The Challenges of Principal Succession and Recruitment

Lynne Doneley
Dip Teach, Grad Dip Ed Studs, M. Ed, M. Ed. Admin

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Education at Griffith University.

School of Education and Professional Studies

13 July 2017
Abstract

Successful principal succession and recruitment is important for placing the right people in the right schools. The impact of principals on schools, particularly in relation to the delivery of successful student outcomes, has been extensively researched, discussed and evaluated (Fullan, 2015). However, principal succession and recruitment has been, and remains, a relatively neglected area of research (Striepe, 2010). This study applied a school strategic architecture framework developed by Davies (2003) to investigate links between principal succession and recruitment and the overall strategic architecture of the respective school. The research reported in this thesis consists of three educational case studies drawing data from three Christian schools located in Queensland. It examines the retrospective accounts and relevant documents provided by the members of the school boards involved in recent principal recruitment and selection processes. I locate my research at the intersection of three fields of inquiry: school strategic architecture, principal recruitment and selection processes; and school governance practices.

This qualitative study investigated the important event of appointing a new school principal. However, nothing in education is simple. The recruitment of a principal has been recognised as a very significant responsibility for the members of the governing board. To capture the complexity of such decisions, the analytical framework chosen drew on the pivotal work by Davies and his colleagues on school Strategic Architecture (2003). This model was utilised as a lens through which to investigate the recruitment and selection experience in each site.

Through the development of a case study approach for each site, the researcher provides a rich reconstruction for each site, of the polices and processes leading up to and including the final decision of appointment of a new principal. It was then possible to compare across the cases, identifying the significant similarities and differences for each in their
succession and recruitment approaches. This study is of particular value in identifying
and analysing policies and processes that may be considered best practice for conducting
principal succession and recruitment in schools.

The findings highlight two key areas of focus when governing boards undertake principal
recruitment in their schools. First, the newly appointed principal must be a good fit to the
culture and values of the respective school. Second, the newly appointed principal should
possess the personal and professional qualities to establish strong relationships with key
stakeholders in the school community. Two elements were identified in this research that
were not explicitly depicted in Davies’ Model. These elements were Trust and
Socialisation. One further key element within the area of Strategy in Davies’ model was
identified in this research, yet not explicitly depicted in the model. This element was
Legacy.

The findings from this study offer recommendations for schools undertaking a principal
succession and recruitment journey. The study also makes recommendations for further
study. These findings contribute to the current paucity of research in this area of
educational leadership.

Keywords: succession, recruitment, governing boards, strategic architecture model
Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Lynne Doneley

13 July 2017
Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... ii
Statement of Originality .................................................................................................................. iv
Table of Contents ............................................................................................................................ v
List of Tables ...................................................................................................................................... vii
List of Figures .................................................................................................................................... viii
Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................................... 1

Chapter One: Introduction ............................................................................................................... 2
  1.1. Purpose of the Study ................................................................................................................. 3
  1.2. The Research Question ............................................................................................................. 3
  1.3. Effectiveness of School Leaders ............................................................................................... 5
  1.4. Background and Key Terms ...................................................................................................... 6
  1.5. Theoretical Framework ............................................................................................................. 14
  1.6. Researcher’s Background .......................................................................................................... 16
  1.7. Thesis Structure ......................................................................................................................... 17
  1.8. Conclusion ................................................................................................................................. 18

Chapter Two: Literature Review ...................................................................................................... 19
  2.1. Organisational Legitimacy ....................................................................................................... 20
  2.2. Hybrid Organisations ............................................................................................................... 24
  2.3. School Leadership .................................................................................................................... 25
  2.4. Governing Boards .................................................................................................................... 27
  2.5. The Principal and School Success ............................................................................................ 31
  2.6. Principal Leadership ................................................................................................................ 35
  2.7. Principal Succession and Succession Planning ....................................................................... 37
  2.8. Principal Recruitment .............................................................................................................. 40
  2.9. The Australian Perspective of Principals and School Success ................................................. 42
  2.10. Conclusion ............................................................................................................................... 51

Chapter Three: Methodology and Conceptual Framework ............................................................ 53
  3.1. Conceptual Framework ........................................................................................................... 54
  3.2. Research Design .................................................................................................................... 64
  3.3. Validity ..................................................................................................................................... 75
  3.4. Ethical Issues ......................................................................................................................... 76
  3.5. Limitations of the Study .......................................................................................................... 78
  3.6. Conclusion ............................................................................................................................... 79

Chapter Four: Case Study One: The Lewis College Story .............................................................. 81
  4.1. The Site ................................................................................................................................. 81
  4.2. Succession Planning and Recruitment .................................................................................... 85
  4.3. Application of Davies’ Model ................................................................................................. 94
4.4. Emerging Insights in the Lewis College Case................................. 106
4.5. Conclusion.................................................................................. 109

Chapter Five: Case Study Two: The Bradley College Story ...................... 111
5.1. The Site..................................................................................... 111
5.2. Succession Planning and Recruitment............................................ 115
5.3. Application of Davies’ Model....................................................... 124
5.4. Emerging Insights in the Bradley College Case.............................. 133
5.5. Conclusion.................................................................................. 135

Chapter Six: Case Study Three: The Fisher College Story......................... 138
6.1. The Site..................................................................................... 138
6.2. Succession Planning and Recruitment............................................ 141
6.3. Application of Davies’ Model....................................................... 146
6.4. Emerging Insights in the Fisher College Case.............................. 155
6.5. Conclusion.................................................................................. 160

Chapter Seven: Summary of Findings and Discussion................................. 162
7.1. Findings..................................................................................... 162
7.2. Recommendations from this Study.............................................. 178
7.3. Suggestions for Further Research................................................. 179
7.4. Conclusion.................................................................................. 180

