Patrick's College, Mary Immaculate College, Froebel College of Education and Marino Institute of Education (Department of Education and Skills, 2012). For all teaching posts in secondary, community and comprehensive schools Postgraduate Diploma in Education or Graduate Diploma in Education or Higher Diploma in Education (Secondary) is a required qualification. The applicant's degree must be deemed eligible by The Teaching Council for the purposes of secondary school teaching (Department of Education and Skills, 2012).

The Teaching Council is the professional body for teaching in Ireland (The Teaching Council, 2012). The Teaching Council Act (No. 8 of 2001) established the Teaching Council to promote teaching as a profession; to promote the professional development of teachers; to maintain and improve the quality of teaching; to provide for the establishment of standards, policies and procedures for the education and training of teachers and other matters relating to teachers and the teaching profession; to provide for the legislation and regulation of teachers; and to enhance professional standards and competence (Garrouste, 2010).

As the professional body for teaching in Ireland, the Teaching Council has many functions relating to teacher education. These functions span the entire teaching career – from entry to initial teacher education programmes; accreditation of such programmes; induction of newly qualified teachers into the profession; and the continuing professional development of teachers throughout their careers (The Teaching Council, 2012). The Council’s functions in relation to the continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers are set out in sections of the Teaching Council Act, 2001. This provides that the Council will ‘advise the Minister in relation to the professional development of teachers’. Under the Act, the Council promotes this development and conducts research into it. It encourages understanding of the benefits of CPD, among the public and teaching profession alike. The Council reviews and accredits relevant programmes. It also performs other related functions as may be assigned by the Minister (The Teaching Council, 2012).

Currently, there are also programmes that aim to support teachers and schools CPD including Primary Professional Development Service, Second Level Support Service, School Development Planning Initiative and Social, Personal and Health Education Support Service (Egan, 2004).

**Leadership Studies in Ireland**

There is limited research in the Irish context on educational leadership, especially studies on school principalship. One piece of research that was carried out earlier last decade is about significant influences that shape the identities of primary school principals as a means of gaining insight into the process of identity construction and the process of school change (Sugrue & Furlong, 2002). The researchers have chosen to work in an interactive, dialogical manner between theoretical perspective and data with a view of generating a series of grounded insights and theoretical understandings of continuity and change as played out through the identities of participants. Twelve primary principals were interviewed to gather the data. Results showed that the nineteenth century structure that contrived to create a denominationally funded state system of education continues to shape principals’ identities in the daily aspects of their duties. Their approach may turn out to be a high risk strategy, completely out-paced and overtaken by the relentless process of globalisation. According to Sugrue and Furlong (2002), the primary lesson for policy makers is to recognise a key paradox that taking leave of the past does not necessarily mean abandoning tradition. Policy makers have emphasized the need for change without paying adequate attention to what schools do well, thus generating resistance to new ideas rather than a more open and positive attitude. In addition to this, principals become more adept at dealing with the more unpredictable and uncertain way to learn to recognise risks, to evaluate them, to imagine possible alternatives, and to harness these forces and construct new ways of being a school leader.

Similarly, Farrell (2002) explored the skills for principals that states there is a lack of recognition of the requirements and complexities of the principalship role. According to the researcher, expectations of school principals are high, but skills development, preparation, training, and pay and conditions are low. There is a huge raft of legislative change that was enacted such as the 1998 Education Act, the Education Welfare Act 2001 and the Freedom of Information Act 2001, to name but a few. Therefore, in this climate of change, a whole plethora of management skills are required for principalship such as; personnel management, communication, team and time management and decision-making. In addition to this middle management must be properly structured to be effective and the principal must ensure the school has a mission and a vision.

Sugrue (2003) intended to provide some tools for thinking about principals’ professional learning and has identified in principalship a growing emphasis on leadership, in addition to the tasks of administration and management. Sugrue (2003) stated that there is a growing emphasis on professional development for aspiring principals. The study showed that there is no formal training prior to principalship appointment, however even the experienced principals need ongoing professional learning. The researcher suggests that it would be important that there be a focus on inquiry that would provide opportunities for a judicious mix of theoretical and practical knowledge with appropriate rigour to make the learning process both challengingly intellectual while simultaneously increasing skills and expertise.

In 2004, O’Mahony and Cottrell presented a study at the IPPN (The Irish Primary Principals’ Network) annual conference about the workload of principals. The researchers stated that key survey findings profile a strong desire among principals to be relieved of time consuming administrative functions that are rightfully the responsibility of the Board of Management, so that principal teachers can meaningfully address their role as instructional leaders and influencers of teaching and learning in their schools. Interestingly, administrative principals argued forcefully to be enabled to return to their core business of managing teaching and learning.

Another piece of research in the field is about preparation for the leadership of professional staff that was carried out by Travers and McKeown in 2005. The study focuses on describing and analysing the system and curriculum for preparing leaders of professional staff in the Irish primary school system through the operation of the Misneach programme. Misneach (means courage in the Irish language) is a programme of induction for first time principals and a framework for the professional development of Irish school leaders. The programme stresses the importance of value driven and vision leadership and uses peer networks and support groups as instructional approaches. The programme is located in training, consultancy and expertise areas that do not totally ignore reflection on practice, research evidence and ideas, but they are used on a very controlled manner to promulgate certain positions. After analysing the programme, the researchers concluded that the programme is primarily designed to train principals to implement effective school leadership.

Arguably one of the most important pieces of research in the Irish context is Morgan and Sugrue’s (2008) national survey on principals’ role and the main sources of his/her job satisfaction. 800 questionnaires including three sections were sent to principals of primary and post primary schools. The questionnaire consisted of items about principals’ background and qualifications, challenges of the work and job satisfaction. 76% of the principals responded to the questionnaire. Results showed that policy development and implementation, problem solving and conflict resolution and self-management are the biggest challenges to Irish principals. However female principals rate themselves as better able to deal with the most difficult challenges in the job and at the same time derive more satisfaction from their work. On the other hand one-fifth of the sample had less energy and enthusiasm and found their works less rewarding as sometimes they think about leaving the job. With regard to the source of job satisfaction, results show that receiving and giving support is significantly important for the principals followed by intrinsic rewards of work, leadership awards and recognition and affirmation.

Finally Joyce (2009) focused not on principalship, but rather analysing principalship training programmes. The researcher aimed to find any correlation between the school principal and organisational effectiveness. The case study was carried out in a primary school and focuses on a principal as the leader. Data was collected by interviewing the principal, two teachers, two students and a parent and a parents’ council meeting was observed also. Results showed that leadership is the key enabler which helps to achieve results for the organisation and these results feedback to innovation and learning. It is critical to achieving and driving organisational effectiveness.

**Education and Professional Training in Cyprus**

After long years under the Ottoman Empire and British rules as a crown colony, in 1960 Cyprus achieved its independence as the Republic of Cyprus. However between 1963 and 1974, eleven years of intercommunal violence between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, Turkish invasion led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Cypriots and the establishment of a separate Turkish Cypriot political entity in the north, known as Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The resulting political situation is a matter of ongoing dispute.

Educational administration in Cyprus is highly centralized and the system is mainly a transactional bureaucracy. The ministry of education is responsible for all Greek schools and for the schools of all the other ethnic groups that aligned themselves with the Greek community. The ministry of education is responsible for the enforcement of educational laws and the preparation of educational legislation (Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003). It prescribes syllabi, curricula, and text books. It regulates and supervises all the institutions under its jurisdiction. Compulsory education starts at age six with primary education until age fifteen, the end of secondary school. After compulsory education, pupils who wish to continue can take upper secondary education and then postsecondary and tertiary education (Pashiardis, 2007).

The general aim of the Cypriot education system is to create free, democratic, and autonomous citizens who have a well-rounded personality; who are healthy, honest, and creative; who contribute through their work to the social, scientific, economic and cultural advancement of their country, and to the promotion of cooperation, understanding, and love among people with the aims of freedom, justice and peace, and who resolutely pursue the freedom of their country (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1996). The educational process in Cyprus had moved from an emphasis on writing, reading and arithmetic in the last century to a focus on the logic of writing, reading, arithmetic, learning foreign languages and learning how to work with computers.

In order to become a teacher, candidates must apply to teacher training courses in the universities.Inspections of newly appointed teachers are conducted twice a year until they become permanent civil servants. Inspection then becomes irregular and not so important until the twelfth year of service for a particular teacher, when the teacher must be inspected in order to earn a grade for promotion which usually occurs around the eighteenth to twentieth year of service (Pashiardis, 2007).

Teachers must be patient to the highest degree because of the transactional bureaucracy. Appointments, secondments, transfers, promotions and all teaching personnel are the responsibility of the Educational Service Commission (ESC) for a six year term. The pedagogical institute, which is mainly a staff development organization providing in-service training to both primary and secondary teachers on the island, offers a variety of professional development programmes for teachers. Teachers attend short courses offered by the institute, usually on a voluntary basis in the afternoon and after school hours. Inspectors visit all schools and offer in-service training and advice. They are also responsible for teacher supervision and school evaluation (Tsiakkiros & Pashiardis, 2002; Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003).

**Leadership Studies in Cyprus**

In order to understand the context in Cyprus, leadership studies on the island were reviewed. There is various research in the Cyprus context trying to understand the characteristics of effective school principals, professional development of school leaders, successful school leadership and evaluation of the Cypriot education.

Pashiardis (1995) carried out a study with primary school principals to assess school leaders’ effectiveness. In order to measure school principals’ self-evaluation and self-knowledge a questionnaire that includes most of the basic effective principal characteristics was sent to 377 primary school principals in Cyprus. The questionnaire has items about school climate, school improvement, curriculum management, personal management, administration and fiscal/facilities management, student management and professional growth and development. There was 59% return (*n= 221*) and all the data was analyzed by using quantitative techniques. The results show that primary school principals in Cyprus want the strengthening of collegiality and the feeling of being a team; the creation of a positive, human school climate; the cooperation among staff for the creation of a common vision for school improvement. On the other hand, Cypriot principals seem to attach importance to their relations with the Ministry of Education and to bureaucratic procedures both inside and outside the school. They also all believe that the qualities described in the questionnaire items are essential to being an effective principal. In terms of the needs of primary school principals in Cyprus, it is found that they have a need of improvement in the areas of identification, analysis, and application of research findings to facilitate school improvement; ensuring that curriculum renewal is continuous and responsive to student needs; systematic and continuous monitoring of instructional and managerial processes to ensure that programme activities are related to programme outcomes; disseminating ideas and information to other professionals as well as using developmental evaluation effectively and comprehensively with all staff by systematically observing instruction, recording observations and regularly conducting formative and summative evaluation conferences and communicating and promoting high expectation levels for staff and student performance in an enabling, supportive way. Another finding is that principals who have less experience than others have a greater need for improvement in the areas of School improvement, Personnel Management and Professional Growth and Development. Overall it is seem that the greatest needs of primary school principals in Cyprus are training in curriculum management, school climate and issues dealing with teacher evaluation.

In 1998, Pashiardis carried out a similar study and looked into characteristics and behaviors of effective primary school principals in Cyprus. Forty nine principals, thirty six male and thirteen female, who are excellent in their jobs, according to the Ministry, have participated in the study. In this case study, a semi structured interview and observation methods were used for gathering the data. The data was divided into three dimensions. The first section deals with the general perceptions of the principals about their job and their own career paths; the second section deals with the principals’ perceptions on the professional aspects of the job; finally the third section deals with principals’ personal beliefs on being an effective principal. Results of the research show that effective primary school educational leaders have great love and ambition for their profession, which they regard as a sacred duty; they are deep thinkers and constant learners; they have a deep conviction that they could influence much more from a position of leadership such as the principalship than any other position in the school system; they are risk takers and are not afraid to express their inner thought freely; they are self-confident and know that they do a good job; they are honest and truth lovers as they are forthcoming and bold with their ideas; they find innovative ways to reward both their teachers and their students as they believe that rewards are important motivators; they are ambitious; they are keen on creating and maintaining good school-parent relations; they mostly believe in trait-leadership theory, finally they are almost impulsive in their leadership style and use their emotions a lot (Pashiardis, 1998).

Another study with primary school principals was carried out by Pashiardis and Orphanou (1999). The purpose of the study was finding out about the perceptions of elementary school teachers regarding their principals and their leadership styles. The results showed that the major strengths of principals in Cyprus are areas of administrational and fiscal management, problem solving and decision making and school climate as principals care a lot about financial affairs and try to succeed in their own endeavors to keep within the school budget; principals are aware of the necessity and the benefits of collaborative decision making; and they show ample interest in establishing a positive educational and pedagogical milieu at their schools. On the other hand principals have weaknesses in leadership and personal management and professional development and in service as teachers described their principals as average leaders in the general area of dealing with personnel issues and they think their principals do not really worry about their personal and professional growth and development.

A similar result was reached in another study (Pashiardis, 2000) that showed teachers from secondary and elementary education would like the expectations of their immediate supervisor to be clearly defined concerning the expected standards especially when initiatives are introduced. In terms of school leadership and management, administration and fiscal management and problem solving and decision making areas, there are some agreements and some disagreements between the teachers and the principal. It was found that the principal closely cooperates and contributes to the work of the Ministry of Education as she knows the legalities of the bureaucracy involved and adheres to all laws and regulations in an almost religious fashion. On the other hand teachers think she sometimes lends support for experimentation and innovation at her school. In terms of administrational and fiscal management, the principal complies with Ministry of Education policies as well as school regulations in trying to fulfill the school’s mission. However teachers believe that sometimes the principal is punctual on setting up appointments or attending various functions, sometimes not. Finally about problem solving and decision making, the principal allows discussion and promotes the idea of searching for solutions; she is open to different approaches and solutions and does not insist of any one way of problem solving. This perception of the principal by the teaching staff comes in contrast to what the principal believes about herself (Pashiardis, 2000).

Another leading study was carried out by Pashiardis in 2001, to assess perceptions of secondary school teachers regarding their principal and her leadership style. The underlying assumption for the study was that the effectiveness of a leader is mainly dependent on how others perceive him/her as a leader. A mixed methodological approach was used for gathering the data. First, questionnaires were given to the teachers to assess their principal. Questionnaire items were about school climate, school leadership and management, curriculum development, personnel management, administration and fiscal management, student management, professional development and in service, relation with parents and the community, problem solving and decision making. After the questionnaires were collected from the teachers, the semi structured interview was carried out with the principal. Results show that there is some kind of agreement and disagreement between the teachers and the principal regarding the principal’s view of herself and teachers’ views about the principal. The teachers are in an agreement with the principal on school climate, curriculum development, student management and relations with parents and the community as the principal stated that she leaves great autonomy to teachers to organize and plan their teaching; she effectively directs and integrates programmes designed for children with special needs with regular school programmes; she communicates both positive and negative aspects of student behavior to their parents as well as tries to have general assembly with the students once a week and follow the laws and regulations especially with regards to disciplining and managing the students; she tries to encourage relations between the community, the parents and the school. There are certain aspects of which the teachers and the principal are in disagreement with, which are personnel managing, professional development and in service. The principal stated that she is clear about her expectations from the teachers, however there are mixed feelings among the personnel that her expectations are not really as clear as they could have been.

Alternatively Pashiardis (2004) worked on democracy and leadership in the educational system of Cyprus. He tried to examine how the main educational goal of the Cyprus Educational system is transformed into practice through the way in which schools are managed and governed and through the way in which school principals are trained and prepared for their new posts. Currently in Cyprus, the main philosophies that underpin the education system are centralization of powers and seniority within the system. Therefore, everything needs to go through the director of primary or secondary school education, respectively, within the Ministry of Education, which means school principals cannot handle money. In terms of appointments, principals have no say in the appointment of personnel to their school, which means democracy in schools is minimized by inhibiting school principals from having no saying on their staff as they are sent by the Ministry of Education; therefore principals have to work with them. Moreover, in service training is not mandatory after the university years, except secondary school teachers who get a one year training programme prior to their first teaching post. After appointment to the education service, no organized, compulsory or systematic in-service training takes place. Moreover teacher evaluations improve with seniority and age, therefore older teachers are mostly the ones promoted. Furthermore there is no flexibility on curriculum changes unless teachers take their own initiatives to create papers or handouts for the enrichment of the education process. Based on these features of Cyprus education system, the notions of self-management at the school level, decentralization and democracy are non-existent in Cyprus or exist at a very low level. In terms of preparation of the principals, there is no preparation at all. For most principals in Cyprus, when they are first appointed, it is matter of sink or swim as they have no formal training for the first principalship. According to Pashiardis (2004), the bureaucratic and highly centralized structure of the Cyprus educational system is ineffective and must be abandoned. Principals must be motivated towards self-improvement and school improvement. ‘Change in educational matters becomes manageable if there are principals who can manage change’ (Pashiardis, 2004). Pashiardis (2004) suggested making gigantic steps forward in structural and organizational reforms for changes in a democratic way.

Another study which was part of 2001-2002 European Union (EU) fund was carried out in Cyprus, England, Greece and Sweden by Thody et al. (2007). The purpose of the study was investigating principal preparation systems in those countries. The researchers reviewed the training which principals receive in their countries and semi structured interviews were conducted with the principals to find out their views on how they were selected and trained for principalship. The research showed that in order to become a principal in Cyprus, a candidate must apply and face an interview by the Education Service Commission. The candidate is informed very shortly before s/he is appointed, so there is no time to prepare. Once appointed the Ministry of Education offers a few induction seminars, but they are not helpful and the principals essentially sink or swim. They usually stay in a specific school for between two and four years until their retirement. According to the interviews with Cypriot principals, they expressed that formal preparation was essential and crucial, because today’s society and parents are very well educated and they have increasing demands from their school principal to be a match for them. They also put emphasis in training on the job to be able to know what to do in different situations. They suggested having both in-service and degree courses which should include human relations, ways of communication with the staff and parents. They also need to know duties of the position, disciplinary matters, rules about personnel and students, knowledge of psychology and pedagogy, dealing with the ministry and public speaking skills.

In order to put emphasis on in-service training Michaelidou and Pashiardis (2009) aimed to investigate school leaders’ views regarding the in-service training programmes they formally attend and whether specific personal characteristics of school leaders are associated with their views. The data was gathered by using interview and semi structured questionnaire methods from the newly promoted primary and secondary school leaders (362 deputy heads, 120 primary heads and 101 secondary school heads) and they were all asked about in service training (INSET) programmes they receive after their appointments and continuous professional development (CPD). Results show that the participants did not express positive views with regard to the INSET/CPD activities they are engaged in. They seem to participate in those activities for promotion purposes. They prefer school based seminars, the exchange of experiences among themselves, short courses and peer work. They were also asked to rank the topics they need to be trained in and educational leadership came first in their prioritization, student discipline issues was second, followed by differentiation in teaching and information and communications technology in education. Regarding the INSET programme, it was found that the principals’ perceptions about the specific topic tend to predict their perceptions about the whole programme. Results also showed that school leaders have different needs depending on the post they hold and have a medium level of satisfaction from their limited attendance at INSET and CPD activities in general.

Another piece of research was conducted by Pashiardis at el. (2011) and it was about providing an insight into successful primary school principals in rural areas of Cyprus to compliment the construction of development programmes for their in service training. The research was part of the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP). Based on the recommendations of the inspectors of primary schools, a sample for the study was identified. Semi structured interviews were conducted with five school principals, teachers, students and the parents to gather the data. The five case studies showed that there are differences between the five school principals and while some of the principals adopted practices that promoted strong values and a school vision, focused on learning and human relationships and built external networks of support; others took a rigid stance towards rules and regulations. Finally the other one failed to create constructive links with parent and the community. All principals gave attention to the creation of strong interpersonal relationships between themselves and all stakeholders. They also actively demonstrated their commitment to their school through consistent hard work as well as they educated themselves constantly thus actively demonstrating the value of further education to their teachers and students’ educational development. In order to deal with the particular problems of the students in their schools, the principals introduced specific and appropriate educational programmes that proved successful in dealing with the challenges faced.

**Education and Professional Training in Malta**

The political change in 1964, when the Maltese Islands became an independent archipelago, initiated a number of revolutionary reforms that the Maltese education sector has been going through ever since (Cutajar, 2007). The Maltese education system together with its examination system followed very closely the British model (Ciantar, 1993). Education in the Maltese islands is free of charge, except those attending one of the church schools or one of the independent schools. Compulsory education starts at age five and the age of exit is sixteen. Education is highly centralized and politicized and the government has the right to establish the national minimum curriculum of study for the schools. The education division is responsible in terms of the education act, for the provision of an efficient and effective system of schools by ensuring education and training in areas relevant to the needs of Maltese society, affords the individual without any distinction of age, gender, belief or economic means, the opportunity to develop his/her full cognitive, affective and operative potential to prepare students for life, including their working life (Cutajar, 2007).

The educational division is responsible for curriculum development, implementation and review; although the school administrative personnel and teaching members of staff were also asked to contribute towards curriculum development and implementation by the minister of education (Cutajar, 2007). Each head of school formulates a three year business plan in consultation with his/her staff and in accordance with overall national objectives, priorities and programmes. Several administrative and determinate educational decisions are now taken at school level or by the school council. Only the recruitment, deployment, disciplines and promotion of staff remains the responsibility of the education division (Cutajar, 2007 & Bezzina, 2004). There are also sustainable development strategies, controlled by the National Commission for Sustainable Development, which are multifaceted, taking into consideration economic, social, cultural, environmental, participatory and political factors that affect human welfare (Briguglio & Pace, 2004). Briguglio and Pace (2004) explains the education for sustainable development as it implies a learner-centred pedagogy that promotes interdisciplinarity, ensures relevance of knowledge to the learner’s experiences, encourages active learner participation, helps the development of critical thinking and participatory skills and caters for life-long education.

Primary and secondary school teachers are trained at the Faculty of Education of the University of Malta. After a four year course, they obtain a Bachelor of Education Degree. Applicants are required to choose between primary and secondary education as their area of specialization when registering for the course. The University of Malta also offers post graduate courses for students who wish to become teachers after a first degree. Teachers, at all levels, including university faculty are represented by the Malta Union of Teachers which is the biggest union in Malta, founded in 1919. The union works to increase the professional status of teachers and negotiates with the government for economic benefits.

In 1985, the first diploma programme in educational administration and management was introduced by the Faculty of Education. The programme was aimed at attracting those in administrative positions and/or those who wanted to be considered for such posts. The 1994 Reorganization Agreement recognized the diploma as a prerequisite to headship. This meant that anyone who wanted to become a head of school would require not only five year experience as an assistant head of school but needed to have successfully completed the diploma course (Bezzina & Cassar, 2003). After four years, in 1998, teaching was recognized as a profession and without doubt the Malta Union of Teachers has had a massive effect on it. As well as playing a big role on recognizing teaching as a profession, Malta Union of Teachers also worked to increase the professional status of preschool teachers. As a result of the union’s attempts the state provides scholarships for in-service and professional training for teachers.

**Leadership Studies in Malta**

As it is seen above, for Cyprus studies, Pashiardis is leading the field and similarly to Pashiardis, in Malta, the leading researcher in the field is Christopher Bezzina. In 1997, Bezzina published an article which was about restructuring schools in Malta (Bezzina, 1997). The study was aiming to present some ideas for discussion and proposes particular routes which can help empower teachers and schools in particular as they strive towards quality improvement. According to the researcher, reform policies need to be directed toward creating the kinds of institutional arrangements and organizational structures that promote educational excellence. Schools and their staff need to become active participants in the process of school improvement. This implies that educators at school level need to be willing to take charge. This leads researchers to explore the area of teacher empowerment which deals with the giving of decision making authority to people who in the past had looked to an authority to make decisions. For school site management (SSM) to succeed and be effective, schools and central authorities, need to develop a framework for such professional development to take place. On the other hand in order to design and implement a SSM programme which could impact positively on school practices, one must start by evaluating the extent to which instructional leadership and planning practices are providing a sound foundation for programme development. As a result of this kind of studies, Bezzina (2000) stated that a number of initiatives were taken by central authorities to give more power of responsibility and authority to the schools; thus all state primary and secondary schools were encouraged to develop draft school development plans. Such a move expresses the view that school improvement can be brought about by concentrating development efforts on the school, hence seeing the school as the major unit of change in the education system (Bezzina, 2001a). Nevertheless neither school leaders nor those at central level were prepared to take up the challenge of decentralisation. On the other hand providing leadership that moves away from a purely authoritative style of administration to a more collaborative style of management is extremely difficult. Therefore Bezzina (2001a) suggested giving empowerment to teachers to improve their instructional techniques. He advocates, if teacher empowerment is utilized properly, members of staff will slowly begin to feel that they are respected and valued as individuals who can contribute in meaningful ways to school improvement.

Another study was carried out to present some of the developments that were undertaken in Malta to address the professional development of principals (Bezzina, 2001b). Bezzina, who described school leaders’ educational paths and reform activities in his research, suggested providing a comprehensive range of professional development courses for educational leaders across career preparation, induction and on-going professional development, as he advocates that a lot of work still needs to be undertaken to engage in further and more in-depth research.

Another piece of research was carried out to present a theoretical rationale for a teacher led approach to school improvement and explore the initial collaboration between the lead author and the principal of a church school (Bezzina & Testa, 2005). The case study was undertaken in one of the biggest colleges in Malta which shows that principals believed that schools should model life and achieving this vision requires a people centered and system thinking professional culture that engages teachers, support staff, parents, students and the wider community in defining the organization’s goals. Therefore the principal emphasized communication as he was organizing leadership team meetings, meetings with parents and other bodies according to learning organization principles. On the other hand instead of developing the school’s vision and goals alone, the head created them patiently with his staff and the community, gaining their vital support in establishing a meaningful educational programme. He also encouraged their involvement in collaborative decision making which they have not been used to. Moreover there has been an impact on the staffs’ own professional learning and on the school as a whole. Teachers have gained a sense of personal worth and empowerment through the way they have helped to nurture a warm positive and conducive climate that has brought about a culture of learning for one and all. Bezzina and Testa (2005) concluded that the school staff was the key to improvement. The journey that the school had embarked on goes to show that with hard work and commitment expressed by the principal and teachers, improvements such as those experienced could be achieved.