References.......................................................................................... 182
Appendix A.......................................................................................... 218
Appendix B.......................................................................................... 222
Appendix C.......................................................................................... 224
Appendix D.......................................................................................... 225
Appendix E.......................................................................................... 226
List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Statistical Data on Member Schools</th>
<th>66</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>Summary of the Case Study Documents</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3</td>
<td>Coding System used for Data Analysis</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>Lewis College: Background Profiles of Participants</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5</td>
<td>Correlation between Benchmarks, Selection Criteria and Vision</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6</td>
<td>Bradley College: Background Profiles of Participants</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7</td>
<td>Background Profiles of Fisher College Research Participants</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Strategic Architectural Model (Davies, 2003, p.309)</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Data Analysis Method in Relation to Succession and Recruitment Process</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Davies’ Model, Vision and Areas</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Elements Contained in Culture and Values (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Elements Contained in Strategy (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>Elements Contained in Relationships (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>Elements Contained in Learning (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8</td>
<td>Elements Contained in Resources (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9</td>
<td>Davies’ Strategic Architecture Model Post Analysis (adapted from Davies, 2003; p. 310)</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10</td>
<td>Governance Structure of Bradley College</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11</td>
<td>Davies’ Model, Vision and Areas (adapted from Davies 2003; p. 310)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12</td>
<td>Elements Contained in Culture and Values (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13</td>
<td>Elements Contained in Relationships (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14</td>
<td>Elements Contained in Strategy (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15</td>
<td>Elements Contained in Learning (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16</td>
<td>Elements Contained in Resources (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 17</td>
<td>Davies Strategic Architecture Model, Post Analysis</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 18</td>
<td>Governance Structure of Fisher College</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 19</td>
<td>Elements Contained in Relationships (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 20</td>
<td>Elements Contained in Culture and Values (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 21</td>
<td>Elements Contained in Strategy (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 22</td>
<td>Elements Contained in Resources (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 23</td>
<td>Elements Contained in Learning (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 24</td>
<td>Fisher College - Davies Strategic Architecture Model Post Analysis</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 25</td>
<td>Summary of the Areas and Key Elements from Davies Model, Post Research</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

This research project would not have been possible without the support of many people.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my supervisors, Dr Paula Jervis-Tracey and Associate Professor Cheryl Sim. Paula and Cheryl, I am extremely grateful for your expert guidance, attentiveness and persistent commitment to supervising my work. Your experience and beneficial feedback was invaluable and my knowledge and understanding of academic work has developed immeasurably.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the schools who participated in this research and especially the participants who freely gave of their time to contribute to this study. My sincere appreciation goes to my fellow colleagues for their support and interest in this project; especially to Pastor Dr Craig Murison, Mr Leighton Kuss, and Mr Christopher and Mrs Heather Meadows.

Finally, my special thanks go to my own family; to my children, Helen and Paul, and their spouses, James and Erin, thank you for your care and understanding throughout my journey in completing this project. Special thanks goes to my husband Greg, who gave me endless support and encouragement, and put up with many lonely evenings and weekends while I was writing this thesis. Sadly, Greg passed away unexpectedly and suddenly before I had completed this thesis. It is to him, my soulmate, that this thesis is dedicated.
Chapter One: Introduction

“With a growing concern over sustaining the quality of leadership in schools, it is imperative that the succession of principals be examined to inform practice, policy, and future research about the ways school systems can manage and plan for the effective succession of school leaders” (Zepeda, Bengston, and Parylo, 2012, p. 137).

Growing recognition of the importance of school principals in leading successful schools has seen a parallel concern for their recruitment and selection process to ensure the final appointment is effective and sustainable. Fullan (2010) highlighted the importance of the qualities, actions and decisions by school principals in leading strategic and successful schools. The responsibility of the principal to lead and manage the planning, delivery, assessment and improvement of the education of all students through the strategic distribution of resources has been a focus of interest for researchers internationally and in Australia (Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson and Wahlstrom, 2004). This study sought to illuminate policies, processes and decisions made by the governing boards of three independent schools in regard to principal succession and recruitment in their schools. This research has clarified the responsibilities and duties of principals, highlighting the importance of their role in achieving successful student outcomes and the significance of improving succession and recruitment processes (Barty, Thompson, Blackmore and Sachs, 2005; Beatriz, Deborah, and Hunter, 2008). The significance of the principal’s role has seen a critical need for thorough research into the process of principal succession to guide future policy because of limited and conflicting understandings (Gronn and Rawlings-Sanaei, 2003).

This study contributes to the limited empirical evidence relating to principal succession and recruitment. It focuses on the role of the principal, as influenced by two key factors. First, research has shown that the quality of the principal’s educational leadership is a critical factor in shaping the success of a school. Second, a global
leadership shortage has developed over the last 20 years because of imminent retirement of principals, their increased workload and reduction of work/life balance (Pont, Nusche and Moorman, 2008). The purpose of the study is outlined in the next section.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate how the governing boards of three independent schools conducted their most recent principal succession and recruitment processes. The opportunity to investigate principal succession and recruitment in independent schools provided a chance to enrich current understandings of this process. It is hoped that the findings will better equip governing boards of these schools with knowledge to ensure a successful outcome in future principal recruitment processes. The outcomes of this study will potentially inform the policies and processes used by other schools, and the way in which these schools undertake principal succession. The research question guiding the study is outlined below.

1.2. The Research Question

In this study the question “How do schools’ governing boards conduct succession planning and recruitment for principals in their school?” is addressed. The question arose in seeking to investigate the policies and processes of governing boards in principal succession. The culmination of the principal succession process is the appointment of the preferred candidate, as determined by the governing board of the respective independent school. Therefore, this study encompassed case studies of three Queensland Christian schools and analysed the reasons for the appointment of their preferred candidates.

Davies’ (2003) conceptual framework of the school’s strategic architecture (discussed in detail later in this chapter) was applied as an analytic lens to data collected from the interviews, focus groups conducted with selected participants, together with relevant documents supplied by the schools. The concept of “organisational vision” is
central to the Davies’ model and as a result three themes emerged in this research. These themes are:

1. The extent that succession planning is linked to a comprehensive organisational vision.
2. The relationship between the selection process of the principal and the organisational vision.
3. The alignment between the recruitment process and the organisational vision.

The research on which this thesis is based has focussed on the issue of principal succession and recruitment within the Australian Christian schools’ group, because of the unique values and spiritual qualities required in the principals of these schools to be accepted in the school community and aligned to the school’s culture. The governing board of each school has its own approach to principal succession and recruitment, informed by local context and its specific priorities. I examined the question by selecting schools within this group that had undergone principal succession and recruitment within three-five years prior to embarking on this study. The choice for this time frame was to ensure that those school members who had been involved in the principal succession and recruitment journey would be able to recall and reflect on the decisions made during the process and the reasons for those decisions. Because each school was not part of a system and had undergone their principal succession and recruitment journeys at different time periods, a case study approach was deemed appropriate. Case study is not defined by the wide variety of methods that can be used but by the focus on a specific situated case of intrinsic interest. In this way case studies enable the researcher to have a distinct focus linked to a particular event, situation, or setting, incorporating the views of the participants in the study to extend the experience of what is already known about the issue and to develop an understanding of the complexities of these interactions, set in a real-life context (Yin, 2009).
Chapter Three, explaining the research design, provides a full explanation of the Davies (2003) Strategic Architecture Model. Davies’ (2003) work focussed on the alignment of a school’s strategic architecture and the leadership of its principal in leading and managing the vision of the school. The outcomes from his research emphasised the importance of ensuring the skills and capacity of a potential principal were aligned to the school context and its development phase to ensure the long-term stability and continued development of the school.

1.3. Effectiveness of School Leaders

Much of the research into school leadership has focussed on principals and the way in which they exercise leadership in their schools to prepare students for a complex and rapidly changing world (Davies, 2012; Fullan, 2011; Lonsdale and Anderson, 2012). With the leadership of the school by the principal being a key factor to the improvement of educational outcomes for students and the advancement of the school vision, it is essential that the principal succession and recruitment process is thoughtfully and intentionally planned. Failure to do this may result in the loss of respect and credibility, in the newly appointed principal, by the school staff, parents and students, during the first few months of tenure (Normore, 2013; Rothwell, 2011).

The link between effective school leadership and student outcomes has been a catalyst for governments committing resources to improve school leadership as a key driver in the achievement of successful school reform and student achievement (Barty, Thomson, Blackmore and Sachs, 2005). Many international and Australian studies have argued that successful outcomes for students and school professionals are strongly reliant on the strategic leadership of the principal (Dinham, 2005; Mulford, 2008; Leithwood, Patten and Jantzi, 2010; Hallinger, 2011). The background for this study was set within Australian schools and specifically the Christian schools’ group of Australia.
1.4. **Background and Key Terms**

This section outlines the background to the research project and explains key terms. In Australia and overseas, the field of educational leadership has been identified as a critical factor for increasingly shaping the school culture and improving student outcomes. In particular, the effectiveness of school leaders is recognised as an essential element for improving the efficacy and equity of schooling. The specific setting of this study is related to leadership in Australia of Christian independent schools. The impact on independent schools and the development of their organisational characteristics will be briefly explained followed by an explanation and definitions of the key terms: governance, organisational legitimacy, principal succession and strategic architecture. The theoretical framework is then explained in brief, before a summary of the researcher’s background is provided in the final section. Shaping a vision of academic success for students by managing people, data, teaching and learning processes to foster continuous improvement for the long term has been recognised as a key aspect of the success and effectiveness of school leaders.

**The Australian school context.** There is no uniformity across the Australian independent and government school sector in relation to principal succession planning and recruitment. This is largely a reflection of education in schools being administered by each Australian state and territory; also, principal succession and recruitment is delegated to systems or the governing boards of individual independent. Further there is no nationwide formal training or compulsory professional development for potential principals because, again, constitutionally, state and territory governments have had responsibility for education in Australia. This responsibility encompassed the regulation of school education, the administration and funding of schools. Australian education is inclusive of primary, secondary and tertiary education, with tertiary education encompassing Universities, Technical and Further Education Colleges, Vocation Education and Training providers.
Depending on the relevant state or territory and date of birth, education is compulsory between the ages of five and fifteen to seventeen. Australian schools encompass three sectors. These sectors are government schools, Catholic schools and independent schools. Respective state governments offer free education in government schools, although some schools ask parents to contribute to services and materials such as textbooks and extra-curricular activities such as camps.

Australian Catholic and independent schools usually charge tuition fees. Independent schools are located in all states and territories of Australia. These schools operate independently within the boundaries of state and federal legislative requirements. Apart from systemic schools, where the system authority has oversight, independent schools are governed on an individual basis and are answerable to their own governing boards or management committees (Independent Schools Council of Australia, 2015). Catholic schools are governed by the Roman Catholic Church in Australia within the Australian education system. These schools are governed by a local church parish or by the Catholic system in the relevant state or territory (Sullivan, 2013). The governing board structure of independent schools in Australia has consisted of the board of directors with sub-committees overseeing a range of areas such as the management of annual budgets, major capital expenditure, building projects, education projects, which are submitted for approval to the board of directors (McCormick, Barnett, Alavi, and Newcombe, 2006).

The federal government has been acknowledged as the major provider of public funds for independent and Catholic schools (Harrington, 2011; Kenway, 2013). While state governments have had responsibility for delivering education in Australia, the federal government is increasingly setting a national education policy plan where the assessment results of schools are linked to their effectiveness and success as an educational service provider (Prasser, 2012). As a result, Australian schools, regardless of sector, have faced increasing competition and ongoing pressures from rising parental and community
expectations over the last twenty years (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003; Lingard, Hayes, Mills, and Christie, 2003). Pressure from parents has increased because they now consider a school’s results by students who undertake The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and other state or national tests as a measure of how effective a school is as an education provider (Prasser, 2012). This increased competition among schools vying for enrolments, has resulted in schools pressured by government, society and the media to improve. In addition, schools have been confronted with pressures to implement a national curriculum, national testing, and increased reporting requirements. Schools have also been faced with increasing costs associated with implementing fast-changing technology (Moyle, 2010).