A follow up piece of research about learning communities came by Bezzina in 2006. Bezzina (2006) aimed to contextualize the potential networking of schools within the nurturing of inclusive learning communities. According to Bezzina (2006), building a community of learners is essential to any school reform effort. A constructive community that develops responsive structures that helps schools to address learning is needed. The children can learn, rather than just being taught, in a context of learning and one dedicated to learning in which educators replace prescription and compliance with involvement in problem posing, sharing and solving. However networks in themselves will not solve all of our existing problems. This is natural and we need to acknowledge the recurring tensions in networks. The dynamics inherent in the attempts to resolve these tensions appear to be central to the process of how networks organize, build new structures, learn to collaborate, and develop a sense of community.

Another research that was carried out in Malta is about school leadership, principals and professional development. After the radical transformation taking place in Malta, Spiteri (2009) explored areas deemed essential by the international literature for networks to reap benefits through appropriate educational leadership. The research sought to investigate the impact of learning networks on the educational leadership being exercised by drawing upon stakeholders’ experiences. Results showed that the senior management team (SMT) perceptions are overall highly positively skewed indicating a belief in Maltese educational reform. SMTs are assigning a definite strong vote of confidence in favour of their principal whom they feel to be excelling in the role. SMT perceptions of the teaching personnel within their school are highly positive and SMT have good opinions of their teaching personnel. Another result is that the teacher population is trustworthy, confident and believed in SMT educational leadership to run a school especially through the difficult period of an educational reform.

Gatt (2009) investigated the role of head of departments. Her study views the role of the head of department not only as subject coordinator but also within the sphere of middle management. The senior management team, head of departments, coordinating teachers and regular teachers were asked to give their opinion on a number of issues regarding the present role of a head of department. Analysis show that even though the presence of a head of department is considered as vital the actual definition of the role is still very vague where many teachers have no idea what the dynamics of the position actually are. The lack of involvement by the head of department in school decisions also has a detrimental effect on the staff. It is clear both in theory and practice that heads of department have to develop effective negotiation skills to assist them in managing diverse situations effectively. There seems to be common agreement that the head of department should not only be the main administrator of a department but should also be a curriculum leader and provide vision not only to his/her teachers but also students.

Grech (2009) examined the changing role of the principal and carried out a research to investigate the impact of the college principals upon the secondary school principals’ role in leading educational professionals in Malta. The research extended amongst two colleges. Interviews held with college principals and principals formed the basis of the qualitative research, whilst the third component of the triangulation was derived from a questionnaire presented to the academic staff which provided the findings for the quantitative analysis. Two college principals, seven principals, nine assistant principals and fifty nine teachers within the secondary schools participated in the study. Analysis showed that the introduction of the college principals had affected the principal’s role in leading a secondary school in Malta. The principals stated that generally they experience a more personal and ameliorated relationship with their next level supervisor, who became the college principal, whilst commenting that their work load has increased. Although both the college principals and the principals have defined roles, their relationships are still being established. Innovative channels of communication are developing with the introduction of the newly set up colleges. This research showed the values and personality of the college principals are essential in determining the type of relationships fostered within the college.

Cuschieri (2009) carried out another piece of research to investigate what it is like to be a principal in a Maltese Roman Catholic school, through an exploration of attitudes, behaviours, leadership styles and managerial skills and approaches that these educational leaders are adopting. Interview and questionnaire methods were used for gathering the data. Ten heads of schools were interviewed and 30 heads of the Maltese Roman Catholic Church were sent questionnaires. Analysis showed that all heads feel that they have a multiple role, while the majority feel a great sense of fulfilment being given by their job. Regarding their leadership styles, most of them are employee oriented, accompanied by collegiality and shared decision making. They also believe in the competence and professionalism of their staff and believed in having a moral and ethical base for leadership judgment. They also give importance to communication and teamwork. In terms of motivating factors, some participants opted for the spiritual aspect of their mission while others gave a more academic or managerial attribute to their role as head of school. They are all concerned about the students and wellbeing in every aspect is the fulcrum and fundamental motivation factor of some leaders. For some of them the academic achievement is the main job satisfier. Others responded to this question that finding support from their staff, students and all stakeholders including past students who speak affirmatively was most important. It seems one of the biggest stressors for these educational leaders, is the factor of time coupled with administrative issues. They describe the culture of their schools as collaborative, friendly, collegial and person oriented, caring, catholic, inclusive, holistic, cosy and very high on relationships. Finally when asked if they have adequate support when they come across difficulties, they answered in the positive, albeit with some reservations.

Tonna (2009) carried out another piece of research in Malta aiming to discuss the role that school leaders hold in the continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers within their school and how their involvement can aid to transform CPD programmes and collaborative encounters into valid learning experiences that equip teachers with the necessary skills to perform satisfied within the classroom. Semi-structured interview and observation techniques were used for gathering the data. Interviews were carried out with nine participants who are involved in the field of in service teacher education and training (INSET). Results showed that teachers think that training initiatives can be tailored in accordance with the local needs and resources at hand. What they think about school based INSET is that schools can become too insular and teachers will not have the opportunity to widen their perspective through external encounters. They also believe that they should be given the opportunity to meet a wider community of teachers than within their immediate school context. The study reveals that a number of schools, and teachers, are managing the possibilities for collaborative practices in different ways. There is also high level of distrust coming from some teachers towards other colleagues and the school leadership team. Finally some of the teachers confirm that in some cases the professional development needs of the school, or college they belong to are prioritised over their own individual development needs. They assert that teachers should be provided with the best opportunities for professional development when these take place outside school.

Another interesting piece of research about school leadership in Malta, aimed to find out the role of emotional intelligence in school leadership in secondary schools (Cilia, 2009). The findings showed that the head of a school can positively impact the school’s emotional climate; teacher motivation and learning environment, as well as, the female heads of schools tend to be very competent in the use of emotional intelligence skills. It was found that emotional intelligence skills are effective on student learning as positive emotional tone by the leaders is conductive to a positive emotional climate at school and consequently improves staff mood and motivation with the ultimate effect of generating a more learning enriched environment for the productive development of students.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has described education systems of Ireland, Cyprus and Malta. Education systems in these countries are centralized and hierarchical. The Ministry of Education and its divisions in these countries are responsible for the education, legislation, discipline, recruitment and promotions. Teacher training is carried out in the universities and training colleges. Appointment of teachers is followed by in-service training and inspections until teachers move to civil servant category. In Malta, teachers have to do courses in Educational Management and Administration to become a principal; in Ireland it is not required but it helps teachers and principals for their self improvement; on the other hand in Cyprus age is the determinative criteria for promotions.

There have been numerous studies about principalship in Cyprus and Malta, but the Irish context is very limited in terms of these studies. One of the important studies in the Irish context is Morgan and Sugrue’s (2008) national survey on principals’ role and the main sources of his/her job satisfaction. On the other hand in the Cypriot and Maltese contexts we can see Pashiardis (1995, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2011) and Bezzina (1997, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2006), who have various studies about educational leadership, which are significantly related to this research. While this study aims to bring an original study on primary school principals, to the Irish context, previous studies in Cyprus and Malta will also be extended.

This chapter has outlined previous leadership studies in Ireland, Cyprus and Malta, and identified the contextual background of these countries in terms of educational leadership studies. It is essential to understand educational leadership issues through these previous studies in the field which are the basis of this research.

The next chapter reviews literature relevant to educational leadership and outlines principals’ career development in some countries.

**Chapter 3: Literature Review**

**Introduction**

In order to understand leadership in a general manner; it is important to understand different aspects of leadership. One of the most important aspects of leadership is inarguably educational leadership. Educational leadership, in others words school leadership, is a field of study and practice concerned with the operation of schools and other educational organizations (Bush, 2008). The starting point of educational leadership studies is in the USA and in the UK, as a great deal of research was carried out in those countries. On the other hand researchers in Europe are very limited and the field is hungry for new studies.

Leadership studies began with Ohio State University and Michigan Leadership Studies in the 50’s. These studies have critical importance in the field as they are one of the first pieces of research in leadership. After these studies, some researchers come up with theories such as Theory X and Theory Y and Path-Goal Theory; some others suggested models such as Fiedler’s Contingency Model and Normative Model.

Over twenty years of studies by Bush (1986, 1995 and 2003), have resulted in educational leadership models that categorized as; formal, collegial, political, subjective, ambiguity and cultural. As well as these models, Instructional Leadership is also described in this chapter.

This chapter aims to give comprehensive information about leadership, through a literature review on leadership. In this respect leadership studies, educational leadership and models of educational leadership will be outlined in this chapter. Moreover principals’ career development in different countries was reviewed in this chapter too. In order to understand the basis of this research, a literature review on principals’ career path was also carried out and principals’ career development in different countries was evaluated. Furthermore a conceptual framework for the study, which concludes with a need for more research on educational leadership, is also developed in this chapter.

**Leadership**

*I think people want to be magnificent. It is the job of the leader to bring out that magnificence in people and to create an environment where they feel safe and supported and ready to do the best job possible in accomplishing key goals. This responsibility is a sacred trust that should not be violated. The opportunity to guide others to their fullest potential is an honor and one that should not be taken lightly. As leaders, we hold the lives of others in our hands. These hands need to be gentle and caring and always available for support,* (Blanchard, 2001:2)*.*

The word ‘Leadership’ entered literature in the 14th century and it has been used since that time, but more often in the last two centuries (Stogdill, 1974). Research on leadership began to intensify in the 1950’s and from that time the importance of leadership has been made much more understandable. Since it had been first used, many definitions have been made of ‘the leader’ and ‘leadership’. Some researchers identify it as problem solving, while some concentrate on organizations and effectiveness.

According to Werner (1993), leadership appears in a particular situation, particular time and particular circumstances; stimulates a group of people to endeavor to reach the organizational aims. Manske (1994) refers to the common aims of leadership and according to Manske (1994), the leader affects the members, who works in the same organizational group, sets particular aims, directs them and uses his/her social authority which depends on social relationships. Bennis (in Hale, 1998) stresses the importance of social relationships and points out that leadership qualities include having vision, interest, honesty and courage (Hale, 1998). On the other hand Fidler (2000) states two key features of leadership as; a sense of purpose and confidence is engendered in followers; and followers are influenced towards goal achievement. Başaran (1974) describes the leader as a member of a group who has a positive efficiency on the other members of that group; Eren (1984) explains the leader as the one who gets something done which nobody wants to do; Jones and Pound (2008) suggest leaders and managers play a significant role in enabling other practitioners to develop the necessary capabilities in a climate of significant change and developments.

Sergiovanni (2001) identifies leadership as problem solving and the purpose of leadership is finding solutions; it is about helping people to get a handle on how to manage these problems and even with learning how to live with problems. On the other hand Adair (1983) identifies five distinguishing leadership characteristics; according to Adair (1983), a leader gives direction; offers inspiration; builds teamwork; sets an example; gains acceptance. On the other hand Can (2009), considers leadership more deeply and describes it as the ability to gather individuals around some specific objectives by motivating them to fulfill these objectives co-operatively. Leaders should have qualities such as having vision, giving confidence, being adaptable, taking risks, being honest, courageous, cold-blooded and willing. According to Soutworth (1993) as well, leadership is often associated with vision which provides the essential sense of direction for leaders and their organization. Somehow it is not effective at all times, as Fullan (1992) suggests that visionary leaders may damage rather than improve the organizations. Leadership approaches are subjective and it is changeable in terms of leader’s experiences, political approach and other environment variables. However in practice schools and colleges require visionary leadership, to the extent that this is possible with a centralized curriculum and effective management (Bush, 2011).

Alternatively Godt (2008:49) touches on the continuousness of leadership and describes it as;

*The personal challenge of leadership is to have your greatest accomplishments recognized, found to be valuable, and continue to be used by the next generation in taking over the field of education. As we share enthusiasm for a common task, we can provide helpful hints and suggestions to help each other through the challenges we inevitably will encounter along the way*.

On the other hand some researchers (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993) suggest that leadership begins with the character of leaders expressed in terms of personal values, self awareness and emotional and moral capability. It is increasingly linked with values and leaders are expected to ground their actions in clear personal and professional values (Bush, 2011).

Bolman and Deal (1997) put emphasis on distinctiveness of leading and managing, but state that both are important. They suggest organizations which are over managed but under led eventually lose any sense of spirit or purpose. Poorly managed organizations with strong charismatic leaders may soar temporarily only to crash shortly thereafter. The challenge of modern organizations requires the objective perspective of the managers as well as the flashes of vision and commitment wise leadership provides.

Differently from the researchers above, Sparks (2009) categorized leadership features and argues that leaders should;

* [Create a](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fuk.mc238.mail.yahoo.com%2Fmc%2Fwelcome%3F.gx%3D0%26.rand%3Degq76gkpmjo9s%23confidence.&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNEyd-attttiYpTbxt7hX_gDVFB2kA) base [for self-](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fuk.mc238.mail.yahoo.com%2Fmc%2Fwelcome%3F.gx%3D0%26.rand%3Degq76gkpmjo9s%23confidence.&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNEyd-attttiYpTbxt7hX_gDVFB2kA)understanding [and confidence;](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fuk.mc238.mail.yahoo.com%2Fmc%2Fwelcome%3F.gx%3D0%26.rand%3Degq76gkpmjo9s%23confidence.&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNEyd-attttiYpTbxt7hX_gDVFB2kA)
* [Create a base for interpersonal relationships](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fuk.mc238.mail.yahoo.com%2Fmc%2Fwelcome%3F.gx%3D0%26.rand%3Degq76gkpmjo9s%23relationships.&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNFE8uVX5hu3UY4dGVLU4cYGj8Xozg); ethnic, cultural, and brain differences are identified, recognized, discussed, and appreciated;
* [Create a framework for adult understanding](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fuk.mc238.mail.yahoo.com%2Fmc%2Fwelcome%3F.gx%3D0%26.rand%3Degq76gkpmjo9s%23understanding.&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNE1Hfq2TCC0AYRMfiZYMLbQUCP-AQ);
* Teachskillsforleading [others](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fuk.mc238.mail.yahoo.com%2Fmc%2Fwelcome%3F.gx%3D0%26.rand%3Degq76gkpmjo9s%23others.&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNFj5tUxaIHRcn9houqFlFSRqUWIJg); organization skills, role modeling, leadership styles, group dynamics, team building, time managing, empathy, decision making, group processing, mediation skills, peer counseling;
* Practiceleadingothers[.](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fuk.mc238.mail.yahoo.com%2Fmc%2Fwelcome%3F.gx%3D0%26.rand%3Degq76gkpmjo9s%23others.&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNFj5tUxaIHRcn9houqFlFSRqUWIJg)

On the other hand Stogdill (1974), points out characteristics of effective leaders as having sense of responsibility; concern for task completion; energy; persistence; risk taking; originality; self-confidence; capacity to handle stress; capacity to influence and capacity to co-ordinate the efforts of others in the achievement of purpose.

Hoyle and Wallace (2005) note that leadership has only recently overtaken management as the main descriptor for what is entailed in running and improving public service organizations. Bell and Stevenson (2006) argue that there are deep rooted and significant developments in educational policy over five decades. As a consequence of these developments, the roles of principals and other school leaders have undergone a series of fundamental changes in the extent of their autonomy, the levels and patterns of their accountability and the very nature of their responsibilities.

On the last two centuries, the term leadership has been subjected to much research, in different fields. Doubtlessly, approaches to leadership and leadership theories have effects on leadership research and forming conceptions of leadership. Therefore it is important to understand the background and starting point of this research to have an in-depth outlook on leadership.

**Leadership Studies**

Studies on managerial approaches to education started in the United States with the work of Taylor, in 1947, who was particularly influential and his scientific management movement is still subject to vigorous debate, particularly by those who oppose a managerial approach to education. Weber’s work on bureaucracy in the same year, 1947, followed it. Both studies were developed outside education but the results were applied to schools and colleges. However research on leader behavior started in Ohio State University in 1950s where the researchers identified categories of relevant leadership behavior and developed questionnaires, known as the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) and the Supervisor Behavior Description Questionnaire (SBDQ), to measure how often a leader used these behaviors. The findings indicated that the two most important dimensions in leadership included initiating structure a behavior that involves leader concern for people and interpersonal relationships, and behavior that involves leader concern for accomplishing the task (Yukl, 2010).

In the same years, The Michigan Leadership Studies began which observed the effectiveness of leadership behaviors on small groups. Researchers indicated that leaders could be classified as either employee centered or job centered. These studies identified three critical characteristics of effective leaders such as task oriented behavior, relationship oriented behavior, and participative leadership and has similarities in behaviors to the Ohio State University Studies (Erzurum, 2007).

Another crucial study was carried out by Blake and Mounton that identify two fundamental drivers of managerial behavior under the managerial grid model: the concern for getting the job done, and the concern for the people doing the work. The managerial grid model is a leadership style model which plots the degree of task centeredness versus person centeredness and identifies five combinations as distinct leadership styles. By plotting *‘concern for production’* against *‘concern for people’*, the grid highlights how placing too much emphasis in one area at the expense of the other leads to low overall productivity. The model proposes that when both people and production concerns are high, employee engagement and productivity increases accordingly (Lacpa, 2009). It follows the ideas of Theories X and Y which was developed by Douglas McGregor that postulates the core leadership assumptions to assist leaders to question their underlying assumptions and perceptions about people (Baah, 2009).

Theory X advanced the view that human beings have an inherent dislike for work and can only be made to get results at work by the application of coercive methods and by direction as well as emphasizing an authoritarian style of leadership where results are the focus of leadership and it is more work centered than people centered. On the other hand Theory Y approaches to management are more people centred where the individual is valued and appreciated. McGregor postulated that leaders who hold Theory X assumptions believe that people are lazy, abhor responsibility and are not motivated and therefore need to be coerced before they will work and show commitment. Leaders, who practice Theory Y assumptions on the other hand, involve workers engage in problem solving, understand the needs of team members and integrate personal needs of achievement with organizational objectives. Although with such an approach the leader facilitates and initiates the control process, it is done with the involvement of the workers in mind and can be encouraging and motivating for them (Baah, 2009).

Another theory, called Contingency Theory, also known as the Situational Approach may vary depending on the status of the leadership style and is based on assumptions. This approach includes researching which leadership style is more appropriate in which situation (Barutçuoğlu, 2002). It is basically where the leader uses sensitive, situational knowledge to guide decision making (O’Brien et al, 2006). Under a situational approach to leadership, there are various models such as Hersey and Blanchard’s Situational Leadership Model, Fiedler’s Contingency model, Path – Goal Theory and Vroom and Yettan’s Normative Model.

Hersey and Blanchard’s Situational Leadership Model has an intuitive appeal. It acknowledges the importance of followers and builds on the logic that leaders can compensate for ability and motivational limitations in their followers. Successful leadership is achieved by selecting the right leadership style, which Hersey and Blanchard argue is contingent on the level of the followers’ readiness. The emphasis on the followers in leadership effectiveness reflects the reality that it is the followers who accept or reject the leader (Graeff, 1997).

Fiedler’s Contingency Model was developed in 1980s and deals with the cognitive abilities of leaders. The theory examines the conditions under which cognitive resources such as intelligence and experience are related to group performance. According to the theory, the performance of a leader’s group is determined by a complex interaction among two leader traits (intelligence and experience), one type of leader behavior (directive leadership), and two aspects of the leadership situation (interpersonal stress and the nature of the group’s task) (Yukl, 2010). Beare et al (1997) stated that, according to Fiedler, leadership style is an innate, relatively enduring attribute of our personality which provides our motivation and determines our general orientation when exercising leadership. On the other hand Fidler (2000:58) explains the contingency model as;

*What is appropriate leadership at a particular point in time depends on: the context and its pre-history; the nature of followers; the particular issues involved; in addition to the predispositions of the leader. Thus although a leader may have a preferred leadership style, this may need to be varied according to the circumstances*.

Another theory in the field is Path – Goal Theory which is a dyadic theory which reflects the dominant paradigm of the study of leadership about 1975. It is a dyadic theory of supervision. It concerns relationships between formally appointed superiors and subordinates in their day to day functioning. It is concerned with how formally appointed superiors affect the motivation and satisfaction of subordinates. It is a dyadic theory of supervision in that it does not address the effect of leaders on groups or work units, but rather the effects of superiors on subordinates (House, 1996).

Vroom and Yetton’s Normative Model took both a situational and a rescriptive stance. In their role as organizational decision makers, leaders were advised to examine the characteristics of each decision situation before making a predecision of what decision method to select for solving the problem (Field & Andrews, 1998).

As well as the theories stated above, Handy (1993), offers three theories of leadership, Trait, Style and Contingency. Trait theory focuses on identifying the key success characteristics of leadership; style theory, which attempts to show the way in which leaders approach their roles in given situations fosters success or failure; contingency theory attempts to analyze interrelationships between leaders and potential followers and the nature of relationship between them (Law & Glover, 2000).

Besides Handy, Sergiovanni (2001) suggests three other theories which are rules and personality based and shape the way we think about school leadership, organization and management. The theories Sergiovanni suggests are pyramid, railroad and high performance theories which are useable in different conditions and fields.

Pyramid theory assumes that the way to control the work of others is to have one person assume responsibility by providing direction, supervision, and inspection. It works well for organizations that produce standardized items in uniform ways; it becomes a bureaucratic nightmare when applied in the wrong situation. Railroad theory assumes that the way to control the work of people who have different jobs and who work in different locations is by standardizing the work process. When the theory is applied to schools it creates an instructional delivery system which specific objectives are identified in and tightly aligned to an explicit curriculum and a specific method of teaching. High performance theory distinctively differs from the others by de-emphasizing both top-down hierarchies and detailed scripts that tell people what to do. Decentralization is the key with workers empowered to make their own decisions about how to do things. High performance theory emphasizes collecting data to determine how well workers are doing, and to improve the likelihood that standardized outcomes specified by distant authorities are met.

Apart from these theories and models, there are three other identified approaches to leadership which are features, behavioral and situational approaches. The features approach is also known as the traditional approach. In this approach, leaders try to determine the characteristics and features of physical, social and personal to be gathered in three groups (Tahiroğlu, 2003). On the other hand behavioral approach tries to explain the leadership process. According to the main idea of this theory, behaviors of the leader are more important than the features. Behaviors have a bigger role on the way to success (Koçel, 2003). Ohio State University, Michigan University Studies, Blake and Mounton’s Managerial Grid Model and Douglas McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y have had big impacts on forming the behavioral approach. Finally the situational approach targets different solutions to different situations as explained in the above paragraphs.

There are also new approaches which are called modern leadership approaches and include charismatic and transformational leadership model, vertical-dyad linkage approach, team leadership and visionary leadership.

Charismatic and transformational leadership is defined as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems. In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders. In both charismatic and transformational approach there are values, vision, passion and responsibilities of the leaders (Erzurum, 2007).

Vertical-dyad linkage approach which is also known as Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) describes the role making processes between a leader and each individual subordinate and the exchange relationship that develops over time. LMX theory was formerly called the vertical dyad linkage theory because of its focus on reciprocal influence processes within vertical dyads composed of one person who has direct authority over another person. The basic premise of the theory is that leaders develop a separate exchange relationship with each subordinate as the two parties mutually define the subordinate’s role (Yukl, 2010).

Team Leadership provides the leader or a designated team member with a mental road map to help diagnose team problems, and then take appropriate action to correct team problems. It focuses on goals, process improvement, decision making, training, coaching and modeling (Northouse, 2007).

Finally in the Visionary Leadership theory people move towards a shared vision, telling them where to go, but not how to get there; thus motivating them to struggle forwards. They openly share information, hence giving knowledge and power to others. They can fail when trying to motivate more experienced experts or peers; but this style is the best when a new direction is needed (Goleman et al. 2004). Essentially, a vision is required; otherwise it could be unable to fulfill the requirements of leadership.

Goleman and others (2002) identified six leadership styles. According to them, leaders are; visionary to move people towards shared dreams; coaching to connect what a person wants with the organization’s goals; affinitive to create harmony by connecting people to each other; democratic to value people’s input and gets commitment through participation; pace-setting to meet challenging and exciting goals and commanding to soothe fears by giving clear directions in an emergency.

On the other hand there are other leadership styles namely autocratic, democratic and participator and laissez-faire. Autocratic leaders exclude the management of viewers out of the administration. Another statement, the objectives, plans and policies in the determination of any question the audience is not right. Force makes himself center (Eren, 2001). A democratic and participative leadership style favors decision-making by the group with the leader giving instruction after consulting the group. Such leaders can win the co-operation of their group and can motivate them effectively and positively. The decisions of the democratic leader are not unilateral as with the autocrat because they arise from consultation with the group members and participation by them (Leithwood et al, 1999). Laissez-faire leadership, also known as delegated leadership, is a type of leadership style in which leaders are laisses-faire and allow group members to make the decisions. Researchers have found that this is generally the leadership style that leads to the lowest productivity among group members (Eren 2001).

Gunter (2001) investigated approaches to leadership and grouped the positions in leadership under four categories. According to Gunter’s categorization the positions in leadership are Critical, Humanistic, Instrumental and Scientific. The critical position draws on the social sciences to map and analyze the interplay between the agency of the role incumbent and the structures that enhance or limit that agency. The humanistic position is based on a narrative biographical epistemology through which principals can tell their own stories of what it feels like to lead and to exercise leadership in particular settings over time (Ribbins, 1997 & Tomlinson et al, 1999). The instrumental position provides models of effective systems and cultures designed to enable site-based performance management to be operationalized (Grace, 1995). Finally the scientific position seeks to measure the casual impact of principals as leaders on follower behaviors, functions, emotions, student learning outcomes and so enables statistical evidence to be generated about the link between policy and practice.

On the other hand, Fidler (2002) suggests four perspectives on leadership: situational leadership, four frames of leadership, leading professional and chef executive, moral leadership and curricular leadership. Situational leadership is the appropriate leadership style depending on the context; Bolman and Deal’s four frames suggest four approaches to leadership namely structural; largely focused on a rational view of management, human relations; concentrates on the behavioral aspects of management and harnessing the motivation and commitment of employees, political; recognizes that individuals both within and without the organization have their own private agendas of interest, and symbolic; which is also referred to visionary leadership. On the other hand while leading professional and chief executive is related to theoretical and practical levels; moral leadership is about ‘how we think it right to do things’ and finally curricular leadership suggests the principal has an impact on the professional work of the school, including the teaching and learning that goes on in the classroom.