Australian educators and policymakers have been tested by consistent challenges in closing achievement gaps in student learning outcomes. The historic Gonski Review Report (2011) was initiated in April 2010, by the then Federal Minister for Education, the Hon Julie Gillard MP, to review funding arrangements for schools. The goal was to gain advice and recommendations to develop a funding system that would be equitable, easy to understand and financially sustainable in encouraging outstanding outcomes for all Australian students (Gonski, Boston, Greiner, Lawrence, Scales, and Tannock, 2011). Several very concerning trends in the educational outcomes of Australian students were noted in this report. Gonski and his colleagues stated that, during the past 10 years, Australian students’ achievement standards had declined. A significant gap between the highest and lowest performing students was also noted in the report, compared with many member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In addition, pastoral care programs have become important in schools to build resilience in students to address bullying and other social issues because of the impact of these issues on students’ learning (Cross, 2012; Mulford, 2008). This recognition has galvanised programs and initiatives to educate principals and school leaders in the
knowledge and qualities needed to effectively lead their schools (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, and Orr, 2009). These programs and initiatives have subsequently increased the responsibilities and accountabilities of governing boards (Austen, Swepson, and Marchant, 2012). The development of Christian schools in Australia has contributed to this context.

**Development of Christian schools in Australia.** Historically, the first Australian schools were established by the Anglican Church (Church of England) in New South Wales in the late 1700s. Christian and church schools have been part of the Australian education arena since colonial times, when a Church of England chaplain to Australia established a school in The Rocks area of Sydney, NSW. The modern era of what are known popularly as Christian schools in Australia typically dates to no earlier than the 1960s.

Calvin Christian School was established in Tasmania in 1962, and the modern-era Christian schools owe their existence to the willingness of the Federal Government to provide aid in the form of general recurrent and capital grants directly to non-government schools. Prior to this, Catholic, Protestant and other independent schools were supported by their own communities with little financial assistance from the government.

The emergence of these low fee Christian schools was stimulated by the abolition of the ‘New Schools Policy’ under the Howard Federal Government in 1996. During the following 10 years, the Howard Government supported a market-based education system through choice and competition offering alternatives to government state schools such as the low fee Christian schools. Increased federal funding for independent schools, especially under the Howard Government’s Socio-economic Status (SES) Funding Model and reduced restrictions on establishing new schools enhanced this growth (Cobbold, 2007; Symes and Gulson, 2005). This flow of public funding from federal and state governments, based on the total student enrolments and the socio-economic status of each
school, enhanced the quality of facilities, resources and programs that independent schools were able to provide for students. Public funding also enabled them to achieve these improvements without a proportionate increase in tuition fees (Symes and Gulson, 2005, 2008).

Christian schools established after that critical and timely funding decision were generally low fee by comparison with the older denominational colleges. In Queensland, Christian parent-governed schools and schools using Accelerated Christian Education curriculum were among the first to be founded. These schools and groups of schools are sometimes referred to broadly as the Christian schools’ movement (Justins, 2002). They were diverse: some were owned and supported by a community of Christian parents; others were owned and supported by churches, typically evangelical, charismatic or Pentecostal churches (Frisken, 2011, Justins, 2002).

During the 1960s through to the 1990s, Christian schools continued to develop throughout Australia. In the 1990s there was an ideological shift in Australian education, which saw the emergence of low fee Christian schools that adhered to an evangelical doctrine of education. These schools were founded by parents, local communities and churches that formed governing boards to lead and manage the vision of the schools, setting the schools low to attract families from low-socio economic backgrounds who desired a Christian education for their children (Frisken, 2011). These governing boards were using the regular state-based curriculum recognised in states and territories throughout Australia. Under Australian federalism, education was solidly a state matter, and the Federal Government (at that stage) took little part in curriculum issues, restricting their involvement to financial support.

The defining change in schooling over the last two decades has been the diversification of religious schools. Religious schools now include the Christian school sector discussed above, as well as schools established and governed by denominations
such as Anglican, Lutheran, Muslim and Uniting Church schools (Buckingham, 2010). Because of this diverse and cross-sectoral nature, Australian schools have no unified national approach to leadership development (Dinham, Collarbone, Evans and Mackay, 2013). This means that research has been fragmented and situated in isolated sectors such as the Government, Catholic and Lutheran systems (Grace, 2003; 2009; Story, 2016). The expansion in number and diversity of these schools has enabled this school sector to become an important part of the Australian education scene and they are now responsible for a third of all students (Buckingham, 2010; Symes and Gulson, 2005). Growth in Queensland Christian schools over the last ten years has increased from 22% to 28% of the student population in the independent school sector. In Queensland, in 2015, there were 32,193 students in Christian schools compared to 26,258 students enrolled in Anglican schools and 18,195 in Lutheran schools (Australian Bureau of Statistics; MySchool). In addition, the influence of Christian schools on the Australian education field has been enhanced by the government financial support they receive and the distinctive nature of their curricula which reflect the religious views of the schools as well as government requirements (Twelves, Symes and Gulson, 2008). Despite this growth in their significance, Christian schools remain a largely untapped area of research (Striepe, 2010). Striepe, Clark, and Donoghue (2014) emphasised the need for further research into Australian religious schools, to generate a better understanding of the context and perspectives in these schools, particularly in relation to the way in which their values inform the foundations of their perspectives.

The growth of Christian schools in the field of Australian education, together with the lack of research in educational leadership in this sector, coincided with my own personal journey that provided the impetus to undertaking this research. Given the importance of the principal’s role on school effectiveness, a study focussing on the
succession and recruitment of principals can advance evidence based understanding within this field. This study used key terms to provide context.

**Key Terms.** The following were the key terms used to provide context for this study: governance, organisational legitimacy, principal succession and strategic architecture. These terms are explained below.

**Governance.** Governance is a term that includes the rules, relationships, policies, systems and processes under which the authority of the organisation is exercised and maintained. In practice, governance is the direct process by which the owners or agents of an organisation exercise their ownership entitlements over the corporate entity (Carver, 2011; Tricker, 2015).

**Organisational Legitimacy.** Van der Laan (2009) theorised that organisational legitimacy is the way in which organisations are constantly looking for ways to ensure that they function within the standards and boundaries of respective societies in which they operate. This process is designed to align the social values of the organisation with their activities and norms of acceptable behaviour that are aligned to the organisation’s foundational principles.

**Principal Succession.** Principal succession is described as the planned approach towards replacing one principal with another that flows positively and is coordinated in a seamless progression (Hargreaves and Fink, 2006). Principal succession encompasses recruitment and selection. Within the context of this study, principal recruitment is defined as the process that seeks to attract suitable applicants from which the most suitable one is selected for the position (Kwan and Walker, 2009). The purpose of recruitment is to find the widest pool of applicants to provide the greatest opportunity to select the principal that is the best fit for the relevant school and its context. Principal selection is concerned with ensuring there is a good fit between the potential principal and the respective school (Young, 2008). Principal selection is intended to be a two-way interactive and subjective
procedure in which the candidate and the governing board decide whether or not to continue the relationship through employment.