Although there are many theories and approaches on leadership, most theories of educational leadership and management possess three major characteristics namely normative, selective and observation. According to Bush (2011) theories tend to be normative in that they reflect beliefs about the nature of educational institutions and the behavior of individuals within them; theories tend to be selective or partial in that they emphasize certain aspects of the institution at the expense of other elements and theories of educational management are often based on, or supported by observation of practice in educational institutions.

Yukl (2010) argues that the definition of leadership is arbitrary and very subjective. Some definitions are more useful than others but there is no correct definition. Leadership styles can be changed subjectively; as each people have different features and different approaches. Because it is impossible to have all these features on the same person, there are different people who share these roles in schools and other organizations. Leaders should choose the theory most appropriate for the organization and for the particular situation under consideration. Appreciation of the various models is the starting point for effective action. It provides a conceptual tool kit for the manager to deploy as appropriate in addressing problems and developing strategy (Bush, 2011).

Similarly, Bush et al. (2010) state there is no single or correct way either to lead or structure an organization; the leaders, the lead, and the organization itself each have distinctive, even unique, characteristics, as do the tasks of leadership and management in what is invariably a changing, turbulent environment. Effective leaders and managers should adopt strategies and methods appropriate to their particular organizations, tasks, staff and contexts (local and national). During the adaptation period of strategies and methods and by the time leadership and managerial development is also needed to produce more effective leaders.

On the other hand Bush (2010) argues that quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and student outcomes and there is increasing recognition that schools require effective leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their students and learners. Development of effective leaders should not be left to chance. It should be a deliberate process designed to produce the best possible leadership and management for schools and colleges. School leadership is a different role from teaching and requires separate and specialized preparation. According to Bolam (1999), there is a curriculum of leadership development that includes personalized learning (includes facilitation, mentoring, coaching), group learning, action learning, networking and portfolios. The relationship between leadership and learning is increasingly accepted as being one of the most important issues in enhancing the effectiveness of educational organizations. Principals in schools and principals in colleges are encouraged increasingly to understand the importance of their role in enhancing the learning experience of students and to seek to ensure that the structures and systems to support teaching and learning are created as part of their leadership responsibility and accountability (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2010).

As stated above, much of important research in leadership was carried out in the educational area or adapted to education. Therefore educational leadership, in other words, school leadership takes place in the context. In order to understand educational leadership, it is important to understand the contextual background of it as well as research in the field.

**Educational Leadership**

In the late twentieth century the term ‘school leadership’ came into currency and the concept of leadership was favored because it conveys dynamism and pro activity. The principal or school head is commonly thought to be the school leader; however, school leadership may include other persons, such as members of a formal leadership team and other persons who contribute toward the aims of the school (Waters & Marzano, 2006). As Harris (2004) suggests heads who distribute leadership responsibilities to his/her staff are more likely to build capacity to improve the schools. School leadership, in other words educational leadership, seeks to achieve the wide ranging objectives which are set by stakeholders, notably the governments to deliver higher educational standards (Bush, 2008).

Gunter (2001) suggests educational management promotes improvements in the leadership, management and administration of educational organizations; while Hallinger (1992) explains changing conceptions of school leadership in terms of managerial, instructional and transformational. He states that during the 1960s and 1970s, principals’ approach was managerial. By the mid 1980s, the emphasis had shifted to instructional leadership. The instructional leader was viewed as the primary source of knowledge for development of the school’s educational programme. During 1990s, a new conception of leadership emerged based on the assumption that schools were becoming the ‘unit’ responsible for the initiation of change, not just the implementation of change conceived by others. This led to the notion of transformational leadership, as principals sought to enlist support from teachers and other stakeholders to participate in a process of identifying and addressing school priorities.

On the other hand Gunter (2001:22) touched upon the chronological change of educational leadership and management under pre 1930s, post war and post 1960s. She stated;

*Up to 1930s, management was very much about strong control and discipline through the capacity of principals to keep other teachers and the pupils in a state of subordination; but in the post war period there was a moral energy for change and a belief in the connection between education and democratic culture. By 1960s, aspects to education started to change and participating to issues become more prevail. Research on education and educational leadership started to be supported by the governments. For schools the most significant change was the development of comprehensive education which had implications for the internal administration of teaching and learning.*

Global interest in educational leadership and management has grown during the past few years and there is widespread recognition that leadership is second only to classroom practice in terms of, impact on school and student outcomes (Bush et al, 2010). It is not only carried out within individual schools, colleges, universities and other settings; but also carried out collaboratively, in partnership with other leaders, to give children, young people and adults access to a range of educational provision (Briggs, 2010). West-Burnham (2009) explains the leadership as a moral activity that should be creative and transformative to engage with the social and personal lives to experience the learners inside and outside the school.

Educational leadership and management has progressed from being a new field dependent upon ideas development in other settings to become and established discipline with its own theories and significant empirical data testing their validity in education (Bush, 2011). Leadership and management, in education, is people orientated problem solving, culturally influenced process of reflection and concerted efforts by individual practitioners working together with parents and others to improve outcomes for children (Jones & Pound, 2008). Both are about motivating people and giving a sense of purpose to the school and their role in achieving. Leaders and managers play a significant role in enabling other practitioners to develop the necessary capabilities in a climate of significant change and developments (Jones & Pound, 2008). According to Dunford et al (2000:2) both leadership and management are necessary for a school to be effective. They stated;

…*each must be present, but they are quite separate in their meaning. Leadership is the ability to move the school forward, whilst management is concerned with the procedures necessary to keep the school running. An effective principal needs to be both a leader and a manager*.

Bush (2003) argues that educational management should be centrally concerned with the purpose or aims of education. The purpose or goals provide the crucial sense of direction which should underpin the management of educational institutions. On the other hand Moos and Reeves (1998) explain school leadership in five definitions including leadership having a clear personal vision of what you want to achieve; good leaders are in the thick of things and working alongside their colleagues; leadership means respecting teachers’ autonomy, protecting them from extraneous demands; good leaders look ahead, anticipate change and prepare people for it so that it does not surprise or disempower them; good leaders are pragmatic, able to grasp the realities of the political and economic context and they are able to negotiate and compromise.

Sergiovanni (2001) describes effective leaders as having a better understanding of how the worlds of schooling and of school leadership work. Effective leaders have figured out alternatives to direct leadership that are able to get people connected to each other, to their work and to their responsibilities. As well as engaging with the surrounding community effective leaders also hold positions in different places and different levels of an organization. The central role of principals as school leaders was viewed, variously, as building , administrator, politician, change agent, boundary spanner and instructional leader. During the last decade these stances have been centered on the principal as the instructional leader, accountable for the academic achievement of students. Taken collectively the effective school studies reflect the view that the direct responsibility for improving instruction and learning rests in the hands of the school principal (Kuh et al, 2005).

Jones & Pound (2008) suggest that one of the main responsibilities of leadership should be developing a vision which is shared by staff and parents. That vision must have at its heart the wellbeing of children, but in order to achieve that it must also have concern for the wellbeing of families and practitioners. With values and principles leaders and teams are better able to evaluate change and to judge whether or not it is effective or desirable (Jones & Pound, 2008). Similarly Early and Weindling (2004) state leadership is to show clear vision, a sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school, with a relentless focus on pupil’s achievement. They argue strategic planning reflects and promotes the school’s ambitions and goals; thus leaders inspire, motivate and influence staff and pupils in order to create effective teams and committed to running an equitable and inclusive school, in which each individual matters. According to West-Burnham (1997), there are four key components of leadership in a quality education environment: vision, creativity, sensitivity and subsidiary. Similarly to West-Burnham (1997), Peters and Austin (1985) refer to the importance of communicating the vision, being where the action is, focusing on the kids, subsidiary and blame free culture, teamwork and motivation.

Gunter (2001) states that educational leaders should create performing schools that should also be democratic**.** Education is a public good which is an entitlement and promotes equity; thus purposes of schools and schooling are to educate as well as train, and to enable children to engage in the theory and practice of what it means to be a citizen in an unfolding and reforming democratic project (Gunter, 2001).

The process of deciding the aims of the organization is at the heart of educational management. In some settings, aims are decided by the principal, often working in association with senior colleagues and perhaps a small group of lay stakeholders. In many schools and colleges, however, goal-setting is a corporate activity undertaken by formal bodies or informal groups (Bush, 2011). Therefore school success is never reached by only a leader. All school members should work coordinated as educational leaders, identified as occupying various roles in the school, which provide direction and exert influence in order to achieve the school’s goals (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

As it is clear from the above, leadership addresses a wide field and is a subjective term as described differently by different researchers. In general these descriptions are highly correlated with management, problem solving, continuity, coordinated working and forming vision and values. Bush (2007) suggests that awareness of alternative approaches is essential to provide a set of tools from which discerning leaders can choose when facing problems and deal with day-to-day issues. The next part of this study provides an overview of the main models of educational leadership and links them to similar models of educational management.

**Models of Educational Leadership**

After long studies over twenty years, Bush (1986, 1995 & 2003) has presented and classified theories of educational management in six major models namely formal, collegial, political, subjective, ambiguity, and cultural models.

**Formal Models**

Formal models assume that organizations are hierarchical systems in which managers use rational means to pursue agreed goals. Heads and principals possess authority legitimized by their formal positions within the organization and are accountable to sponsoring bodies for the activities of their institutions (Bush, 2009). There are five models of formal leadership including structural, system, bureaucratic, rational and hierarchical.

*Structural Models* stress the primacy of organizational structure but the key elements are compatible with the central features of any formal model (Bush, 2011).

*System Models* emphasize the unity and integrity of the organization and focus on the interaction between its component parts, and with the external environment (Bush, 2011).

*Bureaucratic Models* describe a formal organization which seeks maximum efficiency through rational approaches to management. It is often used broadly to refer to characteristics which are generic to formal organizations. It stresses the importance of the hierarchical authority structure, goal orientation, division of labor, rules and regulations, impersonal relationship between staff and with clients. In schools teachers are motivated to either avoid something unpleasant or to get some reward (Sergiovanni, 2001).

*Rational Models* emphasize managerial process rather than organizational structure or goals (Bush, 2011).

*Hierarchical Models* stress vertical relationships within organizations and the accountability of leaders to external sponsors. The organizational structure is emphasized with particular reference to the authority and responsibility of the managers at the apex of the structure (Bush, 2011).

Managerial leadership is the related leadership model of formal models. It assumes that the focus of leaders ought to be on functions, tasks and behaviors and that if these functions are carried out competently the work of others in the organization will be facilitated. Most approaches to managerial leadership also assume that the behavior of organizational members is largely rational. Authority and influence are allocated to formal positions in proportion to the status of those positions in the organizational hierarchy (Leithwood et al, 1999).

In respect of schools and colleges formal models have serious limitations as the dominance of the hierarchy is compromised by the expertise possessed by professional staff. The supposed rationality of the decision making process requires modification to allow for the pace and complexity of change. The concept of organizational goals is challenged by those who point to the existence of multiple objectives in education and the possible conflict between goals held at individual, departmental and institutional levels (Bush, 2011).

**Collegial Models**

Collegial models assume that organizations determine policy and make decision through a process of discussion leading to consensus. Power is shared among some or all members of the organization who are thought to have a shared understanding about the aims of the institution (Bush, 2009).

Related leadership models of collegial models are participative leadership, distributed leadership and transformational leadership which are all based on understanding aims of the institution and process of discussion.

*Participative Leadership* refers to the opportunities that staff members have for engaging in the process of organizational decision making (Hoyle & Wallace, 2005). It assumes that the decision making process of the group ought to be the central focus of the group (Leithwood et al, 1999).

*Distributed Leadership* concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organization rather than seeking this only through formal position or role (Harris, 2004). It is simply old managerialism in a contemporary guise (Harris, 2010) however it is a palatable way of encouraging teachers to do more work and reinforcing standardization practices (Hargreaves & Fink, 2009). In distributed leadership, everyone is responsible and accountable for leadership within his or her area. It is essentially about shearing leadership across an organization.

*Transformational Leadership* is about building a unified common interest in which motivation is underpinned by attempts to elevate member’s self-centered attitudes, values and beliefs to higher, altruistic attitudes, values and beliefs (Gunter, 2001).

Burns (1978) introduces transformational leadership as a mode of leader influence in which followers are motivated to act beyond their self-interest in the service of a larger community. Bass (1985, 1990, 1996; Bass &Avolio, 1993) proposed several behavioral characteristics of transformational leaders. One is that transformational leaders provide an organizational vision and mission. Another characteristic is that they communicate strong performance expectations and use symbols to manage the meaning of critical information and components of the vision. Transformational leadership assumes that leaders and staff share values and common interests. It is comprehensive in that it provides a normative approach to school leadership which focuses primarily on the process by which leaders seek to influence school outcomes rather than on the nature or direction of those outcomes (Bush, 2009). Yukl (2010) cited in transformational leadership the followers feel trust, admiration, loyalty and respect toward the leader and they are motivated to do more than they originally expected to do. Therefore he suggested that transformational leadership increases follower motivation and performance.

Transformational leadership operates on the basis that schools as organizations are real and are outcome orientated, and this underpins the power structure supporting the leader. Leadership as a performance means that the links between leaders and education are cut, and so transformational leadership is more about leadership in educational settings than educational leadership (Gunter, 2001).

Collegial frameworks models are highly normative and idealistic as participative approaches represent the most appropriate means of managing educational institutions. Collegiality and distributed leadership are elusive concepts but a measure of participation is essential if schools are to be harmonious and creative organizations (Bush, 2011).

According to Leithwood et al (1999), the critical role of the leader is to nurture a culture aimed at developing a shared and evolving vision. In the main, this helps us to appreciate three major categories of leadership, mainly moral, participative and transformational.

**Political Models**

Political models assume that in organizations policy and decisions emerge through a process of negotiation and bargaining. Interest groups develop and form alliances in pursuit of particular policy objectives. Conflict is viewed as a natural phenomenon and power accrues to dominant coalitions rather than being the preserve of formal leaders (Bush, 2009).

Transactional Leadership is the related leadership model of political models, which does not produce long term commitment to the values and vision being promoted by school leaders. It is leadership redefined as skill in bargaining and exchange. In this model skilfull trading of interests allows the organization to function effectively (O’Brien et al, 2006). It provides incentives in order for the leader to persuade followers. Hence, the notion that if an employee does what is desired, a reward will follow and if an employee does not, a punishment or with holding of the reward will occur. Engagement between leaders and followers is a struggle that is controlled through transactional leadership that is negotiation and the motivation and resources within it do not challenge but seek to satisfy (Gunter, 2001). While transformational leadership appeals to the moral values of followers in an attempt to raise their consciousness about ethical issues and to mobilize their energy and recourses to reform institutions; transactional leadership motivates followers by appealing to their self interest and exchanging benefits. It may involve values but these values are relevant to the exchange process, such as honesty, fairness, responsibility and reciprocity (Yukl, 2010).

Political models are important in helping to develop understanding of how educational institutions operate. Political models have much to offer in developing an appreciation of the nature of management in schools and colleges. However political theorists rightly draw attention to the significance of groups as a potential influence of policy formulation (Bush, 2011).

**Subjective Models**

Subjective models assume that organizations are the creations of the people within them. Participants are thought to interpret situations in different ways and these individual perceptions are derived from their background and values. Organizations have different meanings for each of their member and exist only in the experience of those members (Bush, 2009).

As subjectivity is high in postmodern and emotional leadership, they are the related leadership styles of subjective models.

In *Postmodern Leadership*, there can be as many meanings as there are people in the organization, with power being distributed throughout the school rather than being the preserve of the formal leader. Each participant has a unique view of the institution. There is no absolute truth only a set of individual insights. There are multiple visions and diverse cultural meanings instead of a single vision enunciated by leaders (Bush, 2009).

*Emotional leadership* relates to the subjective model in that it concerns individual motivation and interpretation of events. The distinctive feature of emotional leadership is that it is concerned with feelings rather than facts, recognizing that rational approaches, inherent to the formal models, do not fully explain how principals enact their leadership role (Bush, 2009).

According to Bush (2001) the model provides a significant new slant on organizations but the perspective is partial. It is valuable in providing conceptual underpinning for interpretive research methodology.

**Ambiguity Models**

Ambiguity models assume that turbulence and unpredictability are dominant features of organizations. There is no clarity over the objectives of institutions and their processes are not properly understood. Participation in policy making is fluid as members opt in or out of decision opportunities (Bush, 2009).

In ambiguity models we can consider *contingent leadership* models. The contingent model provides an alternative approach, recognizing the diverse nature of school contexts and the advantages of adapting leadership styles to the particular situation, rather than adopting a ‘one size fits all’ stance (Bush, 2008).

Ambiguity models make a valuable contribution to the theory of educational leadership and management. The emphasis on the unpredictability of organizations is a significant counter to the view that problems can be solved through a rational process. On its own it is not sufficiently comprehensive to explain behavior and events in education (Bush, 2001).

**Cultural Model**

Cultural model assumes that beliefs, values and ideology are at the heart of organizations. Individuals hold certain ideas and value preferences which influence how they behave and how they view the behavior of other members. These norms become shared traditions which are communicated within the group and are reinforced by symbols and ritual (O’Brien at al, 2006).

Moral leadership is the related leadership style of cultural model. It assumes that the critical focus of leadership ought to be on the values, beliefs and ethics of leaders themselves (Bush, 2008).

Heads and principals have their own values and beliefs arising from many years of successful professional practice. However values and beliefs are not universal and subjective. A ‘one size fits all’ model does not work for nations any more than it does for schools. The informal world of norms and ritual behavior may be just as significant as the formal elements of schools and colleges. An appreciation of the relevance of both societal and organizational culture, and of the values, beliefs and rituals that underpin them is an important element in the leadership and management of schools and colleges (Bush, 2011).

**Instructional Leadership**

The instructional leadership model is the leadership model that cannot be categorized in a list and evaluated separately to the other styles. It differs from the other models as it focuses on the direction of influence, rather than its nature and source. Instructional or pedagogical leadership is a model of leadership that places an emphasis upon the development of others (Harris, 2005). The descriptors vary and include pedagogical leadership, managing teaching and learning and achieving excellence in teaching and learning (Bush, 2008). In instructional leadership attempting to change the mindset of leaders with regards to the process of teaching and learning as central to their role, rather than simply leaving such matters to classroom teachers (Bush, 2008). The inclusion of teacher learning signifies pedagogic development and the development of an environment where teachers are confident to become learners (Southworth, 2000).

Instructional leadership is actively and visibly involved in the planning and implementation of change, but encourages collaboration and working in teams. It emphasizes the quality of teaching and learning with high expectations of all staff and all pupils, whilst recognizing that support and encouragement are needed for everyone to give of their best (Hopkins, 2005).

Each event, situation or problem may be understood by using one or more of these models but no organization can be explained by using only a single approach. In certain circumstances, a particular model may appear to be applicable, while another theory may seem more appropriate in a different setting. The six models differ along crucial dimensions but taken together they do provide a comprehensive picture of the nature of management in educational institutions (Bush, 2001).

**Principals’ Career Path**

This study aims to explore school principals’ career path; therefore it is essential to review the research on career development to understand the basis of this research. There are much research in the USA on principals’ career development; however this research is traced in Peter Ribbins’ study that was carried out in 1997, in the United Kingdom. Therefore it is essential to know about Peter Ribbins’ study and other studies under his leadership that provide a basis for this research.

One of the most important studies in the field is probably Peter Ribbins’ leadership study that was presented in September 1995 at National Conference of the British Educational Administration Society in Balliol College in the University of Oxford (Ribbins, 1997). In this study, headmasters and headmistresses of public primary, secondary, special schools, colleges and universities were interviewed. The interviews aimed to find out what have the principals done the job as well as what the job has done them. Furthermore it stated how the principals’ personal features have shaped the job and how the principalship has shaped them. There were eighteen contributors to this research, nine of them are researchers identified by Hugh Busher and Peter Ribbins and the other nine are the interviewees from schools, colleges and universities. The questions focused on the idea that ‘educational leaders are responsible for managing institutions rather than systems’. In the light of this idea nineteen questions were asked to the interviewees. After gathering the data, before the analysis, the answers of the interviewees were separated into twelve themes which were;

1. What influence did family, friends, early life etc. have on their experience and views on education?
2. How do they describe their careers before becoming a head? Why and when did they decide to become a head?
3. How did they go about this? How difficult was it to achieve? How do they regard the selection processes which they experienced? How well prepared were they for the first days, weeks and years of such leadership?
4. What is they vision for their institution? How do they seek to share and develop this?
5. What part do they play in enabling more effective teaching and learning in their institutions? Are they satisfied with the contribution they make?
6. To whom are they accountable? Who manages them? How do they see the role of parents, governors, students, LEAs, DFE, etc? How do they manage external relations?
7. How do they remember their own education and what influence did this have on their views as educators / managers?
8. What influences have shaped their views as heads? What do they mean by effective leadership? Has this changed? If so, in what ways and why? Is it harder to be an effective leader than it used to be? If so, why?
9. What are their key educational and managerial values? What sort of leader are they? How do they enable others to lead?
10. How do they manage people and resources?
11. How do they cope with stress when things go wrong? What aspect of their role do they most / least like? Where do they find support?
12. Are they necessary? Are they democratic?

All the data were analyzed under these themes. From the analysis it was found that there was no strong parental effect on choosing teacher and principal professions, however there was parental effect on some specific fields. Most of the interviews showed that choosing leadership was interviewees’ own preference. While they were in primary school, none of them were positive about the school and their lives in secondary school, which stimulated them to go to the university. Only one of the interviewees followed the traditional path of school, training college and then back to school as teacher. While they were teaching most of them had taken advanced courses. After many years experience in teaching they became deputy heads. They said they learnt from the heads they worked with and many of them said their heads always gave them confidence. After a certain time in the deputy headship, they applied for headship. In general they had uncertain start to their careers; they have not had their career development in a planned process; they only took the opportunities that arose. All of them gave their decisions within a broad framework of educational values, knowing what they wanted to create and lead, and realizing that headship would allow them to achieve their goals.

The interviewees put emphasis on role modeling to staff and the students and they explained their visions included creating the best working atmosphere; being visionary, implementary, practitionary and professional. All the interviewees professed commitment to the underpinning activity of their organization. They argued that sources of problems increase lack of managerial training, increase workload, diminishing teaching duties, bureaucratic frustrations and the sheer rapidity of changes. They thought values were at the heart of their leadership and they enjoyed observing improvements of others; respect the individuals and their ideas, accepting differences of the people. We can never know under what circumstances leadership behaviors occur; but according to the interviewees principals are heads of everything in the school and are responsible to create the most appropriate environment. There should be respect for the teachers and the students, and openness and trust are the key managerial values. On the other hand some of the interviewees also said principals need to be good listeners as well as enthusiastic and tenacious implementers of actions. However, at all events, principals cannot be one hundred percent democratic.

In terms of managing people and resources, interviewees found administrative and financial duties difficult. Rather than administration and financial duties, they gave more importance to managing people. Several principals commented on the need to manage themselves as one of those people. They also pointed to fairness, encouraging people, building a trustful environment and explaining decisions openly. Decisions should be taken collaboratively and staff development should be paid attention. There also should be effective networking with the parents, governors and local communities.

After Ribbins’ (1997) study on educational leadership, a collective research project was carried out under the leadership of Peter Gronn and Peter Ribbins in four island states: Hong Kong (Wong & Ng, 2003), Cyprus (Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003), Malta (Bezzina & Cassar, 2003) and Singapore (Chew at al. 2003).

Wong and Ng (2003), interviewed with one female, eight males, in total nine secondary school principals under the aim of getting information about their lives and professional careers. Most of the principals came from a low income and a less educated background. However their families were of great support to their education and affected their choices. All the principals have survived in the competitive education system and became a teacher although only one of them planned to become a teacher and gradually they all developed their interest in teaching. Overall the principals had a good impression of their primary schooling and their memories of individual teachers were vivid. The influence of secondary schooling was equally impressive. The majority of the participants went through the normal process of promotion into senior teacher and/or deputy head before they become principals. On the whole, the principals did not have a high opinion of training, particularly principalship training. They were offered a nine day course, which was very short and MEd courses in the university which were too theoretical. Nevertheless these courses had an effect on them while they were learning from their experiences. At the end of the research Wong and Ng (2003) stated that they saw how education had changed the status of the majority of the principals who came from low income families.

For the same purposes as Wong and Ng (2003), Pashiardis and Ribbins (2003) interviewed eight secondary school principals, three female and five male, in Cyprus. Similarly to the Hong Kong sample, the participants stated that their parents had an important and crucial effect on their careers to achieve what they have done. They showed admiration and respect when they were talking about their families. They also admitted that their parents, siblings, relatives and even their local communities from small villages had affected their personalities. They all had a positive attitude towards school and education, and said that their experiences in the school had been supportive in their lives. Most of them could not give much information about their primary school teachers, but they gave detailed information about their secondary school teachers and, their memories were positive. Some of them said there were some teachers who guided them and who were supportive. They were all keen on learning, but since there were political issues on the island, their education came to a standstill. While they were students, the island was under British rule and there was no permit to hang Greek or Turkish flags in the schools. Because of that the schools were closed. On the other hand people who were living in the mixed areas, where Turkish and Greek communities were living together, they had to move to other places during the incidents. These developments had a negative effect on the schooling and education.

In terms of choosing the teaching profession, the majority of the principals did not want to become a teacher, however they did not have much choice and in order to earn money they had to choose teaching. In Cyprus, becoming a principal is highly related to the age and experience is way for promotion. For this reason teachers can become principals after age fifty, and retire at sixty. Most of them did not have career plans, however in order to earn more money and be more prestigious they became principals. For the newly appointed principals there are short courses, but when you start the principalship, it is mainly sink or swim. Some principals said they had advantages of learning from their own principals. The issues they most struggled with are;

* Money: everything needs to go through the director of secondary education within the ministry of education,
* Personnel management: they have no say on the personnel in the school,
* Curriculum: they have little power on this,
* Parents and teacher association: the principals have to be supported against parents,
* The power of the center: they have to do what the ministry requires. They need more autonomy and authority (Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003).