**Strategic Architecture.** Researchers have acknowledged the importance of having a strategic framework that guides principals in developing the capacity and capability of the school (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994; Kaplan and Norton, 1996). The works of Davies’ (2003, 2010), Sergiovanni (2015), DuFour and Marzano (2015) has been pivotal in defining and articulating the framework and strategies that could be applied in achieving the vision of the school. As a result of his comprehensive research, Davies (2003, 2010) developed the concept “strategic architecture” to explain key leadership areas and their relationships in a school organisation thus providing principals with a framework to inform the leadership for both the immediate needs and a long-term perspective. The framework encompasses the knowledge and work needed by school leaders to ensure that the school will grow, develop and succeed. The strategic architecture provides the elements for the principal to focus on achieving the organisational vision, rather than a detailed plan. The process requires compilation of the vision and identification of core strategic actions needed to accomplish that vision. In addition, the framework is valuable for acknowledging the importance of the resources needed and consultation with stakeholders in the school, in order that the actions needed to achieve the vision of the school are achievable. For the purpose of this study the explanations and diagrammatic representations of Davies (2003) strategic architecture model is further discussed below.
1.5. Theoretical Framework

This study applied a strategic architecture model developed by Professor Brent Davies and colleagues working with principals in the UK. Davies argued that successful principals lead their schools in ways that engage staff members, parents and students in conversations about the key issues driving the school and how these will advance the development of the school to achieve its vision (Davies, 2003).

The strategic architecture model developed from Davies’ research has been selected as an analytical conceptual framework in this research to examine the processes of principal succession, selection and recruitment. The model emerged from large studies conducted by Davies seeking to determine the qualities and skills that are valued as essential for principals to successfully lead their schools’ strategic directions. The areas and elements that resulted in Davies’ model were applied in this research as a lens to examine the data gathered from members of three governing boards responsible for recruitment and selection decisions. The information generated from this research has particular significance at a number of levels. The research problem relating to the educational leadership of principals and their succession and recruitment in schools is outlined below.

Research Problem. The field of educational leadership has been identified as a critical factor for increasingly shaping the school culture and improving student outcomes (Day, Gu, and Sammons, 2016; Fullan, 2011). Effective principals are recognised as an essential element for improving the efficiency and equity of schooling, because they shape the conditions and climate in which teaching and learning occur (Caldwell, 2007). Principals have been acknowledged as the key drivers in strengthening their schools’ focus as professional learning communities, fostering teachers’ engagement and the application of instructional practices related to student achievement (Ingvarson and Robinson, 2007). They drive the teaching and learning process towards student achievement, framed by the
school vision and its culture and values (Fuller and Young; 2009; Hallinger and Heck, 2010). In order to achieve this, significant responsibility is placed on those who recruit and select the principal. Barber, Whelan and Clark, (2010) argued that a critical aspect of the principals’ leadership is to ensure that there is support for those under their responsibility (staff) to promote the advancement of this vision. Without productive relationships, an effective leadership strategy would not achieve the important goal of successful student outcomes (Barber, Whelan and Clark, 2010). Research into the role of principals and their recruitment has also been undertaken in Australia.

The pressure on principals of Australian schools to improve student outcomes and manage accountability expectations has impacted the stress and workload of principals (Watson, 2007). These factors have contributed to aspiring principals reconsidering whether to seek principal positions. As a result, Australian schools are facing an increased number of principal vacancies (Fraser and Brock, 2006; Whitaker, 2003). Other contributing factors have been increased parental expectations and the lack of respect with which the role of the principal is held (Lacey, 2003). In addition, the principal’s role has been increasingly regarded as being focussed on managerial and fulfilling government statutes rather than educational responsibilities (Gronn and Rawlings-Sanaei, 2003). There is a lack of empirical evidence on principal recruitment in Australian independent schools despite the importance of this sector (Grace, 2009; Striepe, 2010; Scott and McNeish, 2012). It is important to investigate the decision-making processes used by governing boards of independent schools in their principal appointments (Cranston, 2007). The motivation for undertaking this study was enhanced by my professional background as a past principal, now working with principals and governing boards in the independent school sector.
1.6. Researcher’s Background

My interest in the topic of principal succession and recruitment was informed by key experiences. First, my own personal principal recruitment journey, as principal of an independent school, was challenging yet rewarding. Three challenges confronted me in my first year. The college was involved in an anti-discrimination enrolment case at the time of my appointment which continued throughout my first year as principal. This anti-discrimination case was initiated by the parents of a student, enrolled by my predecessor, who was the founding principal and resigned after five years due to ill health. In that same year, I led the college through a period of grief and loss after the death of a Year 2 student, due to a car accident on the way to school. Finally, a significant part of my responsibility as principal, during my first year, was to undertake a feasibility study to lead the college into secondary from its small primary enrolment of 128 students. The secondary campus of the school was established two years after my initial tenure began.

After 11 years as principal of this school, with an enrolment growth of approximately 1000 students, I resigned to take up an executive role in an educational organisation, providing advocacy and strategic support to governing boards and their principals of member schools. This strategic support involved working with governing boards of these schools as external advisor, in their principal succession and recruitment journeys. My role as external advisor included meeting with governing board members of each school, to discuss the recruitment process for their new principal. My interest in this process heightened during discussions with the governing boards of the 31 member schools over a five-year period. These discussions were about the qualities and skills being sought in their new principals and how ensuring a suitable cultural fit between the new principal and the school community was critical to the selection. This role, as external advisor, and my principal experience, was the catalyst for my research interest in principal succession and recruitment processes. The next section provides an outline of the thesis structure.
1.7. Thesis Structure

To orient the reader on the structure of this thesis, a summary of the focus of each of the chapters is provided.

Chapter two. Chapter two of this thesis reviews the relevant literature. This review of literature examines five key themes relevant to the research question. It presents the research in the fields of global and national shortage of principals in schools, and the nature of principals and their leadership styles. The review then examines work in the fields of governance structure of independent schools and the relationship between the role of the governing board and that of the principal. Finally, an overview of the types of leadership displayed by principals is outlined.

Chapter three. Chapter three explains in detail the conceptual framework of the study, including a rationale for the design of the study. The three case study sites and the justification for their selection are outlined. The chapter also includes the method for generating the data analysis. A description of the group of schools from which participants were selected is included in the chapter. Limitations of case study research are discussed in the chapter.

Chapters four, five and six. Chapter four provides a critical analysis of succession and recruitment journeys, experienced by the first site selected for the study, Lewis College. Its principal succession and recruitment journey arose because of the retirement of the Principal, after eighteen years. Chapter five describes Bradley College the site used for the second case study. Its principal succession and recruitment journey arose because of the unscheduled departure of the incumbent Principal. Chapter six describes Fisher College, the site used for the third case study. In this site the principal recruitment journey began as a result of the employment contract of the previous principal not being renewed.

Chapter seven. Chapter seven, the final chapter, provides a summation of the findings which have emerged from the analysis of the three case study sites. It also draws attention to some specific implications from the study for the governing boards of
independent schools regarding principal succession and recruitment, and suggests areas in which further research on these issues could occur.

1.8. Conclusion

The investigation explored in this thesis is different from other studies into school leadership in two ways. First, the role of governing boards and their decisions, especially in the succession and recruitment of principals, has been given little research attention (Striepe, 2010). This study seeks to address this shortfall by focussing on the board’s role in recruiting and selecting new school principals, and examining the strategic actions and decisions taken by the members of governing boards of these schools during their principal succession and recruitment journeys.

Second, this study applies the strategic architecture model developed from the research of Davies and his colleagues as a means to examine principal succession practices. In an independent school, the responsibility for recruiting the principal is endowed upon the governing board, when a principal retires or resigns. Davies’ model was used to examine recruitment and selection processes because it captures qualities sought by governing boards when recruiting principals, contributing to the paucity of research into the role that the governing boards of independent schools play in the principal recruitment process (Tricker, 2012).

This chapter has introduced the study and articulated its research concern. It suggested that there was an important link between the important role of principals in achieving successful student outcomes and aligning the school’s vision to the culture and values, learning and resources of the school. It has also highlighted the importance of effective selection and recruitment of the principal in achieving successful student outcomes. The chapter also provided an overview of the study’s aims, research question, researcher perspective, research design and theoretical framework and the study’s significance. The next chapter, Chapter Two, provides a detailed review of relevant literature.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

“Recruiting a head teacher is arguably the most important task a governing body will undertake. Appointing a high-quality head to lead teaching and learning in your school is something under the direct control of governors that positively affects school improvement” (National College for School Leadership, 2012, p.3).

As the quotation above emphasised, the successful recruitment of the principal has been acknowledged as critical for school improvement. This chapter is contextualised in the research question “How do schools’ governing boards conduct succession planning and recruitment for principals in their schools?” A review of literature was conducted relating to principal succession and recruitment, across studies undertaken globally, nationally and in government and independent primary and secondary schools. This review sought to provide background to the research undertaken in this thesis and identified gaps in the research into this area of research.

The review is organised around published research conducted in the last 25 years. From this research nine topics were included in the Literature Review for this study because they offered links to the research question and its three themes identified in the first chapter of this thesis, which asked “How do schools’ governing boards conduct succession planning and recruitment for principals in their school?” In reviewing the literature which underpinned this study, these nine topics were drawn from the literature studied and also aligned with the three case studies discussed in Chapters Four, Five and Six of this thesis. These topics offered links between the research question and its three related themes and the local context of the three case study sites investigated. For example, the second topic, Hybrid Organisations, aligned with the two case studies discussed in Chapters Five and Six, because the schools and their related entities were Hybrid Organisations. These topics are:

1. Organisational Legitimacy,
2. Hybrid Organisations,
3. School Leadership,
4. Governing Boards,
5. The Principal and School Success,
6. Principal Leadership,
7. Principal Succession and Succession Planning,
8. Principal Recruitment, and
9. The Australian Perspective of Principals and School Success.

2.1. Organisational Legitimacy

The key researchers in the field of organisational legitimacy whose work was reviewed are Boisot (1995, 2000), Moerman and Van der Laan (2005), Senge (2006; 2014), and Tricker (2010, 2012). Boisot (1999) focused on strategic knowledge management tools that enabled organisations to be successful and credible. He argued that to be effective and sustainable, organisations needed to develop a suitable conceptual framework, decision making processes, and build strategic knowledge management to secure competitive advantage. Organisations endeavour to manage their legitimacy to safeguard the continued flow of finance, human resources and clients essential for continued viability. In their research Moerman and Van der Laan (2005) focused on those measures that organisations need to establish to ensure they comply with government rules and regulations that preserve integrity and the ability to pursue the strategic vision. Moerman and Van Der Laan (2005) stated in their research that organisational legitimacy refers to the practices and understandings involved, to conform to the accepted and valued expectations of society. Recognising the diverse stakeholders within its communities, organisations have operated from a more abstract level, as they sought to establish similarities between their activities and the norms of acceptable behaviour (Boisot, 1995, 2000; Moerman and Van der Laan, 2005).
Learning organisations. The term “learning organisation” is strongly associated with the work of Senge (2006). Such an organisation is one which has usually begun with an idea or concept that progresses over time through stages, and the organisation is capable of changing in response to the external and internal challenges that result. The seminal work of Senge (2006), focussed on the legitimacy of organisations in facilitating the successful learning of its members and the ability for the organisation to continuously transform and be sustainable whilst facing the challenges of competition and innovation. Senge’s (2006) research focussed on the essential features that ensured an organisation could excel, identifying five key characteristics. The first characteristic is systems thinking. Senge argued that this characteristic encompassed a body of knowledge in the organisation that helped it understand how to implement effective change. The second, personal mastery refers to the skills to clarify, develop and articulate vision, particularly by the organisation’s leader. Third, termed mental models, comprise the assumptions and images that influence the way in which the organisation’s leaders take action in responding to challenges. Fourth, is the capacity to build a shared vision of the desired future that unites the organisation’s members around a common identity and goal for the future. Finally, team learning is vital to a learning organisation, built around dialogue and shared interactions amongst the organisation’s members. Senge argued that if any of these characteristics are missing then the organisation will fall short of its goal, jeopardising its credibility and reliability. Maturing organisations need to maintain momentum as they develop and grow if they are to achieve desired goals to improve performance and satisfy relevant legislation, social and community expectations (Senge, 2006).