Research in Malta (Bezzina & Cassar, 2003) was about understanding the headship also. It explored career paths of the heads and focused on the first two stages of their personal and professional lives. Eight principals, four male and four female, participated in the study. Similarly to the other research in Hong Kong and Cyprus they all stated that their parents played important and crucial roles in their lives and shaped their views. Primary and secondary schools had a considerable influence upon their attitudes in general and with regards to education in particular. All reported in a positive manner on their schooling. Some of them said that there were teachers who influenced them and they had good memories about those teachers. In this group some of the principals already recognized that they wanted to be a teacher, but some had chosen the teaching as a profession because there were no alternatives. They all went to Teacher Training College and said that the training programme had helped to develop them personally and socially. As Pashiardis and Ribbins (2003) stated, similarly to the Cypriot sample some of the principals in Malta did not do career planning. After working as a teacher for a certain number of years and after doing assistant headship with the support of their colleagues they became principals. In order to become a principal in Malta, a diploma in educational administration and management is required. However there is also a preparatory course. Many of them said the course was challenging and formative. In terms of leadership styles, many of the principals seemed to be autocratic leaders and major decisions were always kept in their hands. Maltese heads felt that they were having difficulties to adjust their role and styles of leadership they were concerned, as the education authorities were expecting them to do too much with limited power to take the decisions that matter. They also stated that they were struggling with having no say in the recruitment of their teaching staff, similarly to Cyprus (Bezzina & Cassar, 2003).

Results in Singapore resemble those in Hong Kong, Cyprus and Malta. The research was carried out by Chew et al. (2003) and they aimed to explore career paths of principals also. Four male and six female secondary school principals participated in the study. Their families had important influences of their education, even some of them were going to two schools in a day. What they stated is it was a preparation for their eventual careers. As well as the parents, some of their teachers also had positive effect in their lives. Similarly to other studies (Wong & Ng, 2003; Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003; Bezzina& Cassar, 2003) the majority of them did not want to be a teacher. However in the end, for some reason they have chosen this profession. For some others, having at least one teacher in their families influenced them. They all became a principal after teaching for a while. In Singapore, promotions are entirely in the power of the Ministry. There is no need to apply for principalship, since the ministry decides on someone and promotes him/her. Because of this, personal relationships are also very important. After appointment to principalship, all the principals get a formal preparatory training. Vice principals who are identified by the ministry are trained by the principals for nine months. Principals said that they found the training very useful and it was received positively in most cases. Naturally, their leadership styles changed as well. In the first years they were firm and assertive but in the fullness of time they started encouraging the staff and tried to include them in planning and decision making. They became more aware of the importance of using their people skills to get things done instead of focusing on the tasks at hand. The principals were also asked what had not helped them in principalship. They stated that they are struggling in a) dealing with situations beyond their sphere of experience, b) personnel back-stabbing each other, c) lack of support from the superiors of the principals (Chew et al., 2003).

As seen above, the previous research that explores career paths of principals are limited and were carried out almost a decade ago. On the other hand all this research was conducted with secondary school principals except Ribbins’s (1997) research with headmasters and headmistresses of public primary, secondary, special schools, colleges and universities. Due to the research on principals’ career path being limited, out of date and focusing on secondary school principals, I decided to include an up to date research on the same topic with primary school principals. Also, as a result of my position, I decided to do this research in three different countries, namely Ireland, Cyprus and Malta. Therefore this study has an updating role on Pashiardis and Ribbins’s (2003) and Bezzina and Cassar’s (2003) research in Cyprus and Malta as well as being one of the first studies in Ireland.

**Conceptual Framework**

This study aims to explore school principals’ career path. In this research these questions will be answered:

* What are the reasons for becoming a teacher?
* What are the reasons for becoming a principal?
* How they went about becoming a school principal?
* How well prepared they felt?
* What is their vision for school?
* What are their educational and managerial values?
* How they manage people, resources and external relationships?
* What part they play enabling better teaching and learning?
* How they evaluate themselves as an educational leader?
* What are the difficulties they face and how they perceive principalship?

This study explores teachers’ professional self actualization on their journey to principalship. This study has been loyal to the original study of Ribbins. Both in the original study and Cyprus and Malta studies, questions that were asked to the principals aimed to understand why principals have chosen becoming an educator and how they have progressed in their profession. Through the questions, principals’ leadership styles and how they manage the school tried to be understood. All these questions aimed to understand principals’ career development and how they have professionally self actualized themselves. Threfore this study is based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory and according to Buhler (2001), this theory brings developmental psychology, which seeks question of the goal of life, into humanistic psychology.

Maslow (1967:280) describes self actualization as people being ‘*devoted, working at something, something which is very precious to them - some calling or vocation in the old sense, the priestly sense’.* According to Fletcher (1998) a self actualized teacher is devoted to the practice of teaching as a part of his or her own being. For him or her, teaching is not simply an occupation or a means to an end; it is intrinsically of paramount importance to the person of the teacher.

It enables the person concerned to find fulfillment and in the broader sense to achieve their potential (Fletcher, 1998). Buhler (2001) argues that capacity to design oneself follows the ability to self actualize and this is the goal of life. However the choices we make are risky and the goal when reached may not fulfill our expectations.

The theory predicts that when needs are satisfied, they are no longer motivators. The hierarchy starts with physiological needs and moves upward in a pyramid shape to safety and security, social activity (or love and belonging), to esteem (or ego), and finally to self-actualization. What Maslow defends in his theory is human needs based on two groupings: deficiency needs and growth needs. Within deficiency needs, each lower need must be met before moving to the next higher level. Once each of these needs has been satisfied, if at some future time a deficiency is detected, the individual will act to remove the deficiency (Maslow, 1943). According to Maslow (1943), in the hierarchy there are physiological needs, safety needs, love/belonging needs, esteem needs and need for self-actualization. Safety level is the level that concerned with economic security. This level corresponds to the level at which people start seeking jobs. For the principals this level coincides with the beginning of teaching. Safety is followed by belongingness and esteem. At the belongingness level people need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance by the community. Esteem needs represents self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect for others and respect by others. At this level people need to engage themselves to gain recognition and have an activity or activities that give the person a sense of contribution, to feel self valued, be in a profession or hobby. This level coincides with the maturity of the profession. For the principals, becoming an assistant head or principal corresponds to this level. After this level comes self-actualization where people see what their full potential is.

This study seeks to explore principals’ career progression, based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory.

**Conclusion**

In the educational leadership field, the importance of leadership studies cannot be denied. Undoubtedly one of the researchers who has made the biggest contribution to the field is Tony Bush. After long studies over twenty years, Bush (1986, 1995 & 2003) has classified six major educational management models. However, other than in the USA and the UK, there is not sufficient research on educational leadership in Europe. In particular the studies carried out with school leaders are limited. One of the leading researchers in this field is Peter Ribbins who has carried out various studies in the United Kingdom and Europe (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993; Ribbins, 1997; Ribbins, 1999; Gronn & Ribbins, 2003; Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003). Ribbins aimed to understand school leaders’ career development. However, these studies were conducted almost a decade ago and it is thought that they need to be updated. On the other hand in Ireland there are limited studies on principals’ career path. Furthermore a review of the literature shows that studies about principals’ career progression were mostly carried out with secondary school principals and there are very limited studies that have been conducted with primary school principals. As a result of these accumulating reasons, updating the Cyprus and Malta studies in the field and bringing a new study to the Irish context has significant importance.

The next chapter outlines the research design of the study in the light of this aim.

**Chapter 4: Research Design**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to explore primary school principals’ career path, how they are made and make themselves. The topic of the study falls within the educational leadership area and this chapter introduces a discussion on some of the philosophical and methodological hypothesis underpinning educational research. This chapter then underlines issues in educational research and the interview method in qualitative research as well as doing comparison analysis of quantitative and qualitative approaches. This chapter also introduces the research design of the study and includes an overview of validity and the ethical factors of the research.

**Issues in Educational Research**

How a researcher does his or her research or what he or she is trying to find out, is significantly related to the methodology that researcher aims to use. Therefore the researcher must have sufficient knowledge about qualitative and quantitative research as well as the strengths and weaknesses of those methods. While qualitative research is strong on an area, it might be weak on another aspect. On the other hand both methodologies could be used together from time to time.

There are a number of research paradigms that differ according to their assumptions, namely:

* Ontology, which is a holistic philosophy that knowledge cannot be dissected from life experience (Byrne, 2001);
* Epistemology, in other words philosophy of knowledge that assumes a separation between knowing and being (Byrne, 2001);
* Axiology, the science of human values, enables us to identify the internal valuing systems that influence our perceptions, decisions and actions (Creswell, 2007);
* Rhetorical, that asks what the most appropriate language and voice is to be used in reporting the results of inquiry is (Creswell, 2007);
* Methodological, that aims to find which research techniques will best serve the researcher in looking for what can be known (Creswell, 2007),

Mack (2010) states that a paradigm is a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts or propositions that orient thinking and research. Researchers draw implicity or explicity upon a set of beliefs or epistemological assumptions called paradigms (Morrison, 2007).There are two dominant research paradigms that provide different emphasises and approaches which are positivism and interpretivism.

For positivism, which is also known as the scientific approach, the purpose of research is scientific explanation (Tuli, 2010) which proves or disproves a hypothesis (Mack, 2010). It seeks to apply the natural science model of research to investigate social phenomena and according to it the social world is best explained in terms of causes and effects, one thing leading to another. The purpose of social science research is to use this method to reveal and analyze the reality of social life (Nudzor, 2009). Positivist research usually has a control and experimental group and pre/test post method and emphasis on the scientific method, statistical analyze and generalizable findings (Mack, 2010). Quantitative methodology, which is grounded on the positivist paradigm, is concerned with attempts to quantify social phenomena and collect and analyze numerical data and focus on the links among a smaller number of attributes across many cases (Tuli, 2010).

On the other hand qualitative research, which is grounded on interpretivism, assumes that the researcher is an integral part of the research process (Byrne, 2001). Maykut and Morehouse (1994:2) stated that ‘*Qualitative research generally examines people’s words and actions in narrative or descriptive ways more closely representing the situation as experienced by the participants’*.

The interpretivist paradigm, in other words anti-positivist paradigm, emphasizes the ability of the individual to construct meaning (Ernest, 1994). It was developed as a reaction to positivism and seeks to understand rather than explain (Mack, 2010). Interpretivist researchers tend to be non-manipulative, unobtrusive and non-controlling as the paradigm is naturalistic (Tuli, 2010). The perspective is based on idealism, which advocates what we see around is the creation of the mind and we can only experience the world through our personal perceptions and beliefs (Nudzor, 2009). Therefore the role of social scientist in the interpretivist paradigm is to ‘*understand, explain and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants*’ (Cohen et al, 2000:19). Interpretivist researchers use qualitative research methodology to understand social realities (Bassey, 1995 & Cohen et al. 2000). Qualitative researchers aim to find answers to ‘How’, while quantitative researchers seek answers to ‘Why’, by using observation; analyzing text and documents; interviews and focus groups; and audio and video recording methods (Silverman, 2008).

The interpretivist paradigm advocates that social science is measured by qualitative research, rather than quantitative research as there is a deeper and a more meaningful understanding of social phenomena from a qualitative perspective. In contrast quantitative researchers offer numerical evidence (Nudzor, 2009). The researchers should focus on understanding the meaning of the events rather than emphasizing explaining behavior through measurable data by using questionnaire, tests etc. (Tuli, 2010). Ulin at al. (2004) describe qualitative research as inductive, oriented toward discovery and process, high validity, less concerned with generalizability and more concerned with deeper understanding. On the other hand quantitative research concerns correlations between two variables. But according to Silverman (2008) its contribution to social problems is lopsided and limited. It explains the issues with statistical tables while qualitative research is strong on descriptive narratives and accessing directly what happens in the world. Social science is established on human behavior and behavior cannot be described by numbers, but by observations or interviews. Byrne (2001) argues that the strength of qualitative research is that the modes of inquiry are holistic and contextual.

Although each methodology argues each other’s strengths and weaknesses, there is no single accepted research methodology applicable to all research problems (Schulze, 2003) and none of them is better or worse than the other, as both are proven to be useful in most research endeavors (Silverman, 1997 & Cohen at al, 2000). What is critical is the selection of the appropriate research methodology for an inquiry. The selection of a research methodology depends on the paradigm that guides the research activity, the theory of knowledge and how that knowledge may be gained (Tuli, 2010).

According to some researchers (Creswell, 2002; Mertens, 2005; Creswell & Garrett, 2008) these two methodologies can be used together. However some others (Sale at al., 2002) argue that it is impossible to combine them as part of one research study.

**Research Design for the Study**

There is no true or false research methodology, as both quantitative and qualitative methods are proven to be used useful in most research endeavors (Silverman, 1997 & Cohen at al, 2000). However the choice between different research methods depends on what the researcher is trying to find out (Silverman, 2000). The purpose of this study is to explore primary school principals’ career development. Therefore I intend to find out *how* school principals are made and make themselves. I will try to *understand*;

* What are the reasons for becoming a teacher?
* What are the reasons for becoming a principal?
* How they went about becoming a school principal?
* How well prepared they felt?
* What is their vision for school?
* What are their educational and managerial values?
* How they manage people, resources and external relationships?
* What part they play enabling better teaching and learning?
* How they evaluate themselves as an educational leader?
* What are the difficulties they face and how they perceive principalship?

In order to find out answers of *how* questions and to *understand* human behavior, qualitative approach is required. Therefore this study is grounded on interpretivist methodology and it is qualitative research which examines people’s words and actions in narrative or descriptive ways. According to Silverman (2008), interview data have potential to give us access to facts about the world. Therefore interview method was used for gathering the data. The rationale for choosing this method is having in-depth understanding of interviewees’ experiences, which is required to understand career paths of school principals, under the aim of this study. On the other hand another reason for chosing this approach is, being loyal to the original study of Ribbins.

There are four types of interview methods: structured interview, semi-structured interview, open-ended interview and focus group.

A structured [interview](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interview) is a qualitative research method commonly employed in survey research. It follows a common set of questions for each interview; asks the questions in exactly the same way, using the same words for each interview and presents the participant with a set of answers to choose from (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

A semi-structured [interview](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interview) is flexible, allowing new questions to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. It follows a common set of topics or questions for each interview; may introduce the topics or questions in different ways or orders as appropriate for each interview and allows the interviwee to answer the questions or discuss the topic in his/her own way using his/her own words (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

Open-ended interview is structured in terms of the wording of the questions and the participants are asked identical questions (Gall et al., 2003).

*The open-endedness allows the participants to contribute as much detailed information as they desire and it also allows the researcher to ask probing questions as a means of follow-up. Open-ended interviews are likely the most popular form of interviewing utilized in research studies because of the nature of the open-ended questions, allowing the participants to fully express their viewpoints and experiences* (Turner, 2010:756).

Finally;

*Focus groups are a form of group interview that capitalizes on communication between research participants in order to generate data. A group of individuals, usually six to eight, brought together for a more or less open-ended discussion about an issue. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members,* (Morgan, 1997:5).

In this research the open ended interview method was used in which the interviewer allows the interviewee the freedom to speak and to ascribe meanings while bearing in mind the broader aims of the project (Silverman, 2008).

**Approval**

Approval to carry out the study was given by the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee. Approval to carry out the study was also given by the Department of Education and Skills of Ireland; Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus and Ministry of Education of Malta.

Three permission letters, one for the Irish sample, one for the Cypriot sample and one for the Maltese sample, were sent to the relevant unit of the ministries. The letters outlined the purpose of the study, the proposed methodology, how participants would be selected on a voluntary basis and how data would be treated confidentially; including the researcher’s personal and contact details (see Appendix A). As soon as the ministries gave the permission the potential principals were contacted via telephone in Ireland and Cyprus and arranged an appropriate date for the interviews with the principals who agreed to participate. In Malta, I was told to contact the college principals, as schools are congregated under college principals. I then contacted one of the college principals and he contacted the heads of the schools on my behalf to set their consent. Then I contacted the voluntary heads of schools via telephone and arranged an appropriate date for the interviews.

**Sampling**

This study was carried out in Ireland, Cyprus and Malta with fifteen primary school principals. Researcher’s geographical position had significant effect on chosing these three countries. On the other hand, in common, these countries were under the British rules, they are small islands and in terms of the education and teacher training they have similarities.

The Republic of Ireland has been established since 1949. Its [capital](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_%28political%29) is [Dublin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dublin) with a population of 4,581,269. The official languages are Irish and English. Primary school teachers are trained at five colleges of education where they follow a three-year course leading to the Bachelor of Education. Each college of education works in partnership with a university which awards the degree. In order for the primary school teachers to be promoted as principals, they must firstly be qualified teachers, work a minimum of two years in a recognized primary school in the Republic of Ireland and have satisfactorily completed their probation period (INTO, 2011).

The Republic of Cyprus is a [Eurasian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurasia) [Island country](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Island_country) in the [Eastern Mediterranean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Mediterranean), south of [Turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey) and west of [Syria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria) and [Lebanon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanon). Its capital city is Nicosia and it has a population of 77% [Greek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greeks), 18% [Turkish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_people), and 5% other. The republic was established on 16 August 1960. The official languages are Greek and Turkish. In Cyprus, the promotional system works in two ways. For teachers in the south, the main criteria is age, which means older teachers have a better chance of taking the position. On the other hand in the north, teachers who have passsed their probation period and worked for a minimum of three years afterwards, are welcome to apply for the principalship position. Northern Cyprus is a self declared state that is recognized by Turkey only. It has declared its independency in 1983, after eleven years intercommunal violence between the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. Due to its lack of recogition and existence of embargoes, it is higlhy dependent on Turkey for economic support. Since it is a small country, favouritism and partisanship among the organisational bodies is higlhy seen.

The Republic of Malta is a southern European country. Its capital city is Valetta and the official languages are Maltese and English. The 1998 Education Act recognized teaching as a profession. The state provides scholarships for in-service and professional training for teachers. This means that anyone who wanted to become a head of school would require not only a five year experience as an assistant head of school but need to have successfully completed the diploma course.

Five primary school principals from each country participated in this study. Participants are all working for state schools and the average age is 51.6 (*n=15*). Table 1 shows number of the participants from each country with the average age.

**Table 1. Distribution of number of the participant and average of age**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Country** | **Number of participants** | **Average of age** |
| **Ireland** | 5 | 52.2 |
| **Cyprus** | 5 | 52.2 |
| **Malta** | 5 | 50.6 |
| **TOTAL** | 15 | 51.6 |

There are eight male and seven female principals participating in this study. The Irish sample was chosen from Dublin, the Cypriot sample was chosen from Famagusta (Northern Cyprus) and the Maltese sample was chosen from the eastern region that is managed by St. Margaret College. Table 2 shows range of gender.

**Table 2. Distribution of gender of the participants**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender** | **Ireland** | **Cyprus** | **Malta** |
| **Female** | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| **Male** | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| **TOTAL** | 5 | 5 | 5 |

**Access**

After having permission from the authorities, the potential participants were contacted by telephone and they were explained the purpose of the study, the procedure and the consequence of the study to them. They were made aware of their rights to refuse or withdraw from the study at any stage. When I got their verbal approval, we discussed the best time to meet for the interview.

**Data Gathering**

After arranging an appropriate date and time with all the participants, I met with each of them to conduct the interview. While I met some of them in the schools, some others met me outside the school. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and I used a voice recorder, with participants’ approval, to record the interviews. Participants were asked nineteen questions about their education, why they have chosen the teaching profession, their career development, their managerial skills, leadership features and the things they like and dislike regarding to their role (see Appendix B). Differently for the Malta sample, I had to skip one of the questions which is; ‘*Is the term head teacher still an accurate description for what you expect of yourself and others expect of you? Is it time we joined much of the rest of the world and called our school leaders principals?*’

In Malta the term ‘head teacher’ is not used. Instead, the Maltese authorities use the term ‘head of school’. All head of schools are under ‘principals’ management who coordinate the relations and communication of heads of schools and the directors. There are ten principals in Malta who are responsible for each region.

**Ethical Factors**

*The unwary reader might think that social research is just a matter of using the right methodology and analyzing your data properly. Unfortunately this review could turn the researcher into a mere technician completely disconnected from the human issues of values and ethics,* (Silverman, 2008:315).

Therefore it is essential to ground the research on an ethical base.

At the permission stage from the Irish, Cypriot and Maltese authorities, the researcher’s role and aim of the study were clarified. Potential participants were all informed about the purpose of the study, the length of the interview, tools that are required for the interview, volunteering and their rights to refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any stage they wish. I also informed them about the confidentially of the study.

Furthermore, I informed them that their names and location will not be used and they will be able to see the final report of the research. Instead of their names, I advised that a special coding will be used, such as ‘C3’; C represents Cyprus and 3 represents the participant. In terms of the interview transcripts, they were advised that transcripts will be seen by themselves, the researcher and if required by the research supervisor and examiners.

**Data Analysis**

This is an update study of the work of Pashiardis and Ribbins (2003) and Bezzina and Cassar (2003) and I aim to conduct it in Ireland in the light of Peter Ribbins’ previous studies. During the research I have been loyal to previous studies and used the same questions for gathering the data. Therefore I used the similar themes, which were used in previous studies for analyzing the data. The themes were already set up in the original study of Peter Ribbins and predetermined. In order to be loyal to the original study, content analysis, which was used for analyzing the data of the original study, was used to analyze the data of this research. In content analysis a set of categories are established and the number of instances that fall into each category is counted (Silverman, 2010). In content analysis the researcher has to know the data; focus the analysis; categorize the information; identify connections within and between the categories and bring everything together.

Interviews with the Irish and Maltese principlas were carried out in English. However, for the Cyprus sample Turkish language was used as it was the mother tongue of Cypriot principals. After gathering the data by a voice recorder, all the interviews were transcribed and written down. For the Cyprus sample, I translated the transcripts into English language. Because the structure of grammer in English and Turkish is different and because there is no direct translation for some particular words, I tried to keep the content integrity as much as possible (see Appendix C). After transcribing the data I listened to the recorder again and in the mean time I checked the transcription to see wheter I have missed anything or not. In order to familiarize myself to the data, I listened to the interviews from the voice recorder again and read the transcripts several times. Then I reviewed the purpose of the evaluation and what I wanted to find out. This step was followed by organizing the data to identify consistencies and differences. Because the themes were predetermined, I organized them into coherent categories. I matched the answers with the themes and moved the answers under appropriate themes. In order to ensure that I matched the appropriate answer and the themes correctly, I re-read the data. I then finally explicated the data and produced a report of the analysis.

**Validity of Study**

One of the most suggested methods for validating the qualitative data is triangulation, which refers to ‘*combining multiple theories, methods, observers and empirical materials to produce a more accurate, comprehensive and objective representation of the object of study*’ (Silverman, 2010:291). However Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest alternative criteria, which are credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability, for establishing validity, or in their words, trustworthiness, in qualitative data.

Credibility refers to whether the results of qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participants in the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Interview transcripts were sent to the participants to get confirmation that the data represents what they wanted to say on the interview day. They were also asked to modify the data if they wish. None of them modified the transcripts.

Transferability refers to whether the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This is a qualitative study and the results cannot be generalized. However since this study is contextualized, it provides transferability to other researchers.

Dependability emphasizes that the researcher is responsible for describing the changes that occur in the setting and how these changes affected the way the researcher approached the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Throughout the entire study I have endeavoured to describe all the steps I have followed in producing the report and collecting the data.

Finally confirmability refers to whether the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A colleague of mine, who is an academic stuff of Division of Measurement and Evaluation in Hacettepe University, also reviewed the interview transcripts, the analysis and the findings. Under the light of her knowledge and experience in the filed, she confirmed that the data supports the results.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has introduced a discussion on some of the philosophical and methodological hypotheses underpinning educational research. In order to find out answers to *how* questions and to *understand* human behavior, a qualitative approach is required. Therefore this study is grounded on interpretivist methodology and it is qualitative research which examines people’s words and actions in narrative or descriptive ways. In this research the open ended interview method was used. Fifteen primary school principals, who are working for state schools, from Ireland, Cyprus and Malta participated in this study. The data was gathered by using a voice recorder and each interview lasted approximately one hour. At the end of the chapter, ethical factors and the credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability of the research were discussed.

The next chapter introduces the findings of the study.

**Chapter 5: Findings**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to explore primary school principals’ career path in Ireland, Cyprus and Malta. The study is carried out in the light of Peter Ribbins’ previous studies (Ribbins, 1997, Gronn & Ribbins, 2003). Similar studies were conducted in Cyprus (Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003) and Malta (Bezzina & Cassar, 2003) almost a decade ago and this study aims to update these studies as well. Also, limited studies in the Irish context persuaded me wish to extend this study to Ireland.

Five primary school principals from each country, in total fifteen principals from Ireland, Cyprus and Malta participated in this study. An open-ended interview method was used for gathering the data. Participants were asked questions about the reasons for becoming a teacher; the reasons for becoming a principal; how they went about becoming a school principal; how well prepared they felt; what their vision for school is; what their educational and managerial values are; how they manage people, resources and external relationships; what part they play enabling better teaching and learning; what kind of a leader they are; what are the difficulties they face and how they perceive principalship. Each interview lasted approximately an hour.

This chapter introduces the findings of the study under the emerging themes.

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**The Irish Sample**

Three female and two male, five primary school principals, from state schools, participated in this study from the Republic of Ireland. Two of them have diplomas in educational leadership and management and two of them have masters degree in education. The average of their ages is 52.2 (*n=5*). They have on average 25 years of experience in teaching and 6.8 years experience in principalship. Table 3 shows the demographic features of the participants.

**Table 3. Demographic features of the Irish sample.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **I1** | **I2** | **I3** | **I4** | **I5** |
| **Age** | 50 | 54 | 56 | 50 | 51 |
| **Gender** | Male | Female | Male | Female | Female |
| **Teaching career** | 20 year | 21 years | 34 years | 26 years | 24 years |
| **Headship career** | 10 years | 8 years | 3 years | 5 years | 8 years |
| **Education** | T.T.C Diploma  Master | T.T.C Master | T.T.C | T.T.C | T.T.C  Diploma |

**The making of five teachers**

This part scopes principal’s career path including the reasons they have chosen the teaching profession and their first years in teaching.