Organisational life cycle. Research into the nature of organisations and the way in which they establish and maintain legitimacy in their field and credibility in society has been reinforced through research undertaken by Martin (2006) and Deal and Peterson (2010). Their research findings argued that organisational legitimacy included the
conscious and unconscious customs and routines maintained on a daily basis. Other work has been undertaken more recently by Hanks (2015) who explored organisations and the ways in which they maintained their credibility as they progressed through their development life cycles. Hanks (2015) studied the stages of development experienced by organisations. He reasoned that, as organisations advance through these life cycle stages, a variety of problems need to be addressed that require different leadership skills, priorities and organisational structures. As organisations change and develop through these life cycle stages, they are impacted by the ways in which their members think and relate together. Throughout these life cycle stages organisations have attempted to maintain legitimacy and acceptance by its members and the broader society (Hanks, 2015). Iselin (2010), whose research focussed on Christian schools, particularly examined the way in which these schools interpret and communicate their culture through their developmental life cycles. These ways of communicating culture were important in two ways: to preserve their vision and core ideology; and to be agile in responding to change imperatives within an ever-increasingly complex and market driven socio-cultural environment. As this study is set in the Christian independent school sector of Queensland Australia, the review of literature noted the increased intervention and regulation by federal and state governments, implying new demands for accountability and responsibility imposed on the owners of these schools. Bound by interrelated activities that stimulate the continual expansion of their capacity and capability, schools maintain their organisational legitimacy through a regulated accreditation process. They have endeavoured to build their future intent whilst translating vision into a collective one amongst their clients.

**Organisational vision, culture and values.** Several researchers have focussed on organisational legitimacy and the link to vision, culture and values. The way in which the organisation’s leader communicates the social values and acceptable behaviour to members of their organisation and the wider social community is an important part of the
leader’s role. Aspin and Chapman’s (2000) work investigating the role of values in organisations, found it is significant to the issue of organisational legitimacy. Oandasan (2009) and Qualman (2012) suggested that a vital aspect of an organisation’s acceptance was its culture and values. Preserving and perpetuating an organisation’s core cultural vision and values has been a critical determinant of on-going effectiveness and longevity (Aspin and Chapman, 2002; Johnson, 2002). Organisational legitimacy can be assessed by an examination of the values and social norms within the organisation’s society (Aspin and Chapman, 2002).

Hatch (2011) and Staber (2013) noted that, since changing social norms was difficult, organisational leaders adapted to the limitations imposed by the specific acceptable norms of legitimate establishments. The leaders modified these norms by shifting policy environments or changing the values and customs in the organisation (Hatch, 2011; Staber, 2013). Several researchers acknowledged the uncertainty that existed in relation to defining an organisation’s values because of the need to constantly respond to internal and external catalysts (Aspin, 2002; Aspin and Chapman, 2002; Johnson, 2002). As this study is set in Christian schools, it is worth noting the recent extensive research into this sector by Iselin (2010) who explored how principals cultivated sustainable school cultures within Christian schools during changing times, particularly focusing on the crucial role that schools culture and the preservation of core cultural vision and values play in establishing and maintaining successful schools. Christian schools governed by churches are administratively complex because of the governance control of both the sponsoring church and school (Iselin, 2010). The challenge for principals of these schools is to ensure the core cultural assumptions, values and beliefs are aligned with those of the sponsoring church (Iselin, 2010). (Hill, 2010; Iselin, 2010). These core values are particularly evident in hybrid organisations.
2.2. Hybrid Organisations

Hybrid organisation is a term that emerged in the research of Mitronen and Möller (2003). Hybrid organisations combine aspects of competition, value systems, centralised authority and networks to achieve organisational efficacy and good performance. Research into hybrid organisations has been limited. Mitronen and Möller (2003) focussed on the management of hybrid organisations and the chain of command and policies articulating the involvement of management in decisions made at individual sites. They identified the challenge for a hybrid organisation was to maintain a balance between the centralised corporate control and the freedom of their local entities to be autonomous. The potential for tensions when subsidiary entities of the hybrid organisation have competing priorities with each other can manifest in the provision of human and financial resources.

In the education sector, examples of hybrid organisations include church governed schools and systems such as the Lutheran and Catholic sector (Mitronen and Möller, 2003). In his research, Weiss (2007) conducted a case study of a Catholic parish primary school. The findings emphasised the importance of alignment of vision and goals for the common good of both entities. The need for the organisation to be open and transparent, communicating the way in which the resources are managed and distributed was important to prevent the relationship between the centralised authority and the subsidiary entity from becoming toxic (Weiss, 2007). Mitronen and Moller (2003) and Weiss (2007) noted the way that tensions can arise at three different levels in hybrid organisations. First, governance structure tensions arose in the event of conflict between independent initiatives at the local level and centralised control. Members’ tensions begin between freedom of operation, independent decision-making and the exercise of power from chain management. Activity tensions have occurred between the rules and values that allow the local entity to maintain independence within the governing body’s centralised control (Weiss, 2007). Research by Battilana and Dorado (2010) focussed on building sustainable
hybrid organisations in the corporate finance sector. Their findings emphasised the need to establish a common organisational identity that balances the management and autonomy and the socialisation policies of its members (Battilana and Dorado, 2010). Building this common identity requires effective governing boards, building trust and respect across the whole organisation so that knowledge is shared and conflicts resolved for the good of all entities within the organisation. The context and manner in which an organisation is structured impacts the leadership of the organisation.

2.3. School Leadership

In the independent school sector, in which this study is situated, leadership of these organisations are the responsibility of the governing boards and their principals. Carver (2001, 2006) explained that governing boards are the key decision-making bodies. In the case of independent schools, governing boards are accountable to their parents and school communities. Their role is to provide strategic guidance for the school and to effectively oversee the organisational vision through the principal. The principal leads and manages the organisational vision, on behalf of the governing board.