***The how and why of teaching***

In order to understand the underlying causes, Irish principals were asked why they have chosen teaching and how they became a teacher. Two principals stated that they were influenced by their teachers and the idea of being teacher occurred at school. One of them spoke about parental influence, as her mother was a teacher and her father was a principal, while the other one said she was influenced by her husband, who went to teacher training college as well. On the other hand, one of them stated that it was a natural thing and a natural process for him.

*For me education was a very natural thing. All of my friends, we played football in the same place that all the students were playing football in. So it was a very normal thing to me being in a university. I was not a student that time, only 11-12 years of age, but the university was our play ground. It did not seem like a strange thing, seemed like a natural thing that I could go to a university.* (I:1)

To become a teacher they all went to a teacher training college in Ireland and received three years of training in order to teach. Two of them obtained post graduate diplomas in special education; two of them have masters degree in educational leadership and management, and two of them have no further education except the courses/trainings that are provided for them. Currently one of them is doing his doctorate on educational leadership.

***First ye****a****rs of teaching***

Principals were all asked if the education they received from teacher training college was helpful and efficient in their first years of teaching. The majority of them stated that their first years could have been better and that they faltered in early years. One of them stated that it would have been better if they learnt what to do under specific situations. This is why she preferred going back to the university in order to learn more.

*On my first years in teaching I really faltered and did not know what to do under some circumstances. Then I decided on going back to the university and learn more.* (I:5)

Another principal spoke about the practicality of the education he received and argued that teacher training should be given by people who are experienced in teaching rather than having theoretical knowledge of it.

*Three years study for education degree was not helpful in terms of dealing with the classroom… For me my education did not answer the questions I needed to get answers in my first year…There were teachers who taught to you in the college but they are not primary school teachers they may not know geography, drama, Irish etc. and none of them worked in the primary schools or classrooms. So you end up getting theory from the people who have not experience about the actual job.* (I:1)

On the other hand one of the principals thought that the education she was given was sufficient to an extent and did prepare her for teaching.

*It was a very practical course. The course was about methodology and practice and theory. I remember when I finished the college and started to teach. To a certain extent, but not to actual practicality, my college education prepared me for teaching.* (I:2)

**The making of five principals**

Questions about teaching and reasons for choosing the teaching profession were followed by questions about principalship in order to understand how participants have decided on becoming a principal, why they have chosen it and what their perceptions of the profession are.

***The how and why of promotion***

Principals were asked why they have chosen to become a principal and what factors pushed them to take a further step in their career. Each principal gave a different answer to this question. One of them was looking for different areas and his colleagues pushed him to apply for the position, another one had frustration on dealing with the Department of Education and she decided to fight for the children’s rights as she stated;

*I felt I would do it myself, because of the frustration of dealing with the department, ridiculous compacts that hurt children and learning, that upset me the most and I decided to fight…* *When I applied for the position I was thinking for the role that I wanted to play: Leading children in education and leading this school.* (1:4)

Similarly another one was not happy working with the existing management as the management in her school changed and it was difficult working with the new management. The situation forced her to start looking for new roles and without having a career plan she found herself applying for the position. She described it as a path that opened up to her.

One of the principals said she was influenced by her father as he was principal too and she also liked the idea of working with adults. In her previous experiences she worked for public development with a leadership role. She was networking with various age groups. After that she evolved to policy development and this experience enabled her to bring her previous skills to leadership and this is how she started being interested in principalship.

Finally another principal stated that he became a principal in order to have a raise in terms of his salary. He described his preference as;

*… I did not go that job to become a principal because I wanted to be a school leader, I did not go for the job because I wanted to work for blind children, I went there because of money they were paying… When I was asked why I wanted to become a principal for this school, I said because it is a bigger school and I will be paid more. Ideally it was for money.* (I:1)

***Preparing for principalship***

Irish principals were asked how they prepared for the principalship position. They stated that there is no initial training for the role unless you get the job. They applied to the position with no training on administration and finance. However when they took the job, they all had a five day union course which was carried by the INTO trade union. On the other hand some of them said that having a masters degree in leadership and management was helpful and advantageous for them. However ‘*you still need to walk in the door and experience it…’* (I:1)

On the other hand some principals had no educational management degree, and prepared for the role by reading books about managing schools, networking and communicating with other people.

After appointment as a principal there were a number of courses that they could attend and all of them attended those courses; however one of them stated that *‘I firmly believe that there should be training for principals...’* (I:4) as another one said;

*There was no structure for formal training before I took on the role. That is not available in the Irish system …we got some in-service training for newly appointed principals and that was very useful and very helpful… For the preparation in service and on the job trainings are going all the time.* (I:5)

***Achieving principalship***

None of the principals had initial plans of becoming a principal; however some reasons made them to apply for the position. Since the Irish system in centralized, the chairmen of the board evaluates the applications and the school management can only suggest the person. All the principals were appointed to principalship directly from teaching. None of them had experience of assistant principalship. Their average age when they were appointed was 45. One of them said *‘I was actually very surprised when I got the job first time as principal.’* (I:1)

Since they had little preparation for the role they found it challenging as one of them said, *‘I did not find it such an easy job. I must be fair and say my first three years were extremely difficult’* (I:4)

Another principal said she was missing teaching and she stated;

*I find it quite challenging… For the first four years, I would happily give the keys and go back to teaching. Because I was missing teaching…when people go to the teacher training college, they go there to learn how to teach. Nobody goes there to learn how to be a principal.* (I:5)

Because there was no formal training in the teacher training college for principalship, some of them experienced difficulties on working with adults and dealing with administrational work.

*When I started for principalship I did not like working with adults and did not fully understand what was going on. There was so much administrational work to do.* (I:1)

***Reviewing principalship***

To review principalship, Irish principals were asked about their vision, values, management and leadership skills and things they experience difficulties on.

*Vision*

The majority of the principals stated that their vision is creating the best learning environment for the children and ensuring they come to the school as happy and enthusiastic pupils. One of them described his vision as;

*I think education should be a pleasant experience. It should be hard work and challenging…They [children] should understand that they are coming to school for something. Teachers should understand that they are coming to school for something too… The environment is relaxed but still the business is going on…* (I:1)

In order to achieve their vision, they work as a team in the schools. One of them said;

*We work together to create this environment, as groups, and with very enthusiastic staff.* (I:3)

Another principal stated how to achieve her vision as;

W*e meet with the in-school management team frequently, we have a five year plan here, we have curricular plans, we have development plans, every year every term we work with special needs team and look at how the children progresses…we try to keep the best practice. We talk to the universities, teachers come in, and we ask them about the news, new developments.* (I:4)

*Values*

In terms of educational and managerial values principals put emphasis on collegiality, transparency, fairness, high quality, openness and respect.

*In our school there are collegiality and friendship, because it is not the right place to come work if people are fighting with each other. We have a transparent process and if people want to see each other they can visit each other easily… there is fairness, transparency…*(I:1)

One of the principals referred in a broader sense to her values as she stated;

*My educational values are high standard, good teaching methodology, commitment, hardworking, inclusive, just good learning and good teaching… I believe very much in inclusiveness which allows everybody and if people are part of all the planning process and also decision making… I believe in collaboration quite strongly.* (I:2)

On the other hand another principal’s values are limited to academic achievement as he said;

*I am very interested in exposing their full potential for both English language and Maths… we have staff meetings and we discuss what we are doing wrong, how we can get the results better…everybody is coordinated that we have staff meetings, we look at all the education* (I:3)

Some of them stated that they found themselves successful as they were told so.

*Because we have whole school evaluation, the department informed us that we are doing very well* (I:4)

One of the principals said that she gets good feedback from parents which shows how successful she is in putting her values into practice.

*I would say I am reasonably successful at it. I get good feedback from parents; I get good feedback form staff.* (I:5)

*Management*

How principals manage people is showing them respect, giving them responsibility, a team approach, communicating with them and understanding them and accepting their different backgrounds. One of them stated;

*How I manage the people is actually giving them what they want, it’s very simple. .. I treat them with respect…* (I:1)

Two principals put emphasis on knowing the background of their staff and taking a different approach to each of them.

*You need to take a different approach to work with each of those people. You need to know their background, what they do, you need to know their work load, and you need to know what is expected…So I need to be very clear on what is expected…I suppose you try and communicate, as clearly and efficiently... all the time…* (I:5)

Another one said;

*I speak with teachers individually, I think you cannot separate people’s personal and professional skills and think they are all together so I would kind of get to know them… I give them quite a lot responsibility… I collaborate with them.* (I:2)

In terms of managing resources, most of them said they receive help from parents as their budget is not enough to meet all of their needs. One of the principals said that;

*During three years we could not have painted the school because we did not have enough budget for it and in the end I asked parents to come and paint the school… We are always looking for extra money for our school… This is how we can manage our resources. For example you have budget for the building and for curriculum, but sometimes you need to spend curriculum money for the building too.* (I:1)

Similarly another principal stated;

*We have a parents association here… we work together to solve the queries…. I think the feel is that I am very approachable… we organized few days that grandparents came to the school... Beside the staff, teaching staff, there are a lot of people willing to help. They do not see the school as a place to be afraid of.* (I:3)

One of them pointed out International Monetary Fund’s involvement and said that getting funding is more difficult than it used to be. On the other hand, differently from others one principal said they have all necessary resources available in the school and the task is prioritizing these resources.

*We have all kinds of resources available for us in the school. I suppose our biggest resources are our human resources. You need to get to know people very well to engage in the process… Every year you need to check what is needed for that year, you need to check it with your staff, and you need to prioritize them. And you plan how you are going spend the money.* (I:5)

In terms of managing the external relationships they often receive support from the parents association. They try to be as open as possible to the parents as well as having a good relationship with them.

*I try to be as open as I can. We have quite a large involvement of parents into the school…parents come and help us on certain things…we keep the communication open, up and running…we have a parent association which is quite new…* (I:2)

In order to keep their relationships well and up to date they send home letters to encourage parents to talk with them; include parents in school activities and have an open door policy. However one of the principals stated that she would keep her distance with the parents.

*I would not have personal relationship with the parents outside the school, but you meet them in the local community, because I live in the local community too, so you come across them.* (I:5)

As well as building good relationships with the parents, they also work in conjunction with the board of management and share their problems.

*We have meetings with the board management that we tell about our problems.* (I:2)

When they were asked to whom they are accountable, they said they are accountable to the board of management, the ministry and the archbishop of Dublin. Also one of them added the middle management team to this list.

*The board manager manages me first of all. But in the school, like any other schools, I have middle management team that I feel we work together; they manage me as I manage them as well. Obviously I am accountable to board of management as well as the middle management team.* (I:3)

On the other hand another principal stated that she is also accountable to children and other agencies.

*I am accountable to children; I have to take huge responsibility that they are receiving good teaching. To me the children come first than everything. After that, from a management perspective I am accountable to the board, parents, teachers, department of education, and school community in an extent. But preliminary and emotionally I am accountable to the children and then department of education. The board of management is my employer.* (I:2)

*Role on effective teaching and learning*

All the principals have regular meetings with their staff to enable more effective teaching in the school. Furthermore one of them stated that they have an assembly every month that encourages children to talk.

*We would frequently have staff meetings which is every month for curriculum. That keeps us in a line…we have a learning environment… with children we have kind of assembly every month.* (I:2)

Two of them stated that they encourage their staff to attend courses and up skill themselves as well as making teachers observe each other in the classes to learn different teaching methods.

*I encourage teachers to take courses. And offer people places to up skill themselves…I think enabling more effective teaching can be done by teaching together in the class…I encourage teachers to go and watch one another.* (I:3)

Principals were also asked if effective teaching is harder now than it used to be. The majority of them said that it is not harder now. However they think some variables make it difficult from time to time such as bureaucracy.

*I do not think it’s harder now… Bureaucracy makes many things difficult. It is more difficult now and comes frustrating. But it does not affect me hugely.* (I:2)

On the other hand one principal stated that because there are less demands on schools, in the last two years it has been easier.

*The last two years I think it has been easier. Because there are less demands on schools. Education is not a priority now; the priority is keeping earning money.* (I:1)

*Leadership*

Principals were asked what kind of a leader they are. They put emphasis on being honest, fair, approachable and supportive.

*I think being fair to everybody is very important… I think being honest and straight forward are very important. Also confidentiality is very important too… It is very important to me that I am kind of approachable. I suppose being truthful, honesty and fairness and being aware of your own and reviewing your practice is very important.* (I:5)

However one of them said being honest may not be a good thing; while another one said it is important having good mental balance.

*I do not know. I think I am very honest, but I do not know if this is such a good thing… I give too much.* (I:4)

On the other hand two of them stated that they do not ask people to do anything they are not prepared to do. Furthermore one of them put emphasis on the barriers.

*I am probably easy to approach… I am also delegating, and it is part of my leadership style. I probably demand, demanding… I never ask people to do anything that I do not want to do myself. I am always there to support somebody… Trust is huge… Friendship is there on a professional level, you are still principal of the school, and there is a barrier.* (I:2)

They were also asked how they support their staff to lead within the school. They all said that they give opportunities to their staff and encourage them to lead. However one of them said he pushes people to take initiatives and lead on projects if there is no volunteer.

*When we have staff meetings there are people who are happy to lead a project. In a way it is better if I do not force. But couple of times no one wanted to lead and I had to push them… I think sometimes you should let people to give their own decisions and take initiatives to move ahead.* (I:1)

Another principal said he encourages his staff according to their abilities as different people have different talents and not everyone is able to do a particular task.

*I look at different areas in the school and different characteristics of teachers…One teacher could be gifted in sports area, so I would encourage him/her and say you are the expert here. The approach is ‘you are a talent here’…You realize the value, you realize their qualifications and then you ask people to help who are a lot more qualified than you on certain areas…There is a team approach and we aim to push this ship as a team.* (I:3)

Principals also put emphasis on giving support to their staff unless they make a big mistake. Additionally one of them stressed the importance of feedback also.

*You try to get them involved in the process; if you want people to lead you give them the opportunity to do that. You need to give that support too… To an extent unless they are making a massive mistake you need to support them and make them to lead… You need to encourage them. You need to give them feedback; you need to say well done good job!* (I:5)

In order to understand what terminology Irish principals are using for their profession, they were asked how valid the term ‘head teacher’ is in the present. They all said that the term ‘head teacher’ is not used in Ireland as it is not an Irish expression.

*To me the word head teacher is English, a British expression that I do not associated to the word in this country, I would never use it. In Ireland we always say principal teacher, we never use head teacher term.* (I:2)

*Curriculum*

When they were asked how they were affected by changes in the curriculum and in policy, they have told that they work as groups and changes are made by the staff.

*We work in groups, we come together, to see where we are, what we are achieving, the best we can do, how can we make it better, what support, what resources we need, are we raising best practice?* (I:4)

However from time to time there are reviews of the curriculum. The reviewed curriculum is supported by guidelines to help teachers in achieving educational aims.

*In 1999 they introduced the reviewed curriculum. There are teacher guidelines in it, in each subject area teachers are getting in service… Everybody has the changes as hard copy or have it on their hard drive.* (I:5)

In terms of support, while some of them mentioned ongoing in-service trainings; others indicated that they have regular meetings with staff to share their knowledge and identify what equipment they need.

*They discuss the need for change with me. If they need more equipment for the change, maybe different text books, new approaches, they discuss with me.* (I:1)

On the other hand one of them stated that in-service training is not for all areas and is not sufficient.

*There is no state supported in service at the moment. There is some support by state for special education teachers, but not very much. If you are in a disadvantaged school in a disadvantaged area, there is more support then. And the support is actually depends on policy. There is quite a lot of stuff online and you can get them as support but they are online.* (I:5)

*Reviewing principalship*

When Irish principals were asked to evaluate what they find difficult related to their roles, some of them said bureaucracy and administrative duties make the role difficult; however some others put emphasis on other variables. While one of them told he finds it difficult dealing with parents whose children are problematic; another one said dealing with people’s expectations is difficult for her.

*Dealing with people’s expectations I think I find it difficult. Because everybody has an opinion about how you should do the job and what you should do in the job. And at the end of the day you are the person who has to do the job… Work load, paperwork are really difficult to manage as well.* (I:5)

On the other hand one principal criticized management decisions and stated;

*Yes, in capital letters, stupid management decisions are coming and I am tired of fighting for children’s rights… They cut all learning sources 10%. Unfortunately school principals are not trusted and they have no rights to say what is best for their school.* (I:4)

Although they said there are things they find difficult and they dislike, when they were asked, they all said they are still enjoying being a principal. However this is highly related to their experiences in the principalship.

*For the first four years, I would happily give the keys and go back to teaching. Cause I was missing teaching…Now I can do everything in a routine, and I am now more confident about the job and happier. But I did not at the very beginning.* (I:5)

In conjunction with experience, their confidence level has increased too. However one of them thinks his educational background was also an attributing factor to his career.

*I really enjoy it now. I like it now, especially after my master degree.* (I:1)

**The Cypriot Sample**

One female and four male, five primary school principals participated in the study in Cyprus. They are all working for state schools and all went to Teacher Training College. Since there is no obligation to have an educational management degree before their appointment to the role, only one of them has a masters degree which is for her personal development and which is in psychological counseling. Other principals have only attended various courses and in-service training. One of the principals is currently doing his masters degree in educational administration and one of them is doing her doctorate in psychological counseling. The average of their age is 52.2 (*n=5*). They have in average nineteen years of experience in teaching and twelve years of experience in principalship. Table 3 shows demographic features of the participants.

**Table 4. Demographic features of the Cypriot sample.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **C1** | **C2** | **C3** | **C4** | **C5** |
| **Age** | 54 | 51 | 51 | 52 | 53 |
| **Gender** | Female | Male | Male | Male | Male |
| **Teaching career** | 25 | 16 | 25 | 13 | 18 |
| **Headship career** | 8 | 15 | 6 | 17 | 15 |
| **Education** | T.T.C Master | T.T.C | T.T.C | T.T.C | T.T.C |

**The making of five teachers**

This part scopes principal’s career path including the reasons they have chosen teaching and their first years in teaching.

***The how and why of teaching***

In order to understand why and how Cypriot principals have chosen the teaching profession they were asked some questions. Interestingly teaching is the first choice of only one of them who was influenced by his primary school teacher. For other principals teaching was the second preferences or it was not even a preference at the time. However because of certain reasons they had to choose this profession. Two of the Cypriot principals stated that they had to choose being a teacher. Although they were qualified to go abroad and study abroad, because of the economic circumstances they had to stay in Cyprus and go to the Teacher Training College, although one of them did not even know of such a college’s existence.

*Honestly I never thought about being a teacher. Although I was qualified to go abroad and study abroad, because of my parents’ economic situation they offered me going to Teacher Training College. That time I did not even know the existence of this college. I applied to the exams and passed and qualified to go that college. I was actually thinking to leave after a while, but I liked it then. On the other hand I had two brothers who were studying too and it was impossible for my parents to pay my college fee if I went to abroad. And this college was giving me a scholarship; therefore I never had economic issues when I was studying and I stayed there.* (C3)

On the other hand the other two principals stated that they wanted to be something else; however they were convinced to go to the Teachers Training College. One of them wanted to be a musician, however his fiancé persuaded him and he applied for the exams to study in this college. He was not even sure about his choice until he started his first internship.

*I started my first internship in 1981. I entered to the classroom, all the children stood up and said ‘Welcome teacher’. That time I felt odd from that natural voice and that time I became a teacher.* (C2)

Another one wanted to be a mechanical engineer and he went abroad to study it. However at the time there were left-right conflicts in Turkey and many of the students were killed. He had to turn back and study for the college exams.

*In fact, teaching was not my first choice. I passed all my exams and qualified to study mechanical engineering in Turkey. However that time there was left – right conflicts in Turkey that many students were killed. I was the only child, so my parents called me back to Cyprus and then we moved to England. There was nothing to do in England, so I studied for Teachers Training College exams for a year and after a year I came back to Cyprus and applied for it. Teaching was my second choice, but I never regret that I earn my life from teaching. I am very happy and want to do it as long as I am healthy.* (C4)

To become a teacher, all the principals went to Teachers Training College, which offers three years of education with practical and theoretical lessons and which accepts students on exam results only.

***First years of teaching***

When the participants were asked about their first years in teaching, three of the principals stated that the education they were given in Teachers Training College was adequate. They were given both theorical and practical courses which helped them a lot in their first years.

*Teachers Training College was entirely teaching how to be a teacher. Therefore methodological courses were extensive. It was different than the university, they were teaching us how to be a teacher, how to teach lessons, which methods are appropriate for specific lessons etc. Actually when I compare my college education with bachelors, I think the education I was given was purely correct. I am happy what I have learned from there. From the first day they imposed us ‘you are going to be a teacher, if you learn this you will be a good teacher, you will teach English by using this method, you will teach Maths by this way etc.’. They thought us the practical aspects and it helped me during my teaching career a lot.* (C2)

As well as the education they were given, one of them said that previous teachers he observed were also helpful to him as he learned a lot from these teachers and put their techniques into practice in his first years. On the other hand one of the principals said the education she was given in the college was not helpful at all and she does not find it adequate.

*I do not find my college education adequate. For this reason I always tried to improve myself and my skills. I read a lot about education and tried to get help from my older teachers to improve myself; because we were entering the classes with theoretical knowledge in the beginning and finding ourselves in a comfortless zone.* (C1)

Differently from the others, one of the principals suggested loving the profession and the children first.

*If you love your profession and children, you can always improve your skills.* (C4)

**The making of five principals**

Questions about teaching and reasons for choosing the teaching profession were followed by questions about principalship in order to understand how participants have decided becoming a principal, why they have chosen it and what their perceptions of the profession are.

***The how and why of promotion***

Cypriot principals were asked why they wanted to become a principal and how they became one. One of them said she wanted it, because she was thinking that the existing principals could not manage the schools and damage the education. She wanted to become a principal to satisfy herself as well as leaving the classroom. She also said she was confident managing and she was thinking she could do it properly. However there were political issues and because of her political party in the first years she was only an acting principal. Similarly, another principal said he worked for management positions in some associations such as teacher’s union and teacher’s bank for long years and he believed he could apply his skills to school management. He added because for the political reasons, he was always rejected and therefore while his colleagues could become a principal in 10-15 years, he would have to wait until after twenty five years of teaching.

*I believed I could be a good manager. I worked at different associations such as teacher’s union and teacher’s bank at management positions. I worked at the union for fifteen years and at the bank for ten years. Then I believed I could do principalship as well. I became a principal after twenty five years of my teaching career. It was the time to have a career, because my students started to be principal and deputy principal. Not because I was incompetent, there are political reasons that I could not become a principal for twenty five years. My friends could be principal after 10-13 years; unfortunately I could do it after twenty five years. (C3)*

Another principal stated that he wanted to be a principal, because he always worked with principals who were not innovative. And then he promised himself that he would be a principal and help teachers who are innovative.

Two other principals wanted to become principal because they thought it was the right time for them. They both felt themselves ready for the position as well as one them stated it was the correct time to take an advantage of the opportunity, and otherwise he could wait for years. For the other principal, he said there was exhaustion and the classroom environment did not appeal to him.

*There is a fact in education that after a number of years there is exhaustion among the teachers and classroom environment do not appeal to them and they want to get out of the classroom. Of course anyone who wants to get out of the classroom cannot be a principal. In order to become a principal you need to have some qualifications and skills.* (C5)

In order to become a principal, Cypriot principals applied for the position and took both written and verbal examinations.

***Preparing for principalship***

Before the examinations for appointment Cypriot principals needed to have a preparation process both educationally and psychologically. In Cyprus principals need to collect some points before they apply for principalship position. The points can be collected from seminars and conferences as well as the courses they take. In addition to this, their experiences in terms of years are also considered. When they have enough points they can apply for the position. They have to know about the legislation as well as teachers’ laws. They have to answer these questions both written and verbally. However in the past there were only verbal exams and some principals said those exams were not objective and there was political favoritism.

*I applied for this exam five times. In the past there was only a verbal examination, but I was always eliminated in these exams because of my political point of view. Then the system changed. First I passed the written exam with high points and then I was accepted to the verbal one. I think written exams are more objective because people who are knowledgeable can only pass them.* (C5)

All these principals were psychologically ready to apply for the position. However one of them explained his psychological readiness more deeply than the others.

*My father is a Cyprus casualty and I lost my father when I was too young. Thus since I was a little child I did my business my own. When I was ten, I set up a music group and I was the chef. I started hunting, I did not satisfy that and I became the club president. I always had an impulsion to organize the things. I think this is essential for being a good manager. You can gain it by the courses or the books you read, but I was given it by life. Then when I wanted to be a principal I applied for it. I also observed the previous principals I worked with. I tried to take good parts of them.* (C2)

***Achieving principalship***

When they achieved principalship the majority of them had no difficulties in their first years. They were all ready for the role and they believed that they could manage it. On the other hand in Cyprus, previous principals always pass everything onto the new principals. Therefore the new principal always knows about the issues before s/he takes over the school.

*I never had difficulties on my first years of principalship; because I always believed I had leadership features and I could do managerial duties. On the other hand, old principal always passes everything onto the new one. S/he gives the keys, shows the library etc. S/he also passes on the documents, files, finance and all the correspondences before s/he leaves. In the end principals’ duties are managing the school, sharing the daily lesson hours to teachers, monitoring the income and expenses and corresponding with the ministry. Also s/he controls the public relationships and relationships with the parents. If s/he has the ability s/he succeeds.* (C3)

Only one of them stated that she had difficulties in her first years which were highly related to managing people. Because her colleagues had hardly accepted her and she had to earn their respect.

*My first years in principalship were extremely hard. Because I worked for both my new role and for people to accept me. Some people unfortunately did not accept my position. They thought they could be the principal and they thought I did not deserve it. However I had more qualification then other people and I was more experienced. On the other hand I waited for a long time for this role, because of my political point of view I refused couple of times before.* (C1)

***Reviewing principalship***

To review principalship, Cypriot principals were asked about their vision, values, management and leadership skills and things they experience difficulties on.

*Vision*

Cypriot principals were asked about their vision for the school. Although they gave different answers, a common point for three of them was preparing the children for life as well as teaching honesty, responsibility, using the resources correctly and teaching basic skills.

*To me school is everything that children can learn to survive. It familiarizes the children to life. Everyone will learn how to live together, how to socialize, how to be responsible to the environment, how to be honest. Everyone will work for his/her country and be a good citizen. I always think in this way and make my education in this way. I want children to grow up as conscious pupil, know who they are, know what they want and be happy.* (C1)

Two of the principals are working in a primary school that only have first and second grades. They both said they want to give the children basic skills, as well as preparing them for the higher grades. However one of them also stated that it is necessary to approach the kids with motherly love as they are so young.

*My visions is teaching the basic skills to the children, teaching the basic steps of education and cooperate with the parents to prepare the children for bigger grades. We aim to teach the children how to hold a pencil, how to behave in the classroom, how to read and write and giving the basics of mathematic.* (C3)

One of the principals stated that his vision is opening the school to the public and being innovative by following the changes in the world.

*My vision is opening the school to public. We organize a lot of events to do this. When I first started in this school, school’s infrastructure was not appropriate for the education. Thus we did maintenance to the building; we organized the classrooms again, from sitting plan to the colors used. Now we have white boards, wireless internet, projection etc. Still there are many things to be done, however we need money and since the economic situation is not very well in our country we cannot make these changes immediately. I also want to follow the changes in the world and be innovative. I always tell the teachers to read and search. (C5)*

*Values*

When Cypriot principals were asked about their values, three of them put emphasis on democracy, honesty and fairness.

*My managerial values are first of all honesty and fairness. These are my biggest principles. If there is no equity and fairness in a society you can never have discipline and trust there. My educational values are the same. Being fair and equal to the children and support them, help them.* (C1)

As well as being democratic, one of them stated the importance of working cooperatively, having good relationships and having welfare in the school. On the other hand, two principals stressed being innovative and following the changes in the world.

*My values are being innovate, being open to the changes, being role model and rather than focusing on the mistakes, trying to find how to correct the mistakes. I support, I respect and I expect respect. It is very important to have good relationships with people.* (C2)

When they were asked how successful they are in putting their values into practice, they all said they are successful.

*I never had difficulties putting my values into practice. I use these approaches in my personal life and in the schools I worked as a principal I was appreciated a lot.* (C1)

Only one principal did not find it correct to evaluate himself; however he said people’s reactions towards him show he is doing the things well.

*I cannot evaluate myself, however people’s reactions show that I am doing the things well…Even I was angry and show my anger; I still feel that I am loved and respected by the teachers and the parents. It is impossible doing everything right, however it is shown that I am doing a lot of things right.* (C2)

*Management*

Cypriot principals are managed by the division manager and they are responsible to the division manager, counselor and the minister of education in the same hierarchical order. However one of the principals gave a totally different answer to this question and he stated he is managed by the problems and the needs.

*If there is child with a problem, then s/he is the manager in the school. We have to serve to her/him. I am managed by the problems and the needs. Most urgent need is the most important one. In fact we are managed by the aims, not the instructions. If someone falls into the fire, s/he tries to save herself/himself. This is the first step. Then s/he puts medicine to his/her wound. Then s/he needs to check if there is an infection. Most important thing here is, finding the needs and the most urgent ones.* (C2)

When they were asked how they manage people in the school, two of them said they experience some difficulties from time to time. One of them complained that there is no one to delegate to such as a deputy principal, therefore he delegates to teachers when he needs to.

*From time to time I struggle when I manage people; because some people compel you. After a while they started not to do their duties. I fought myself a lot not to be an authoriter and harsh person. Some people thought ‘why she became the principal and not us’, however my experience was more than them. Nevertheless I have always been respectful to the others and by the time they changed their approach.* (C1)

Other principals stated that they are democratic, fair, equal, a role model and have good communications skills to make them understand each other. In addition to this one principal said he has different reactions to different behaviors and different people. Usually he reacts according to people’s characteristics and mental mood.

*Everyone is different. I cannot say my reaction to x behavior is this. My reaction is basis on that person’s characteristic and mental mood. For instance x person may need compassion that time.* (C2)

Cypriot principals were also asked how they manage resources. Since Cyprus’ education system is highly centralized and there is bureaucracy; the division is informed about all the needs. However, most of the time, principals try to solve resource issues with parents association.

*This is one of the daily tasks. When anything is needed I write to the ministry and demand from them or I buy and send the invoice to the ministry. For the additional expenses I work with parents association. We had coffee days, networking parties, fund raising together, we sell prize tickets…I try to manage the resources like this…* (C5)

As well as the parents association, one principal stated that they have a commission in the school which is responsible for managing the resources.

*We have a commission in the school. We add parents association’s income to this. If our paper is finishing, or cleaning detergent are running low or maintenance is needed in the school…our commission monitors everything and we prepare ourselves for it. We know how much we get, so we know how much we can spend. We are very careful on this.* (C4)

Another principal spoke about other resources they use in conjunction with, such as teachers, council, theatres, cinema and entertainers. He said his relationship with these people is very good and they always want to cooperate with him.

They were also asked about external relationships. All of them said they have good relationships with the parents and they work with them very closely as the common things between them is the children.

*I always say to parents that I am there for their children. Parents are there for their kids too. So kids are the common thing between us. We all work for the children and their education. I make them to feel this.* (C2)

On the other hand one of them said that it is also important to keep good relationships with the ministry and the division. Another one also added principals deal everything in the school and this involves personal sacrifice.

*You need to deal with everything. For this profession, you need to be sacrificing.* (C1)

*Role on effective teaching and learning*

Cypriot principals were asked about their role in effective teaching and learning. Two principals stated that they pay attention to providing the necessary resources for teachers. Furthermore, one of them said he also supports them as a role model and organizes team meetings for listening to their problems and helps them with solving problems.

*I listen to their problems and if needed I get into the classes and teach children on a topic as an example to the teacher. I am also responsible providing them resources for better education. We also have regular meetings that I listen to their problems and help them to solve these problems. But usually I role model them about how to solve the issues.* (C3)

Moreover one of them said they have regular meetings in the school and every week she trains the teachers how to teach the courses, which methods are better to use, how to introduce the children to some topics and how to approach the children. Alternatively another principal said that he tries to make awareness of teachers’ strengths and motivates them to use their abilities.

*I like to have them compete. Everyone has strengths. I try to make them to discover their strengths. Rather than finding their weaknesses, I try to find their strengths and motivate them to use their abilities. I give right classes to the right teachers. Sometimes verbally, sometimes buying a present to successful classes I try to motivate them.* (C2)

In contrast to the others, one principal said he could not play an effective role in teaching and learning because of the managerial tasks.

*In fact, I do not believe I play effective role on teaching and learning. The reason is, there are shortages at administrative work and as a principal you have to be in charge of everything. Administrative duties do not have contribution on education. One of my duties is visiting the classrooms and inspecting them; however there are so many administrative work to do* (C4)

When they were asked if being an effective principal is harder than before, the majority of them said it depends on the principal’s abilities, work load and the school.

*There is no difference between now and before. Being an effective principal is not hard if you have the ability to manage people and if you are fair, democratic, indulgent and cooperative. In order to be effective you need to be humanitarian. It all depends on your abilities. Can you solve the problems, can you manage people?* (C1)

One of them also put emphasis on principals’ knowledge as the world is changing, parents are becoming more conscious and principals need to be fully equipped with the knowledge. On the other hand another principal drew attention to the schools’ facilities and its importance in being an effective principal.

*Each school has different facilities. In my first year, I had friends to support me and because of the support I could do the duties easier. However in this school there is no deputy principal and I have to do everything myself. Therefore I cannot get around to educational stuff. Briefly it depends on the facilities.* (C4)

Differently from other principals, one of them commented on the hierarchical system in Cyprus and said the system does not allow them to be an effective principal.

*We have a hierarchical system in Cyprus: the ministry, division manager, principal and teachers. This is not an appropriate system. In other European countries principals are more authorized. They do not depend on their superiors too much. However in our country it is different. In Cyprus everything is political and in the end decisions are taken at higher level. It has always been like this.* (C5)

*Leadership*

Cypriot principals were asked to self-evaluate themselves in terms of their leadership styles. One of them said he is open to improvements and he is an innovator principal; another one stated that she is a democratic leader. However sometimes she can be forced to be a dictatorial leader. Therefore she stated that she draw the boundaries very well. Another principal said he is a kind but firm leader. He stated that he focuses on the mistake, not on the people who make it.

*I am coming from a difficult background and life deemed myself suitable for leadership. I started working at ten. You can be faltered when you first become a principal. However I have been leader for different kind of things since I was a little child. Life had already given me this opportunity. And this situation reflected to my school leadership position too. You need to be kind but firm to the mistakes not to people. If you be angry to child, you hurt his/her feelings. But if you be angry to the mistake, the child can understand this and loves you. As a leader you also need to be fully equipped by knowledge. You should be able to help teachers, and then teachers can understand you are qualified for the job, you are not an empty box.* (C2)

One principal said that it is not appropriate to answer the question himself; however he thinks he is a role model for the teachers and he always helps teachers with their problems. Finally another one put emphasis on taking the decisions together and commented on the system.

*I do not believe that people can be principal by written exams. People need to act as principal first. I do not think that principal is an appropriate term. I think leadership term is more appropriate for schools. School leaders should take initiatives, responsibilities, take decisions, share his/her ideas with the teachers and have team spirit. It is important taking the decisions together.* (C5)

When they were asked how they manage staff within the school, most of them said they motivate others to lead as well as supporting them. One of them said he gives them projects to express themselves, while another one stated he includes them in a decision making process. On the other hand one principal said she gives them duties according to their abilities and she supports their weak points. However she said not many people accept support.

*I give tasks to people regarding to their abilities. If they have weak parts, I support them to develop it. However nowadays no one listens to another one. Everyone is a professor and they are not keen to cooperate. Thus you cannot teach anyone who does not want to learn. This is why I motivate people who accepts it and who have abilities on particular topics.* (C1)

Another principal stated that he has been role model to teachers in many situations. On the other hand another one said being interested in leading depends on temperament and he gives opportunity to volunteers who want to lead.

*Some children are more eager than others. It depends on their characteristics and temperament. It is same for the teachers. For some topics, some experienced teachers feel more responsibility than others. If there is a volunteer on a duty, I support him/her and I give him/her opportunity to complete it.* (C4)

Cypriot principals were also asked the accuracy of the term ‘head teacher’. They all said that the term head teacher has not been used since 1994 and it is an archaic term. Nowadays, principal and deputy principal are the terms used.

*Head teacher expression is not valid in the present. In the past we were using term principal for bigger schools and term head teacher for smaller schools. Head teacher is obviously teachers’ superior. There were head teachers A and head teachers B. Head teachers A were in charge of schools with more than six teachers. On the other hand head teachers B were responsible of schools with less than one hundred children. It was then changed to principal.* (C2)

*Curriculum*

Regarding curriculum changes, Cypriot principals were asked how they were affected. Two principals stated that they have problems with finding appropriate books for children; because books come from Turkey and most of the time they are not appropriate to the Cypriot culture. However they allow teachers to use different books which could be more appropriate.

*After curriculum changes we receive different books. However in recent years teachers did not find these books appropriate to children. Books are coming from Turkey and unfortunately they are not appropriate for the Cypriot culture. I give teachers freedom and I let them to use other books as well.* (C2)

On the other hand two principals said they are not affected by curriculum changes as they do not teach in the classes. However they support teachers in their needs. Differently from the others, one principal commented on the education system and addressed the issue of how they can solve the problems.

*Semester starts and curriculum comes after three or five months. Teachers are sent to schools but they do not know what they need to teach children; whereas education should be permanent. Curriculum changes should not be made often. Education needs to have a philosophy, we need to know what type of children we want to raise, what human profile we want. We need to get good sides of other countries.* (C5)

When they were asked what kind of support they need after curriculum changes, some of them said they use different books as a different resource. One principal mentioned about in service training and seminars, whilst another one mentioned it all depends on the children since if the children do not learn a particular topic it means the curriculum in that topic is not appropriate for them.

*Curriculum is carried out in classrooms and children are the referrer point of its success. If children do not learn, then that method is not appropriate for them. We need to try and experience it. In our country our biggest problem is; until we try the curriculum it changes again. There is no persistency in education, everyone needs to test it and until we understand about the new system another one comes. Principals change, division manager changes, minister changes… I have been teacher for thirty years and curriculum has changed at least twenty times.* (C2)

*Reviewing principalship*

Principals were asked if there is anything they find difficult or they dislike regarding their jobs. Two of them stated that they dislike bureaucracy and receiving correspondences very late.

*I think communication works very heavy and I dislike it. For example there is an event; however after the event we receive correspondences. Therefore teachers miss the courses and seminars. I dislike bureaucracy, it takes too much time.* (C5)

The other three principals gave different answers to each other. One of them said he does not like giving punishments; however if he has to do it he does it, while another one stated he dislikes the irregularity of the system and struggling to find funds for the school. Finally another one said she dislikes receiving unofficial orders from the authorities such as accepting under age children to the school and hearing about people who get promotion because of their political point of view.

*I do not like receiving unofficial orders from division managers; for instance accepting under age children to the school. I do not like division managers. I do not like unfairness and seeing people who become inspector unfairly. I do not like giving promotion to some people only because of their political party, although they are not fully knowledgeable to carry on that duty.* (C1)

However when they were asked if they still enjoy principalship, most of them said they enjoy it although there are some issues to be resolved. On the other hand one of them said he only partially enjoys it.

*Because of the negativity and the changes on student’s demographic features I partially enjoy it. There are children who are coming from worker families of Turkey. We have problems on their adaptation to school and education. These problems decrease the quality of the education. My contentedness is 70%, my discontent is 30%.* (C3)

Finally another one stated he does not have the same excitement he had in his first years and he is having psychological hopelessness because of the country’s economic situation.

*At the present economic crisis in the country reflected on all areas included schools, parents and the kids. We have less events in school because economic crisis in an obstacle. Therefore you cannot be happy and you do not want to do anything with this unhappiness. I do not have the same excitement I had on my first years. But this does not mean I will not do anything. I will, but I am hopeless about the future. Let’s say it is psychological hopelessness and ambiguity in the country that reflect everything.* (C5)

**The Maltese Sample**

Three female and two male primary school principals participated in the study in Malta. They are all working for state schools; however one of them came from the private sector. Since having a degree in educational management before they are appointed is obligatory, all of them have a diploma. One of them also has a masters degree in educational administration. The average of their age is 50.6 (*n=5*). They have on average twenty years of experience in teaching and eight years of experience in principalship. Table 5 shows demographic features of the participants.

**Table 5. Demographic features of the Maltese sample.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **M1** | **M2** | **M3** | **M4** | **M5** |
| **Age** | 39 | 57 | 54 | 48 | 55 |
| **Gender** | Male | Female | Female | Male | Female |
| **Teaching career** | 7 years | 30 years | 23 years | 21 years | 22 years |
| **Headship career** | 9 years | 3 years | 10 years | 6 years | 12 years |
| **Education** | TTC Diploma  Master | TTC  Diploma | TTC  Diploma | TTC  Diploma | TTC  Diploma |

In Malta, after educational reforms, the country divided into regions and colleges were formed for each region. Primary and secondary schools are organized under colleges and college principals manage the schools. In schools, there are teachers, assistant head of schools and finally head of schools. All heads of schools are accountable to the college principal. Therefore for the Maltese sample, the term ‘head of school’ is used instead of the term ‘principal’ as principal has a different meaning in the Maltese education system. Because of this reason question seventeen which seeks to understand the accuracy of the term ‘principal’ was removed from the questions for the Malta sample.

**The making of five teachers**

This part examines school heads’ career path including the reasons they have chosen teaching and their first years in teaching.

***The how and why of teaching***

All Maltese heads of school have positive feelings towards school and schooling. However there are different reasons why they wanted to become a teacher. Three of them stated that they were inspired by their own teachers and their teachers were their role models. However two of them also stated that in their family there were teachers and head teachers as well and their families always supported them in their education and they always wanted to become a teacher.

*I always had good teachers; I had good role models during my primary and secondary education. They were really inspirational for me in terms of both professionally and personally… On the other hand, my father’s side was all teachers and head teachers. Some people call it tradition. My aunt was a head teacher, my grandfather was a head teacher; so many people were educators in the family… When I was a little child I was playing teaching game, and always getting the teacher role myself. I never thought myself doing another job. So it seems a logical choice to me. And I though teachers always have future in their hands.* (M5)

On the other hand one of them said that he always saw the school as a safe place. Because there were arguments at home, school became a safe place for him and after his parents divorced he felt responsible for his brother and wanted to be a teacher for a guaranteed job. Also he likes learning new things and his teachers always inspired him for the role.

*I think I was very lucky that I had some nice teachers. If I look back, the school provided me a sense of security. Because I came from a very disadvantaged background in terms of my parents’ relationship, there were always arguments in our house. So I always saw school as a safe place. I was very scared to be on unknown territories; because I was safe at school…I do not want to say that I became a teacher because I was scared of different areas, because at the end of the day it was my choice. The idea of school always attracted me. School became a second family for me, so I had something to do with it. I was always attracted on learning new things, and I enjoyed being in a school community, and also I had really good teachers at school who inspired me. I can also mention a number of people who had direct influence on my decision. I did fine arts in the university but always with education. Because at the end of my studies I needed to have a job. I had a small brother that I had to look after him. Because my parents divorced that time and I had to take responsibility of my brother.* (M1)

Another head of school said, becoming a teacher was not her first decision as she always wanted to be a social worker. However after she had her first child, her perception of education had changed and with her family’s support she turned to teaching.

*I graduated from the university when I was 21 and I did not want to go and teach. I was more interested in doing social work. I got a scholarship to go to Oxford University, to study to become a social worker, but in the meantime, I met with my husband and it changed my life… It [teaching] was not love at first sight... I think when I became a mother I looked education in a different way, and I went back to teaching with insight as a mother, and with the previous experiences that I had as a child and teacher relationships and yes I wanted then to teach. I wanted to teach and then I kept on learning; I still remember some of my teachers, especially the good teachers. I think everything impact on me taking to a leading role. My teachers, my parents...* (M2)

***First years of teaching***

Maltese heads, overall, think that their education helped them in their first years of teaching. As well as their education, more experienced teachers had always been supportive of them. On the other hand two of the heads had different experiences than the others. One of them started his teaching career in a private college and because of the opportunities in private schools; he thinks it helped him to develop his skills for his current role.

*In this private school I had an opportunity to develop my teaching and arts skills. I had wonderful colleagues. But things changed after my first year, because the management changed.* (M1)

Another head of school stated that her first degree was English and in fact she was an English teacher. However her personal skills helped her in her early years.

**The making of five heads**

Questions about teaching and the reasons for choosing the teaching profession were followed by questions about headship in order to understand how participants have decided on becoming a head of school, why they have chosen it and what their perceptions of the profession are.

***The how and why of promotion***

Maltese heads were asked why they wanted to become a head of school and what steps they have followed to achieve it. In Malta, in order to become head of school, one has to act as assistant head of school for a minimum of four years. One also has to have a degree in educational leadership and management. Once they have these qualifications they apply for the role and the most suitable candidate is chosen for headship. All Maltese heads have passed these steps to become head of school.

When they were asked why they wanted to become head of school, two of them stated that the opportunity just appeared and they applied for the position.

*I do not know, the opportunity presented itself and I thought why I should not go for it.* (M5)

Some of them stated that they were aware of the power and they wanted to use it for schools effectiveness.

*On my first years I saw certain problems and then I saw the effect of head teachers on schools and happiness of the children; then I realized that head teachers could be really effective on schools and students. This is why I wanted to become a head teacher.* (M4)

One head of school stated that, he applied for the role because he wanted to see himself in the leader position and become his own boss.

*I wanted to become a head because I am ambitious, I like to be my own boss, I like being in a position that I can initiate projects. I also studied educational management, so I had to put it into practice. Also I always had that issue; being at the leader position, leading the situations.* (M1)

***Preparing for headship***

In Malta, in order to become a head of school candidates have to have a degree in educational leadership and management. When Maltese heads were asked how they were prepared for their headship, they all answered that they have a diploma in educational management. Most of them said they also learned a lot from their previous head and acting as assistant head also had been beneficial for them.

*You have to have a diploma in educational and administrational management… I had this diploma course to become a head, so I was prepared it. I had been already four years assistant head after the diploma, so I had a good part of training. And again as an assistant, I had a very good head. She was one of the top head of schools. She was my role model and we used to learn a lot. Today, I still talk about her and say my ex head of school used to do this. I hate to say, but I am a born leader. I want to do everything myself, even at home, anyone who wants to do something for me, I want to do it myself, since I was a little child.* (M3)

However one of them thinks the courses do not prepare people for the position as she learned most when she was an assistant head of school.

*…for headship you need to apply but you need diploma in educational administration and management or masters in educational leadership. For the role, they do not really prepare you. I mean there is an interview, because I was an acting assistant head for seven years I have done well, those keep you to be chosen... When I was an assistant head, I was not trained, I was learning myself and because I felt I needed to learn more I studied and from my experiences I actually prepared myself to the headship role. I did masters when I was assistant head.* (M2)

On the other hand another principal said he had preparation for administrative work and finance; however it was about secondary school and since he applied for a primary school headship position he was still inexperienced.

*I studied diploma on education and administration, and those studies helped me on my preparations to become a head teacher…I had preparation for administration and dealing with different situations, taking care of financial aspect of school, but the core thing which is teaching and learning in school was all about secondary school. I did not have any experience.* (M4)

Some heads also stated that they had a lot of readings, networking with other assistant heads and head of schools.

***Achieving principalship***

After gaining a diploma in educational management and a minimum of four years experience as an assistant head of school, Maltese teachers can apply for the headship position. Two heads of schools stated that their first years as a head were extremely difficult as they had worked in secondary schools before and then they were transferred to primary schools. Because they did not have experience in primary school before, their preparation did not help them in their first years in headship. However one of them said that she was lucky enough as she found assistant heads in her new school to help her. On the other hand, another one had to learn everything by herself and by training.

*I was an assistant head for five years, in a secondary school, suddenly I became a head teacher for a primary school and I was transferred to a primary school. It was really difficult and I was never given related studies about primary school… My first year was very very hard, because I was coming from a secondary school to primary school. I did not have assistant head that time and everything was on my shoulders. I went to training for being a head for the job, for instance every Tuesday I was going to this training and it was very difficult.* (M4)

For the other three heads, the first years in headship were not difficult for them. One of them said she was well prepared for the role and her previous experiences helped her. Another one said because he was in a private school in his first headship and because he was already head of the arts department in the school, he could do whatever he wanted and did not have many difficulties. Finally another one stated that she was lucky; because her previous teachers had had directorship positions when she began her first headship. Therefore she could ask them for advice. However she faced with some difficulties and it took some time to get used to the role.

*…and even I was on my career as assistant head of school, most of my ex teachers had directorship positions, so sometimes we came across and I tell ‘Ms. I am now head of school and requesting some advice on your directorship for certain things…’ So in that respect my first years of my headship I was very lucky. Because I could ask them for advise… I have been assistant head of school in charge of sections of the school. That helped a lot…If I get opportunity to talk to people, opportunity to experience different kind of situations, I try to do that…I remember my first week as assistant head of school, the head attended to a seminar so I was in charge of all the school for a week; it was nice experience for me. I used to take notes a lot, about the activities and how to better the results. As a head of school, it was a bit scary because of the responsibilities you have. I was in a school that there was no assistant head, so I had to do everything myself. I did take a lot of time to get used to…* (M5)

***Reviewing principalship***

To review principalship, Maltese principals were asked about their vision, values, management and leadership skills and things they experience difficulties on.

*Vision*

Maltese heads were asked about their vision for the school. Although they gave different answers, the common point for all of them is the children. Two of them emphasized the importance of creating the best learning environment for the children. One of them stated;

*My vision for my school is children are happy coming to school. I aim to have organized children in the school and sufficient discipline that helps them to focus on the lessons, but they have also enough confidence when you ask those questions, and take part in taking care of the environment. I want them to discuss with other people, being in positive discipline, be good at reading, especially in English, having ecological aspect and taking part of sports activities. This is our school’s vision. We are doing whole school approach to all of these.* (M4)

One head stated that she wants pupils to see education as a key factor for a successful life; while another one aims that both teachers and parents accept the fact that children can succeed if they believe in themselves. Finally another head of school pointed out that his vision changes from one situation to another and a vision should meet certain requirements.

*I work in one of the most disadvantaged schools in Malta, in terms of socio economic background. I deal with problems like prostitution, drug abuse, domestic violence etc. I can say 80% of the children in school; they are coming from families who have at least one of these backgrounds. Under these circumstances, we need to save the children first. My vision for this particular school is re-structuring the environment; create an alternative view about the reality…So your vision has to be directed to the children you are dealing with and your vision must be related to the children and their needs. Also the vision you started has to change as the school develops. So you need to update yourself in terms of your vision, in terms of what you try to achieve, in terms of how you want to go about to achieve you vision.* (M1)

*Values*

Maltese heads were also asked about their values and how successful they are in putting them into practice. Management wise they stressed upon collegiality, team work, democracy and delegation.

*You have to do a lot of team work first of all, unless you get the team with you, you are obliged to fail. But then of course you have to delegate. You have to believe that the person you choose is the right person for the work. You help them out to start, give them all the space, let them alone, even they make mistakes you make mistake. You cannot put your fingers to them, that is very important… But at least you show them how to get there, but do not stop them every time saying ‘no, I would do this’, you cannot do that. You have to believe in people…* (M3)

Regarding their educational values; one of them stated that her biggest teacher is Jesus and she is following his didactic ways.

*For me the biggest teacher is Jesus. His didactic ways I think his pedagogy, in respect of Christianity is good. Serving others, showing way rather than giving answers, answering the questions which need to be answered, I would really like to be like him.* (M2)

Other heads emphasized children and their needs while some of them stated that the aim is to show teachers and parents that education is not limited to books only. He said he aims to show teachers how to use the resources for better education as well as to evaluating level of the children regularly. On the other hand one head stressed that sometimes managerial work take more time than educational work as; therefore managerial values take overcome educational values.

*I find my educational values override my managerial values. Sometimes managerial tasks take over educational tasks. This is real, because I would say the managerial values have to be there in order to serve the educational values, not the other way round. I find myself sometimes filling forms… but on the other had there could be things need to be fixed in the school. If I need to fill in documents in order to, let’s say apply for funds for books, things like that, I do not mind because in the end it is educational purposes. But just managerial things are… I do not like them at all. I want to concentrate on educational values. Managerial values have to serve them.* (M5)

In terms of putting their values into practice, some heads think they are successful, some think they are not. One of them stated that he and his team are successful in certain areas such in ensuring that the children do their homework. However; he does not think that they are successful in ensuring that all the children have reached the attainment targets. Another one said that when she hears positive feedback from other people such as parents and teachers she thinks she has done good things and she is successful. On the other hand one of the heads said she does not find herself successful; because of the work load she fails from time to time.

*I do not think I am very successful in putting them into practice. Every time you try you get failure. Because or your work a lot, and to give what you think to others takes time… trust is very important. First you have resistance, you have people taking but not giving back, and my idea would be for this community that there would be responsivity.* (M2)

Differently from the others, one of the heads said because of the bureaucracy it takes time to put her values into practice and then she criticized bureaucracy.

*How I put them into practice? Actually there is bureaucracy, so it takes so much time and then you ask what am I? Am I head of school, what am I doing, and then you say my background is education, not bureaucracy or management.* (M5)

*Management*

Maltese school heads are accountable to the college principals as all schools are managed by college principals. On a daily basis college principals manage heads of schools.

*We have a college principal, who is the contact person we tell about the problems of the school. There is also education division, so you are accountable to different people about different things. For example; director of school resources, director finance, director for the teaching etc. So we are accountable to number of people which are all called under educational directory. For example; for the budget we discuss it with the principal and he sends it to the director and as soon as director approves it we action it…Internally my first accountability is the children.* (M4)

In terms of managing people, Maltese heads stated that that they pay attention to being supportive, open minded, firm, clear and respectful.

*We need to respect to each other for better education. So I respect my teachers and expect them to teach the children. I respect them and I correct them without shouting, I explain them what is wrong.* (M4)

One of the heads said she tries to put herself in others’ shoes, most of the time being patient.

*You try to put yourself in their shoes. Cry with people sometimes, correct people, you try to do it in a good way not to break people. And I try to support rather than saying ‘you have to go for this, you must do this’. It does not work that way. But most of the times they say ‘you know I said I have too much but I can give you a hand, I can try’. And seems all I need to do is being patient. I think people cannot be managed, you can manage a book but you cannot manage people. You have to say we are managing each other rather than I am managing you. There are people that they manage me as well.* (M2)

Another head stated that his managerial methods depend on the person he is dealing with. He says he adapts different styles to different people according to their personality. Similarly another head said that she tries to find out what people are good at as that would be the key to communicating with them.

*I do not choose my staff. I am lucky that most of the staff is extremely valid, teaching is not just work for them; it is a mission so that helps a lot. You do get difficult person which makes you want to scream, but when I say how I can relate to the person, not education related issues, need to see where that person good at, that would be the key for communication with this person.* (M5)

In terms of managing resources, they all get funds from the government; however sometimes it is not enough and they have to do fund raising as well as paying close attention to what things are a priority for spending. On the other hand money is not a problem for some schools; they only need to prioritize which things are more important than others.

*School gets its resources per capita, according to the number of children. So we have 450 students, so money is never problem for us. But then of course you have to prioritize. Once I have a lot of funds, I do not waste it for paper and files. I spend on books and equipment, sources that learning will be as an outcome for students.* (M3)

Some schools organise events to raise money for the school. Also the parents association is helpful with certain aspects. One of the heads stated that;

*Parents are very difficult, but they still help us quite a lot because we are all here for the children. When we have healthy breakfast at school, we do very small profit, 20 cents per child. When we organize transport, for the sports activities, they have to pay the transport and usually these kinds of things also bring some money to school. We have a lot of activities so we get a lot of cash to the school. I do not like to spend that sort of money on such maintenance work. I think such money should go for the books and to learning activities rather than to maintenance work. We did some of maintenance work before, for instance we refurbished the library, and the money came from parents association.* (M4)

One of the heads started his first headship in a private school and at that time he had access to everything he needed. Now he works in a state school but still takes advantage of his previous experience. Now, he gets help from people he knew before and this is how he manages the school’s economic resources.

*My experience in the private school, I could access many things directly; everything was under my hand, which possibly other head of schools do not have. I still have some connections from private school, from my experiences, also the kids now grownups that I taught before and if I need something I can easily ask people. There are doctors, lawyers, footballers and if I ask them ‘do you want to help’ most of the time the answer is yes.* (M1)

In terms of external relationships, the majority of them said that they have an open door policy in the school and parents and other people can come and talk with them if they are available.

*There is open door policy, so if they need anything, they know that they can reach to me if I am available, if not they can get an appointment during the school hours. Families have financial problems, sometimes we collect little amount of money from them but not all of them can give it. We cannot exclude the children from the activities, this is not the way. We have to understand those families. So I support them, especially for the children with special needs, because it is a big shock for the families. To me relationships are very important and I try to keep my relationships good with everyone.* (M2)

As well as parents and other stakeholders, one of the heads said that they also work very closely with child protection services and community service and they have to keep their relationships good with these stakeholders.

*Role on effective teaching and learning*

Maltese principals were asked what kind of role they play in enabling more effective teaching and learning. Commonly they said that they support their staff and they do classroom visits both formally and informally.

*I try to support; I try to share my own experiences with other people. I also get people to share their own experiences, because everyone has different experiences and it is good to share it with other people for everyone’s benefits. Also I want them to share the methods they use and see which method is working better for some lessons. Also I would like to go classes more often, I know actually what’s happening, because in the corridors I can hear everything, informally I go in very much, and this is good I think because they are not afraid of me. But on the other hand I also have formal visits. I visit the class and I discuss with the teacher about the teaching method, how I can support, if there is something not well we discuss it.* (M2)

On the other hand one of them stated that he tries to make the teachers aware of the available resources and how to use them more effectively.

*So in terms of learning, my approach to it is ‘ok, what are our resources, what kind of resources do we have?’ Unfortunately most of the teachers are not aware that the resources are not available. There is no one specific reading skill. At the moment when you bring some logic to the chaos, and you offer the teachers ‘this is the resource we are going to use, let’s do an exercise and try to find out what we can do with it, what else we can do, what we can reach with those resources’… that is empowerment. You are empowering teachers, because you are providing resources that make sense. It’s not all over the place, they know exactly where it is, and both physically and in terms of what it can offer. So I make them to discover the reality, and the resources and what we can achieve with the resources we have.* (M1)

Differently from other heads, two heads spoke about administrative work and how this work steals time from education.

*I would like to play a more active part and get involved in education more than doing administrational stuff. We have high doors in the school but when you walk in the corridors you can hear what is going on in the classrooms…. I try not to interrupt the children’s activities so I go before or after the activities. And then say ‘ah you are just about to do another activity, how do you getting on, what did you learn today...’ this is the first point, and then we try to have formal visits to the classrooms. Even I do classroom observation I would like more time in classrooms, but unfortunately I have to do managerial and bureaucratic tasks.* (M5)

They were asked if being an effective leader is harder now and three of them said it is becoming harder. The common reason they suggested is that the wider curriculum places more responsibility on school heads.

*The curriculum is now wider because now we do not have head teacher we have head of school who is in charge of everything in the school, the educational aspect, financial aspect, economic aspect, I am given a budget and try to fit it in our plan. I would rather be with children and somebody else does this stuff.* (M2)

On the other hand two of them said being an effective leader is not becoming more difficult. Although there are still problems and challenges, because of their experience and having assistants, it is not harder for them.

*My first year was very hard… Now I feel that we have problems, yes, we have problems because we are getting better at our job, for instance our school population is increasing, around 20%, this year we have more children than last year; it means our school is doing well. Now it is considerable easier running the school, because I have an assistant head and he is very helpful. Now we want to do more things than before and we are more ambitious.* (M4)

*Leadership*

Maltese heads were asked what kind of a leader they are. There are both similar and different answers to this question. Some of them said they are supportive and helpful to their staff. They respect their staff and expect a mutual respect from them. One of them said she does not ask anything of her staff that she is unprepared to do herself.

One of them said communication is very important within the staff and she tries to be as open as possible even to the extent that she lets her staff criticize her from time to time. However, on the other hand her staff still knows that there is a distance between them and the head.

*I think I am critical, and I would like to be that way. And I am also very open to hear about me from other people to hear what they think about me and I let them to criticize me. I think communication is very important. We also have staff meetings from time to time, professional development sessions, so sometimes I bring tea and cake and chat with them, because those are important moments. I think I do not have a lot of distance with them. But in the end they feel some distance; they know that they cannot call me [my name], so they call me Ms. Giving support to your staff may cost you but it always turn back.* (M2)

One of them described herself as a leader who delegates to others and who lets them do the things in their own way; while another one said;

*I am a visionary leader, I am definitely an educational leader, I am not authoritarian, but I know my ways and I get them. I get what I want. I have a very strong character so they know I can get through on helping them. I tackle each individual person in the way s/he gets its best.* (M3)

When they were asked how they manage leadership within the school, they all said that they support and encourage their staff.

*I always encourage teachers to take initiatives. When they make mistakes, I do not fight with them, I try to help them to correct it. I try to give them more self-confidence, saying ‘you can do it’. I give them responsibility and let them to take initiatives. You have to trust people and make them part or the process.* (M5)

Not only that, one head stated that she also supports organizing training courses that would be beneficial for her staff and the children.

*We also organize training courses in the school, and it was school’s decision, to support our teachers. Together we decided that we needed some help. We had training on assessment on learning, reaching all levels of the curriculum and it helped a lot. It was decided during school development meeting where they felt they needed little push and reassurance. It was kind of reassurance of ‘yes I can make it’.* (M3)

Another head clearly said that he gives teachers the opportunity to lead and encourages them to make decisions.

*I think I give them opportunity to lead. Actually I ask people to make decisions, I speak with them to take their opinion, ask them what they think, what should be done, and sometimes the answer is ‘you are the head you need to tell me what to do’. And then I ask them ‘if you were me, what would you do?’ I get people to discuss about an issue. Tell them that they are professional and they have the expertise to solve the problems and give certain decisions, because I am not in the classroom, they are in the classroom all the time. I tell them that ‘you know what the best is for the children’.* (M1)

*Curriculum*

Maltese heads were asked how curriculum changes affect them. One of them said she does not mind curriculum changes as they have to move forward. What is worrying her is implementation. Another head stated that to implement the new curriculum they have to make a lot of changes and these changes affect her more so.

*Changes affect me a lot. The national minimum curriculum is there and now we are having national minimum curriculum framework. That means everything has changed. We have to start teaching in different way... Teachers are using teaching in a one way so they have to change their methods. First of all I have to change my ways, the ways that I used to teach, they are not good for today’s society.* (M2)

Another head said that they have staff meetings to discuss the changes which are helpful for everyone.

*We talk about the curriculum at school, we have staff meetings and we discuss about it, we try to find out what is the best for our children, how we can approach to them, and then we evaluate the process to find if the decisions we have given were correct.* (M1)

Finally one head stated that in order to adapt to the world we have to keep changing.

*There is quite a big concentration on the new curriculum which is on the way, but as teachers we have some objections on some parts because otherwise it would be so unfeasible to manage. But we have to keep changing because all of us are changing, teachers are changing, students are changing, the world is changing. So we need to change the curriculum too. We need to update ourselves.* (M4)

When Maltese heads were asked what kind of support they need when there are changes in the policy, they said they have a lot of staff meetings to discuss the new policy. As well they are given in-service training for the changes. They can also discuss the issues with the college principals.

*We can ask the college principal for specific implementations and issues, and if we need support most people give us support. I do not mind change. What is worrying me is how all changes can take place at the same time. Because I have to prepare all my staff. We get PD sessions, professional development sessions in school development programme. So we get support for implementing the changes.* (M5)

In contrast to the others one of the heads said that in order to settle, she needs a break when there are changes.

*Hopefully a break! They have sent too many changes to do. Please stop! Give us time to settle down. Because the colleges are new, the children having so many problems at home and they need to be supported. We need some time to see and then do evaluation. Because we are changing too…The teachers feel this pressure, I feel it, and everybody feels it. We need a break to settle down into things and see how they work. We do not even have time to reflect. We need to reflect to evaluate and change that, but give me time.* (M2)

*Reviewing principalship*

Maltese heads were asked what kind of difficulties they face and what things they dislike. While some of them said managerial stuff and restrictive rules on budgeting are difficult to deal with, some others stated that dealing with people with no sense of teaching is hard.

*Dealing with the people who are not giving their word to school is also very difficult and something that I really dislike. You try to discuss with them or find the middle way, but they still do not understand. Still keep making problems and do not do their job properly. This comes really difficult…So I have to find a way to communicate with this person and try to change her/him, which is really hard. These things really frustrate me.* (M5)

Another head stressed the ‘emotional baggage’ which people calls and pointed out the helplessness of people, which he dislikes.

*There is a lot of helplessness; there are mothers smoking cigarette but not buying medicine for her son, these things make me sad and it is hard to deal.* (M1)

Differently from the others, one of them said she dislikes facing the fact of terminal illnesses.

*My most difficult time is when I have to face staff or parent who come and tell you about terminal illness. I can never manage to control that. I find it so difficult.* (M3)

Although there are things they find difficult and they dislike, all of them still enjoy being a head.

*Well, when a kid comes end of the day and say ‘good bye miss’ and gives you a hug, or if says ‘miss I like you’ or those days that a kid shows you from meters away and shouts ‘this is my head teacher’… these things really make your day. When you have time to spend with the children, when you see them learn, those are the days I really enjoy, best days I would say.* (M5)

Similarly another one gave a very specific example that explains when you get it paid, it is worth it.

*Sometimes I say yes, it is worth it, especially when I get paid. There is an autistic child who came last year and he was crying all the time, but slowly with our teachers help he started talking and he talked with me, that time I though yes it worth it. Because seeing this child learning and communicating and his parents coming to school and working with us, that makes so much difference and makes me happy of being a head.* (M2)

**Conclusion**

This chapter has revealed primary school principals’ career development in three different countries. Principals in Ireland, Cyprus and Malta gave both different and similar answers to interview questions in terms of their reasons for being a teacher and a principal, first years in principalship, managing abilities, leadership features, vision, values and reviewing principalship.

The reasons for becoming a teacher are various. While Irish and Maltese principals have chosen teaching due to the influence of their parents and teachers, Cypriot principals have chosen it because there was no option for them. On the other hand reasons for becoming a principal are similar. The majority of them wanted to become a principal to have power and because they believed they could manage the school better than the previous principals, as they had the managerial skills to do the job. Only one of them stated that his reason was economical as he wanted it for a raise in his salary. In terms of their first years in principalship, while some Irish and Maltese principals found it difficult and challenging some others stated it was not hard. Unexpectedly all Cypriot principals stated that they did not experience any difficulties in their first years.

All principals have given similar answers about how they manage people. Commonly they said that they are supportive, respectful, democratic, a role model, honest, collaborate and approachable and that they delegate, give responsibilities and pay attention to good communication. When they were asked to self-evaluate themselves in terms of their leadership features, they gave similar answers and stated that they are supportive, respectful, a role model, open minded, democratic and honest. Irish principals stated that they use these features in enabling more effective teaching and learning. However both Cypriot and Maltese principals said bureaucracy and administrational work do not allow them to be involved in the teaching and learning process, and this is the reason that they cannot play an effective role in enabling better teaching and learning in the school.

A common concern of all the principals is children as they aim to create the best learning environment for them and prepare them for life. Their educational and managerial values for this vision are democracy, collegiality, team work, fairness, transparency and respect. However sometimes they experience difficulties that they dislike when they are carrying their duties. All of the principals stated that they dislike managerial tasks and bureaucracy as well as dealing with difficult people. Differently from the others, Cypriot principals said they also dislike the irregularity of the system and favoritism. In spite of these difficulties the majority of the principals stated they still enjoy principalship. Two principals in Cyprus gave different answers than the others. While one of them said he partially enjoys principalship, another one stated he does not enjoy it as much as he used to.

The findings have identified primary school principals’ career development as well as differences and similarities between Ireland, Cyprus and Malta. In-depth analysis between the three countries and a discussion of the implications will be presented in the next chapter.

**Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusions**

**Introduction**

The overarching aim of this study is to explore primary school principals’ career development in Ireland, Cyprus and Malta. Using an interview method and qualitative approach, the study examines school leaders career path by understanding the how and why of teaching and promotion, the first years in teaching and principalship and reviewing principalship under some variables including vision, values, managerial abilities, role on effective teaching and learning, leadership, curricular issues and difficulties they experience. A conceptual framework was developed for the study which drew on Maslow’s theory of hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943) which is parallel with humanistic psychology. The conceptual framework provided a way to understand principals’ self-actualization where they see what their full potential is and realize where that potential starts. This chapter will focus on discussing the findings and providing an in-depth analysis. The researcher also aims to compare the results between Ireland, Cyprus and Malta as well as comparing the previous results in Cyprus and Malta with the results of this study. On the other hand this is a small scale study, and as such any generalization needs to be treated with caution. However there are a number of points to be made and these are outlined as key issues emerging in the first part of this chapter. This is followed by the conclusion, implications and limitations of the study and recommendations for further research.

**Key Issues Emerging**

Initial studies about principals’ career development (Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003; Bezzina & Cassar, 2003; Chew et al, 2003; Wong & Ng, 2003) were carried out with secondary school principals and studies with primary school principals (Mertkan, 2011) are very limited. Therefore any generalization needs to be treated with caution. However, on the other hand results of this study have significant similarities with previous research which allow the researcher to make comparisons between the studies and hypothesize for further research. The leading researcher Peter Ribbins (1997:183) also found this type of study appropriate, for primary school leaders too, as he stated;

*…acknowledgement of the existence of the managerial role was the result of research into the role of the secondary school headteacher… however, that the model is equally applicable at other levels and in other types of educational organization.*

**The Making of Teachers**

This part will examine the environmental influences of principals leading them to choose teaching as a profession and principals’ experiences in their first years of teaching.

***The how and why of teaching***

The reasons for becoming a teacher are various. Commonly Irish and Maltese principals stated that they were influenced by their teachers and parents. Two Irish principals stated different reasons; as one of them was influenced by her husband and another one was influenced by the environment as he was living close to the university and it was a natural process for him. On the other hand one Maltese principal said he had to have a guaranteed job as he had responsibilities. In contrast, the majority of the Cypriot principals said that they had to choose the teaching profession for various reasons; whilst only one of them said he was influenced by his own teachers. Four Cypriot principals said they wanted to become something else, however because of the economic and political situations, they had to go to Teacher Training College although they did not even see it as a second option. The years they studied in Teacher Training College coincide with the first years of the Cyprus conflict and the post war period that there were economic and political issues in Cyprus. This could be one of the reasons that Cypriot principals studied in the Teacher Training College to secure a job and not to cause economic issues to their families. Similarly previous studies in Cyprus (Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003) shows that several Cypriot principals did not wish to become a teacher as they had other preferences; and similarly the years of those principals have studied coincide the 1963 conflicts that there was intercommunal violence in Cyprus. However some of them were influenced by their teachers and parents into choosing this profession, most importantly for securing a job and earning a living. On the other hand previous studies in Malta (Bezzina & Cassar, 2003) show Maltese principals were influenced by their teachers and parents, which is similar with the results of this research; only one of them stated, she never intended taking on the role of teaching.

***First years in teaching***

Concerning their first years in teaching, most Cypriot and Maltese principals stated that the education they were given in college was adequate and helpful for them. Previous studies in Malta (Bezzina & Cassar, 2003) also showed that Maltese principals had adequate training to enter the teaching profession and their college education also helped them to develop personally and socially. Bazzina and Cassar (2003) pointed out that Maltese principals enjoyed the experiences of teaching in early years of teaching, which is supporting this study’s findings. However Bezzina (2006:12) suggests that;

*The B.Ed. programme needs to be reviewed so that various courses are carried out within school environments so that particular pedagogy and subject courses are tackled within a real context. Furthermore, upon graduation beginning teachers should be provided with professional support at the school site. At the same time, the education authorities and the school head need to create a culture of professional discourse in their schools so as to nurture a culture of collaboration amongst all teachers.*

On the other hand in Cyprus, Pashiardis and Ribbins (2003) stated that people wait several years to be appointed as a teacher, which causes a loss of freshness of the information they are given in the college, which in turn makes them struggle in their first years of teaching. However these findings do not support what the Cypriot principals stated in this study; they were appointed after their graduation and in general they think that the education they were given helped them in their first years. Differently from Cypriot and Maltese principals, the majority of the Irish principals said that they had some difficulties in their first years of teaching and the education they were given in the college would have been better. They said this is one of the reasons that they had further education to improve their abilities.

**The Making of Principals**

This part will examine principals’ career development. This section will explain the reasons for becoming a principal, preparation and reviewing principalship to understand their vision, values, managerial abilities and leadership features.

***How and why of promotion***

There are various reasons for wishing for principalship. Irish principals stated that they wanted it because of frustrations with the department and influence by family members and colleagues as well as a salary rise. Cypriot and Maltese principals said that they wanted to have more power and they thought they could manage the school better than others. The common point between the principals is believing in their managerial abilities and wanting to lead. However none of them had career development plans until the opportunity arose. Previous studies (Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003) show that, Cypriot principals wanted to become principals for prestige and pay which is similar with this study’s findings. On the other hand Bezzina and Cassar’s (2003) study showed that Maltese principals wanted to have career development, to cease being a classroom teacher, to have power and because some of their colleagues insisted on it and it was the right time to apply. According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory this is the level referred to as esteem where people need to engage themselves and to gain recognition and have an activity that gives the person a sense of contribution and to feel highly valued. Results show that this study corresponds to previous studies in Cyprus and Malta.

***Preparing for principalship***

When participants were asked how they prepared for the principalship, Irish principals said there is no initial formal training in the system. However when they are promoted they get five days union training to prepare for the role. On the other hand some said they have masters degrees in educational management and leadership which prepared them for the role. Sugrue (2003) stated that for the last twenty years, none of the principals received formal training prior to their appointment and this is an ongoing issue. According to Sugrue (2003:32);

*If principals are of pivotal importance to the quality of teaching and learning in schools, and school leadership is a comprehensive set of learned skills, attitudes and knowledge, then it seems inexcusable that classroom experience only continues to be the most important pre-requisite for ascent to the position.*

Moreover, Sugrue (2003) stated that there is a growing emphasis on professional development and even experienced principals need to improve themselves. On the other hand the system is significantly different in Cyprus. Cypriot principals have to collect points before they are appointed to the role. Experience in years, seminars and conferences they have attended are highly important for these points. There is also in-service training; however the purpose of this training is not preparing them for the principalship. Furthermore Michaelidou and Pashiardis (2009) stated that Cypriot principals seem to participate in those activities for largely promotion purposes. Only one Cypriot principal has a masters degree for her personal development and another one is doing it currently. Differently in Malta, in order to become a principal, they have to have a minimum of four year experience in assistant headship as well as a masters degree in educational management and leadership which shows in Malta the system educationally prepares the principals to the role. A diploma in educational management and administration was required a decade ago too; therefore this result coincides with previous studies in Malta (Bezzina & Cassar, 2003). When teaching was legally recognized as a profession in the 1988 Education Act in Malta, the Faculty of Education had introduced the course in educational administration and management for teachers to hold post of administrative responsibility in education (Bezzina, 2001b).

On the other hand according to Cypriot principals in previous studies (Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003), the first years of principalship was a matter of ‘sinking or swimming’ as there was no formal preparation for the principals, apart from more than ten years of teaching experience for appointments to headship (Mertkan, 2011). However now there are short courses for newly appointed principals. Michaelidou and Pashiardis (2009) stated that as a part of their professional development, after they are promoted to their new leadership post, school heads and assistant headteachers attend in-service training programmes in Cyprus. However they prefer *‘specific training, especially designed for their needs and according to their specific leadership post’.* Pashiardis (1995) suggested that the biggest needs of principals are a lack of education or in-service trainings to improve their schools. Furthermore they also need to be trained in the area of curriculum management, in-service of teaching personnel, school climate and issues dealing with teacher evaluation.

In order to avoid difficulties in the first years of principalship, Farrell (2002:8) suggested to give *‘a minimum one year’s notice of the position of principal becoming available, structured pre-service training of at least six months and in-service training including management and leadership.’* However, according to the previous studies in Singapore (Chew at al. 2003), principals have experience difficulties in the first years in headship although they receive nine months training for their new role. This result brings to mind the dilemma of borning a leader and it reminds the statement of “*anyone can be a manager, but being a leader needs certain type of individual features*”.

***Achieving principalship***

Although there is no formal training for principalship, Cypriot principals had no difficulty in their first years and did not find the role challenging as they all believed they had good managerial skills; as almost everybody is rated as an excellent teacher in Cyprus (Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003). In fact only one of them had difficulties as her colleagues did not want to accept her position, because they thought they could be the principal instead of her. On the other hand Irish principals found the role challenging in the first years and even some of them missed teaching. None of them had an initial plan to become a principal. Certain reasons made them apply for the position. Both Irish and Cypriot principals entered principalship directly from classroom teaching which could be the reason why Irish principals found the role challenging in the first years. On the other hand all Maltese principals had significantly better preparation as they all worked a minimum of four years as assistant head and they all have diplomas in educational administration and management. However, surprisingly some Maltese principals found the role difficult; although they had initial preparation. The reason is those principals came from secondary schools and they had no experience in primary schools. On the other, this result might make policy makers in Malta question the effectiveness of the preparation and diploma courses for principals.

***Reviewing principalship***

Principals were also asked to review principalship in terms of their vision, values, managerial skills, role on effective teaching and curriculum areas. This section will highlight similarities/differences of Irish, Cypriot and Maltese principals as well as comparing the current results with previous studies in Cyprus and Malta.

*Vision*

Irish and Maltese principals stated that their vision for the school is creating the best possible learning environment for the children. On the other hand Cypriot principals said their vision is preparing children for life. There might be cultural differences here as well as differences in the educational system in these countries. While Irish and Maltese principals aim to provide the best learning environment for the children by also providing them with the required resources, since resources are limited in Cyprus, Cypriot principals stated they aim to prepare children to life and make them learn from life experiences. This approach could also be related to the economic and political situation in Cyprus (North) as there are embargoes and people’s visions are formed by the needs and how appropriate the environment to meet these needs. On the other hand life was not fair to Cypriot principals, as there is political favoritism in Northern Cyprus and some principals had to wait long years because of their political point of view to become a principal. This could be a reason of why these principals have a vision to prepare children to “life”.

*Values*

The main educational and managerial values of the interviewees are collegiality, transparency, openness, respect, fairness, democracy, honesty, team work and delegation. Cypriot principals, in particular put a lot of emphasis on fairness and democracy that could be related to favouritism and unfair circumstances in Cyprus and lack of democracy in appointments as some of them reported. Previous studies in Cyprus (Pashiardis, 1995:6) also show that Cypriot principals;

*Attach importance to human relations among school personnel as shown by the statements concerning (1) the strengthening of collegiality and the feeling of being a team, (2) the creation of a positive, human school climate, and (3) the cooperation among staff for the creation of a common vision for school improvement.*

The values that principals stated coincide with the features of effective leaders as suggested by Sergiovanni. According to Sergiovanni (2001) effective leaders are able to get people connected to each other, to their work and to their responsibilities, and engaging with the surrounding community.

When the principals interviewed were asked how successful they are in putting these values into practice, some Irish and Maltese principals said that they are successful, some are not. This might be because they stated that they spend more time on administrative duties rather than on educational work. On the other hand all Cypriot principals see themselves as successful as they get positive feedback from others.

*Management*

In terms of managing people, Irish principals said they show respect, give responsibility, try to understand the different backgrounds and use a team approach. Similarly Maltese principals said they have different approaches to different people, they are supportive, open minded, firm, clear and respectful. On the other hand Cypriot principals put emphasis on delegation, democracy, fairness, equality, role modeling and having good communication skills. As a matter of fact according to the Cyprus Turkish Education System (2005) a school administrator must be ‘*democratic in his relations, constantly improves himself and his staff, motivating and encouraging, problem solving, decision making, writing, speaking, reporting skills and transfers his authority when necessary but keep his sense of responsibility’.* As can be seen in the definition, in the Cypriot system school leaders are perceived as school administrators, which could make educational authorities expect that the role is mainly concerned with administrative work. On the other hand the definition also suggests school administrtors require managerial abilities but little is said with regards to education.

In Cyprus and Malta there is no option for the principals to choose who they want to work with. Recruitment is carried out by the ministry and one of the challenges for the Cypriot and Maltese heads is that they have no say in the recruitment of their teaching staff as it is done centrally; therefore they must get on well with the staff as best they can. Pashiardis (2004) states that this is an indicator of a lack of democracy in the education system in Cyprus.

In terms of managing resources, all principals said they get support from parents association. However sometimes it is not enough and they do fund raising organisations like coffee days etc. Furthermore most of the time, they have to prioritize spending as they cannot spend money without planning it. In Ireland, after financial reforms in 1999, *‘one of the major changes in the principal’s role was in the area of accountability, specifically in the scrutiny of the use of public funds. The report points out that increasingly taxpayers want to know how and where their money is being spent’* (Whitaker, 2003:43). On the other hand in Cyprus, since there is a highly centralized system, Cypriot researchers Karagiorgi and Nicolaidou (2010) suggest that policy makers should devote more resources, time and funding to developing structures for practising and aspiring leaders.

Regarding external relationships the principals interviewed said they have an open door policy in the school; they pay attention to keeping good relationship with the parents and management as well as keeping good relationships with the community. Recent studies in Cyprus (Pashiardis et al, 2011 and Brauckmann & Pashiardis, 2012) also show that principals give particular attention to building strong relations between the school and the parents, local communities and other organizations that actively take part in school events. Since Cyprus and Malta are small islands, having good relationships with the community and other organizations is essential. However in Ireland, having good relationships with the community is important too, as children are the common line with the community.

Since the education system is centralized in Ireland, Cyprus and Malta, there is a hierarchical order of the managerial relations. Irish principals are accountable to board of management, the ministry and archbishop and Cypriot principals are accountable to the division manager, counselor and the minister. One principal from each country said they think they are also accountable to the children. On the other hand, in Malta the system tries to be decentralized; therefore there are college principals between the school heads and the authorities. Maltese heads of schools are accountable to college principals, education division and directors such as the director of resources, the director of finance and the director of teaching.

*Role on effective teaching and learning*

When they were asked what part they play in enabling more effective teaching and learning, they all said they have regular staff meetings that they talk about the problems and support the staff to solve the issues. While Maltese principals said they do formal and informal classroom visits; Irish and Cypriot principals stated they encourage their staff to take courses and training for their personal development. Cannon and Moran (1998) stated that previous studies in Ireland show that most teachers aim to observe colleagues and offer feedback if it is requested. They also stated that they would like the opportunity to share classrooms and have a collaborative work approach.

On the other hand principals from Cyprus and Malta said administrative duties do not allow them to spend more time on education, and this is why they do not believe they are effective in leading teaching and learning. These findings confirm previous studies in the field (O’Mahony & Cottrell, 2003 and Bezzina, 2006) that also show some leaders in Malta and Ireland feel they spend too much time on administration, budgeting or school site problems. However Bezzina (1997:198) suggests *‘whether you are a head or leader of a smaller school team, you have a part to play in the planned operation and achievements of the school.’*

Principals were also asked if being an effective principal is harder now than it used be. The majority of Irish principals said it is harder now; bureaucracy makes it more difficult. Similarly most of Maltese principals said it is becoming harder too and the reason is wider curriculum and responsibilities.

Sugrue (2003) refers to changes in principals’ roles and labeled principalship as phase one which is predominantly administrative (pre 1971); phase two which is predominantly managerial (1971-1989) and phase three (1990s – to date) which has a growing emphasis on leadership in addition to the tasks of administration and management. On the other hand Bush (2010:114) states that;

*Leadership development is usually targeted at current or aspiring principals and the journey from classroom teacher to school principal (from teacher to middle leader to assistant principal to principal) usually involves the gradual accumulation of leadership responsibilities, linked to a reduction in the teacher role.*

In contrast to Irish and Maltese principals, Cypriot principals interviewed said it depends on principals’ work load and abilities as to whether the role is harder now or not.

*Leadership*

All the principals were asked to self-evaluate themselves in terms of their leadership styles. In general they said that they see themselves as helpful and supportive principals. While Cypriot principals put emphasis on being a role model, democratic and innovative; Irish and Maltese principals said they do not ask their staff to do anything they are not prepared to do. They also said they delegate and they are respectful. A previous study in Cyprus also shows that principals who were classified as effective leaders are experimental and innovative (Pashiardis, 1998).

According to Sparks (2009), leaders should learn skills for leading others including, role modeling, team building, emphaty and decision making. This supports to a large extent the news of the participants in this research. Also since the participants stated that they delegate, it lines with what Harris (2004) argued, which is the heads who distribute leadership responsibilities to the staff are more likely to build capacity to improve the schools.

When they were asked what kind of support they give others to lead within the school, their answers corresponded to their leadership styles. Irish and Maltese principals said they encourage their staff and give them opportunities to lead. Bezzina (2000:305) suggests;

*Leadership cannot remain the prerogative of one single person. It has to become team based, collegial. Leaders of the future need to be trained to master the art of forming teams, to collaborate through teams rather than directing through edicts. Shared leadership encourages a horizontal extension of power. The future calls for an extension of that power vertically downwards to involve all members of staff.*

Similarly Cypriot principals stated they give duties and support to their staff in these duties. However they also said most people do not accept advice as everyone is a professor in the field.

According to the principals’ self perception, they could be categorized as collegial leaders, as the majority of them stated that they delegate, which falls under distributed leadership, and decisions are taken together which falls under participative leadership. On the other hand, some others put emphasis on encouraging teachers to attend seminars that reminds instructional leadership features, and some others stated that their approach to different situations is not the same at all times, which reminds situational leadership features. Interestingly all the principals talked about the promlems when it was asked; however no one suggested how to solve them and change the existing situations. It can be evaluated that there is no transformational leadership features among the principals. On the other hand, this conclusion was made after principals’ statements which could not be totally objective, as the statements of the interviwees are their personal perceptions and beliefs, which are subjective.

Irish and Cypriot principals were also asked about the accuracy of the term ‘head teacher’, if it is appropriate to use in the present. They all said it is a British expression and it is not used in Ireland and Cyprus. Therefore in these countries the term principal is being used. On the other hand, after educational reforms in Malta, regional colleges were set up and college principals were appointed to take charge of colleges who provide communication between the school heads and the authorities. In Malta head of schools are responsible for the schools and principals are their contact person for the issues. Therefore this question was skipped for Malta sample.

*Curriculum*

When they were asked how they are affected by curriculum changes Irish and Maltese principals said they work as a group and try to carry out the implementation together. As Cujatar (2007) stated in Malta the school administrative personnel and the teaching members of staff have to contribute towards curriculum development and implementation in conjuction with theeducational division. On the other hand Cypriot principals said they have difficulties in finding appropriate books for the new curriculum as educational books come from Turkey and are not appropriate for the Cypriot culture. However some Cypriot principals believe they are not affected by the changes as they are not in the classrooms.

In terms of support after the changes, Irish principals said they receive in-service training and everybody has the changes as hard copy stored on their computers, as well as the guidelines. On the other hand, in Ireland, there are cuiditheoirs who support and advice teachers on curriculum content, teaching methods and planning for curriculum implementation. Recent research (Johnston et al, 2007) show that cuiditheoir in general are satisfied with the amount of training they receive in terms is curriculum content and structure. However in terms of communicational skill they need further training.

Similarly to Irish principals, Cypriot and Maltese principals also mentioned in-service training as well. Differently from the others one Maltese principal emphasize that they need a break after the changes as they have to settle down to evaluate the new system.

*Reviewing principalship*

All the interviewees experience difficulties with administrational and bureaucratic duties as these tasks steal much time from educational duties. According to Pashiardis and Ribbins (2003), principals struggle because of various reasons such as money as resources are limited; personnel management as they have no say in choosing the staff; curriculum as they have limited say; power of center as there is a vertical bureaucracy. After a decade, these results still coincide with the present problems of principals. According to Sergiovanni’s (2001) high performance theory, decentralization is the key with workers empowered to make their own decisions about how to do things. The theory suggests de-emphasizing both top-down hierarchies and detailed scripts that tell people what to do. Similarly Pashiardis (2004) evaluates the education system nondemocratic as it is very centralized and principals almost have no say in anything, including the expenses, appointment of personnel, the selection of textbooks and the development of their own curriculum. Whereas in Malta, the system tries to be decentralized, enabling more effective education. In this respect principals are appointed to manage school heads and support them in administrational duties. Bezzina and Cassar (2003) stated that heads are not entrenched in administrative roles anymore; however previous research findings (Cutajar, 2007) and findings of this study do not support this view for Malta where schools heads are still not pleased to spend their time on administrative work rather than educational duties. On the other hand in Ireland, previous studies (Morgan & Sugrue, 2008:20) showed that *‘more formal features of being a principal, including routine administration and formal interaction with relevant agencies, are perceived as not especially challenging, but may be time-consuming.’*

Irish and Maltese principals also stated that they dislike dealing with people’s expectations which is similar with previous studies (Pashiardis, 1998) in Cyprus. On the other hand Cypriot principals said it is hard to deal with the irregularity of the system and favouritism as they are facing issues because of the Cyprus conflict. Another concern is that usually in order to be promoted you have to belong to the correct political party (Pashiardis, 2004).

However, when they were asked if they still enjoy being a principal, all Irish and Maltese principals said they do. One Cypriot principal said he partially does and another one said he does not enjoy it as much as he used to do.

**Conclusions**

In conclusion, Irish and Maltese principals wanted to become teachers because they were influenced by their teachers or family members. On the other hand the reasons of Cypriot principals are different. They have chosen the teaching profession because there was no other alternative. Economic situations after the eleven years intercommunal violence have been effective on their decision. However reasons for becoming a principal are similar. They took opportunities as they arose to manage the schools in own way, to have power and because they believed they have managerial abilities and they could manage the school better than previous principals. On the other hand none of them had definite career plans.

They all have a vision for their school includes creating the best learning environment for the children and preparing them for life. Their vision merges with their educational values which are collegiality, respect, democracy and fairness through which they show that they know what kind of school they wanted to create and lead, and realize that headship would give them possibilities of achieving this. Cypriot principals put a lot of emphasis on being fair and democratic that could be related to their experiences. In Cyprus there is strong favouritism and partisanship and because of these principals’ political point of view, life was not fair to them at all times as some of them had to wait long years to be promoted as a principal.

They are also aware that team work and can reflect their educational values and turn them into managerial aspects as they manage people with support, fairness, respect, democracy and equality. However most of the time bureaucracy and administrational duties prevent educational duties. Principals are conscious of the situation; however in the highly centralized education systems, this is a foregone conclusion. In terms of leadership, principals self-evaluated themselves as approachable, supportive, delegative, innovative, a role model and democratic which also correspond to their values. They all aware of the power they have, however centralized educational structure does not allow them to do much. Their interaction with curriculum changes is limited. After the changes they work with teachers and they are aware that teachers may need their support to some extent.

With regards to principals’ leadership styles, it emerged that they show features of participative and distributed leadership styles which fall under collegial models of leadership. On the other hand according to the interviews instructional leadership features can also be observed. As Bush (2010) argues, leadership makes a significant difference to school and student outcomes and there is increasing recognition that schools require effective leaders and managers. On the other hand it was interesting that no one suggested how the problems could be sorted which brings the mind there could be lack of transformational leadership features. However, since this is a qualitative study and since this study shows interviewees’ self perceptions and beliefs, the data is subjective. Therefore it is not reliable to evaluate the principals’ leadership features according to the interview data.

In the end they all stated they struggle from bureaucracy and administrational work as well as dealing with people. In the governments existence of both vertical and horizontal bureaucracy is unavoidable. As a result of this, education systems are centralized or partly centralized; because there should always be a control mechanism. However having extreme ends could damage the system. Therefore principals could be given independence with boundaries.

In conclusion the study gave in-depth analysis to primary school principals’ career development and their professional actualization, and updated previous studies which were carried out in Cyprus (Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003) and Malta (Bezzina & Cassar, 2003). Results show that findings of this study correspond to initial results in Cyprus and Malta, and Peter Ribbins’ study in 1997. However some differences were spotted. For the Cypriot sample, both this study and the previous Cyprus research of Ribbins and Pashiardis (2003) were carried out with the principals who have affected the intercommunal violence in the island. However Cypriot participants of this study experienced the post war ecomomic problems that directly affected their job preference. On the other hand because these principals are living in an unrecognized country they also experience the political outcomes of the situation negatively. Morover accumulation of the issues in the country made people to solve their problems by using the power party or people they know, which cause experiencing favouritism and partisanship in the country. Furthermore the existing situation may cause principals to have an intention to solve the problems thay may motivate them to become a principal. On the other hand, political favouiritism may also make principals take no action for the issues as they may think nothing will change; as no one suggested how the issues could be solved.

As stated above there are similarities between the results of this study and the previous studies in Cyprus and Malta. Especially about the hierarchical system in education and bureaucracy still make the principals to struggle. This has been the same for the last ten years and it brings the mind that previous studies did not be effective on policy makers.

In both this research and previous studies, principals told about ineffectiveness of the inservice trainings and preparatory courses. Even in Malta, although the diploma courses are mandatory, principals experience difficulties in the first years of headship. This result could make policy makers to re-evaluate the quality of in service trainings. On the other hand, authorities could be more selective for the principals as principals who have dominant leadership features could have advantage to take the role. In the end, managerial skills can be taught, but leadership skills.

Finally, another difference is the issue of accuracy of the term head teacher. In the original study Peter Ribbins asked this question to the interviewees. In order to keep my loyalty to the original study, this question was asked in this research too. However it was seen than the term head teacher in not accurate in the present. Therefore for the further studies this question can be removed from the question list, and up to date questions that may include present issues could be added.

***Implications of the Study***

This study makes the following contributions to research:

* In-depth analysis of Irish, Cypriot and Maltese primary school principals career development;
* Understanding the issues of the Irish, Cypriot and Maltese principals experience;
* Understanding the importance of the preparatory courses on the principals and the importance of its quality;
* Understanding the cultural backgrounds that could be effective on principal’s career development;
* Updating previous studies in Cyprus and Malta on this theme and understanding the changes and similarities;
* Moving the original study to the Irish context.

***Limitations of the Study***

It is recognized that this study has limitations. The study was carried out with fifteen primary school principals; five from Ireland, five from Cyprus and five from Malta. A limited number of participants decrease the reliability of the study. On the other hand since this is a qualitative study, data was limited to the perceptions of the principals who participated in the study.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

This study has raised a number of areas where further research is recommended:

* This study was carried out with fifteen participants. In order to increase the reliability a broader sample could be used and another study could be developed.
* It is proven that studies with primary school principals are limited. Further research can be carried with primary school principals.
* Similar studies were carried out in a limited number of countries. This study can be conducted other countries and beneficial comparisons can be made.
* This is a qualitative study which is based on participants’ perceptions. This study can be supported by other methods and methodologies to improve the objectiveness;

Overall this study explores principals’ career paths including the areas in which they struggle with. All principals who participated in this study stated that they experience difficulties in dealing with people, bureaucracy and administrative tasks. On the other hand it was found that there is no initial training to prepare the principals to the role. Therefore, this study could influence policy makers too.

**Recommendations for Policy Makers**

* Principals could be given quality in service trainings;
* Principals could be given training on communication skills and how to deal with people;
* Principals could be supported by school secretaries for correspondence with the authorities which would help them to spend more time on educational duties;
* Principals could be given [more] independence in some areas such as curriculum, resources, money, personnel recruitment and performance assessment which could be understood as de-centralizing the education systems.
* Principals could be given quality formal training and preparatory courses before their appointment to the role;
* Diploma or masters degree in educational management and leadership should be required for the principalship role in Ireland and Cyprus;
* The educational systems in Ireland, Cyprus and Malta could be re-structured regarding to the research findings.
* Policy makers could take action for the authorities to be more selective on the school leadership role;
* Finally policy makers should be involved to the studies in the field and should be informed about the importance of these studies to take immediate action for the problem solving as this study found that there have been unsolved issues for the last ten years.

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**Appendix A – Permission Request to Carry Out Study**

30th August 2011

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am currently undertaking a four-year research programme at Dublin City University on a part-time basis and I am in my third year of the Doctorate in Educational Leadership. For the next part of this programme I am required to undertake a research study. My thesis is concerned to explore primary school principals’ career development. My study requires an interview with five primary school principals. Participation in this research will be totally at the discretion of the school principals themselves as to whether they choose to participate or not. The data collected will be analysed for my thesis and the results may appear in publications. The results will be reported in a manner which does not enable the principal or the school to be identified. Thus the reporting will protect the principal’s confidentiality.

I would very much appreciate your permission to carry out this research. I look forward to hearing from you at your convenience.

If you have any queries regarding this project please contact me via e-mail or telephone. You may also contact my supervisor ([gerry.manamara@dcu.ie](mailto:gerry.manamara@dcu.ie)) or The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000.

Yours sincerely,

Azize Ummanel

Researcher

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Mobile: 00353 99553517

**Appendix B – Interview Questions**

1. How would you describe your own education and to what extent and in what ways has this experience influenced what you have tried to achieve as a teacher and head teacher?
2. How and why did you become a teacher and a head teacher?
3. How did you prepare yourself for becoming a head teacher?
4. How well prepared were you for your first headship?
5. What is your vision for your school and how do you go about trying to achieve it?
6. What are your key educational and managerial values? How successful are you in putting them into practice?
7. How do you manage people?
8. How do you manage resources?
9. What part do you play in enabling more effective teaching and learning?
10. How do you manage external relations?
11. Is it harder to be an effective head teacher than it used to be?
12. How do you manage others within the school to lead?
13. What sort of a leader you are?
14. Who manages you? To whom are you accountable?
15. Is there any part of your role you find especially difficult and/or do not like?
16. Do you still enjoy being a head teacher?
17. Is the term ‘head teacher’ still an accurate description for what you expect of yourself and others expect of you? Is it time we joined much of the rest of the world and called our school leaders ‘principals’?
18. How are you affected from curriculum changes?
19. What kind of support do you need after having changes in the policy?

**Appendix C – Translation of the Turkish interviews**

**Some examples**

English

*My first years in principalship were extremely hard. Because I worked for both my new role and for people to accept me. Some people unfortunately did not accept my position. They thought they could be the principal and they thought I did not deserve it. However I had more qualification then other people and I was more experienced. On the other hand I waited for a long time for this role, because of my political point of view I refused couple of times before.* (C1)

Turkish

*İlk dönemler çok zorlandım. Çünkü hem yeni görevim için çalıştım hem de karşımdaki insanlara kendimi kabul ettirmeye çalıştım. Bazı insanlar benim müdür olmamı kabul etmedi. Neden biz değil de o müdür oldu kaygısı yaşadılar, benim bu pozisyonu hak etmediğimi düşündüler, halbuki benim kıdemım onlardan daha falzaydı. Diğer taraftan bu rol için uzun yıllar bekledim. Çünkü politik görüşümden ötürü daha önceki başvurularım hep reddedilmişti.* (C1)

English

*I am coming from a difficult background and life deemed myself suitable for leadership. I started working at ten. You can be faltered when you first become a principal. However I have been leader for different kind of things since I was a little child. Life had already given me this opportunity. And this situation reflected to my school leadership position too. You need to be kind but firm to the mistakes not to people. If you be angry to child, you hurt his/her feelings. But if you be angry to the mistake, the child can understand this and loves you. As a leader you also need to be fully equipped by knowledge. You should be able to help teachers, and then teachers can understand you are qualified for the job, you are not an empty box.* (C2)

Turkish

*Ben hayattan gelen birisiyim, zor koşullarda büyüdüm ve hayat bana liderliği uygun gördü. 10 yaşında çalışmaya başladım. Bu hazım konusudur, bir insan ögretmenken birdenbire idareci olduğunda bocalayabilir. Ama ben hayatın içinde de, bircok yerde liderdim, idareciydim, ve hayat bana halihazirda bu fırsatı verdi diye, bu durum benim müdürlüğüme, idareciligime çok iyi yansıdı. Tatlı sert olmak lazım, hataya sert olmak lazım, insana değil. Bir çocuk bir hata yaptığı zaman siz onun hatasına kızmayı bileceksiniz. Çocuğun kendisine kızarsanız onun kişiliğini rencide edersiniz. Ama hataya kızarsanız çocuk bunun hataya olduğunu bilir ve size hak verir, size sevmeye devam eder. Bir müdür olarak tamamiyle kültür yüklü olmanız lazım. Öğretmeninizin bilemediği bir soruyu size sorabilecek olması lazım. Öğretmen sizden yardım istiyorsa ve size birşey danışıyorsa demek ki o öğretmen şunu düşünür: benim müdürümün içi doludur, kavanoz değildir.* (C2)

English

*Honestly I never thought being a teacher. Although I was qualified to go abroad and study abroad, because of my parents’ economic situation they offered me going to Teacher Training College. That time I did not even know the existence of this college. I applied to the exams and passed and qualified to go that college. I was actually thinking to leave after a while, but I liked it then. On the other hand I had two brothers who were studying too and it was impossible for my parents to pay my college fee if I went to abroad. And this college was giving me a scholarship; therefore I never had economic issues when I was studying and I stayed there.* (C3)

Turkish

*Açıkçası bu benim hiç aklımda olmayan bir meslekti, Türkiye’de okul kazanmama rağmen ailemin maddi zorluklarından ötürü eğitimime devam edemeyecegim için ailem bana bu okulu önerdi, öğretmen olabilirsin dedi. Ben açıkçası liseyi bitirdiğimde böyle bir okuldan bile habersizdim. Öğretmen koleji için sınava girdim ve kazanınca oradaki ortam hoşuma gitti, güzel bir ortam vardı. Ben aslında ayrılma niyetiyle oraya gittim ama o ortam sayesinde devam ettim. İki erkek kardeşim de okuduğu için ailem benim okul masraflarımı karşılayamazdı, bu yüzden Türkiye’ye gitmedim. Zaten bir de öğretmen akademisi masraflı değil, burs da aldığım için maddi zorluk yaşamadım.* (C3)

English

*In fact, teaching was not my first choice. I passed all my exams and qualified to study mechanical engineering in Turkey. However that time there was left – right conflicts in Turkey that many students were killed. I was the only child, so my parents called me back to Cyprus and then we moved to England. There was nothing to do in England, so I studied for Teachers Training College exams for a year and after a year I came back to Cyprus and applied for it. Teaching was my second choice, but I never regret that I earn my life from teaching. I am very happy and want to do it as long as I am healthy.* (C4)

Turkish

*Aslında benim ilk tercihim değildi öğretmenlik. İlk tercihim makine mühendisliğiydi ve o bölümü kazanmıştım da Türkiye’de. Fakat bizim mezun olduğumuz dönem Türkiye’de sağ sol çatışmalarının olduğu dönemdi. Çatışmalar sonucu öğrencilerin de öldürüldüğü bir dönemdi. Tek çocuk olduğum için ailem beni Kıbrıs’a çağırdı ve Kıbrıs’a geri döndüm. Sonra İngiltere’ye gittik. İngiltere’de birşey olmadığı için aklımda hep öğretmen koleji vardı. İngiltere’de bir yıl o sınava hazırlandım, tatil döneminde de gelip o sınavlara girdim ve kazandım. Benim ikinci tercihimdi öğretmenlik ama öğretmen olarak hayatımı devam ettirdiğim için hiçbir şekilde de pişman değilim. Sağlıklı oldukça devam etmeyi de düşünüyorum.* (C4)

English

*There is a fact in education that after a number of years there is exhaustion among the teachers and classroom environment do not appeal to them and they want to get out of the classroom. Of course anyone who wants to get out of the classroom cannot be a principal. In order to become a principal you need to have some qualifications and skills.* (C5)

Turkish

*Eğitimde bir gerçek var ki, belirli bir yıl çalışmadan sonra öğretmenlerde bir tükenmişlik olur, sınıf ortamı artık ruh haline hitap etmemeye başlar ve insanlar sınıftan kurtulmak ister. Tabii her sınıftan kurtulmak isteyen de müdür olacak diye birşey yok, müdür olmak için de belirli şeylere hazırlanmak gerekir.* (C5)