Leadership of a school organisation has been explained in terms of layers encompassing the governing body, the principal and executive staff. Mulford’s (2008) research into staff teams and student outcomes identified the need to adapt and improve new practices for continued improvement has seen the development of team-based structures to contribute to school progress and student learning. The responsibility for overseeing the vision of an independent school has been endowed upon the school’s governing board.

Governance is concerned with ideas of organisational legitimacy, vision and accountability (AHISA, 2009; Tricker, 2012). Garratt (2007) noted that “governance” is derived from the ancient Greek “kubernetes”, meaning “the steersman”, namely, the person who has provided direction to a ship or organisation. This concept evoked the
notion of motivating strategic change towards a predetermined goal. In reviewing the literature for this study, key researchers in the area of governance were identified. One of the key researchers in governance is Robert Tricker (1984, 2010, 2012, 2015) who has been considered the “father of corporate governance” because his first book included the term corporate governance and he founded a research journal on corporate governance Corporate Governance: An International Review. Corporate governance refers to the structure of rules, practices and processes by which a company is directed and controlled (Edwards and Clough, 2005). Tricker’s research was pivotal in defining governance from a strategic perspective rather managerial within the organisation’s daily operations. The model he developed was a valuable conceptual framework for boards in determining where their responsibilities were in relation to compliance and accountability, strategy design, and policy formulation. Other researchers have focussed on the development of strategy; in particular, strategic thinking and strategic leadership. Strategic leadership in a school is based on long-term planning under the guidance of the principal who maintains focus on the vision of the organisation. This guidance, by the principal, involves applying strategic processes to make the vision a reality (Davies, 2006). Research by Garratt (1997) into governing boards of corporations found that the most appropriate role for governing boards was strategic thinking, and provided advice on how governing board members can improve their skills and attitudes for developing long term direction of their companies. This research into governing boards of corporations has influenced the role of governing boards of independent schools.
2.4. Governing Boards

Since the 1980s, increased rules and accountability regulations have challenged the quality of decision making by school boards because members were under-skilled, lacking in expertise, or they did not have the information they required to evaluate the effectiveness of their decisions in improving outcomes for the school (Allen and Mintrom, 2006; Payne, 2001; Thomas, 2010). The nature of independent schools as charitable businesses has increased pressure on governing boards to keep the school financially viable in uncertain economic periods.

In recent years, a renewed focus on professional development for board members, in part due to the establishment of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC), has endeavoured to address the effectiveness and quality of governing boards and their decisions. The establishment of the ACNC has been a catalyst for governing school boards to improve their skills. Tricker (2010; 2012) undertook important research into the essential role of governing boards and their key functions especially in developing strategy, and articulating vision, mission and values. Tricker (2012) developed a framework from his research to clarify where governing boards should focus their energies on improving performance, and identified the qualities of effective governing boards. These qualities included first, guiding and supporting the school’s work whilst pursuing further improvement and innovation; second, communicating well, providing good feedback and supporting the principal; third, asking questions, setting targets, monitoring and evaluating performance. In addition to these qualities, the emerging foundations of effective boards have been identified as trust, transparency, skill and competence (Allan and Mintrom, 2010; Thomas, 2010). This renewed focus and the qualities listed above confirmed that good governance, achievements, teacher quality, and leadership qualities are aligned (Jones and Ranson, 2010).
Governing bodies of schools need to have a comprehensive understanding of where governance overlaps across involved entities. They also need well-organised structures, policies and coordination within local entities where centralised operations exist (Mitronen and Möller, 2003). Effective governance requires building partnerships through trust, care and respect for others so that knowledge can be co-created, shared and conflicts resolved for the good of all entities within the organisation. Even though school leadership can be identified in many stakeholders, principals are recognised as the main source of leadership by the staff, parents and governance authority because they can exert a great deal of influence and are accountable to the school community for advancing the school vision (Day, Hopkins, Harris and Ahtaridou, 2009).

Carver (2001; 2006) focussed his research on policy governance, which resulted in the development of a model that defined and directed the roles and relationships between the governing board members and the principal, and argued that strategic leadership was a key success factor for governing boards of non-profit organisations such as independent schools. Davies (2003; 2004) focussed his research on strategy within school leadership for the advancement of the organisation’s vision. According to Davies (2003, 2004) strategic leadership requires a governing board with a balance of strategic skills, a strategic direction and well-established processes to advance the strategy continuum. Further support for governing boards assuming an active role in strategic leadership comes, internationally, from the OECD (2005) and later by Pascoe (2015) supporting the remit that governing boards should ensure that strategic guidance of the company.

A number of studies conducted by Tricker (2010, 2015) into governing boards and their roles and duties in their companies, noted that governing boards are responsible for the overall performance of the entity and compliance with strategies, policies and government regulations. Applying this explanation within the school context, governance involves the responsibility and accountability for the overall vision of the school (Carver,
The governance of a school is the responsibility of its governing board, whose members are known as directors and are responsible for setting the organisation’s direction, formulating strategy and policymaking.

In being accountable to the school community for moving the vision forward, the principal is charged by the school governance to report on the school’s strategy for development and progress. Therefore, the principal needs to be in alignment with the intent of the vision and the identified key performance indicators in its successful completion (Iselin, 2010; Libato, 2014). Governance and the principal have a particular connection in the context of this study in progressing successful school outcomes.

In a Christian independent school, the governing board is accountable for determining and articulating a clear vision, working in partnership with the principal and executive leadership team to guide and direct the future direction of the school (Austen, Swepson and Marchant, 2012). This partnership is an essential condition for ensuring that decisions and actions taken by all members of the school leadership serve the common objective of attaining academic success of the greatest number of enrolled students. The governing board’s role is not to carry out the work within a school. Rather, its responsibility is to concentrate on policies and issues relating to strategic and school improvement, delegating to the principal those tasks that are management such as making judgements about teaching quality and recruitment of staff.

The governing body is established as the guardian of a school’s foundational culture, beliefs and values, ensuring that growth and development of the school are aligned with these elements (Iselin, 2010). All schools have developed unique characteristics and beliefs that define their education philosophy, positioned within the culture, values and philosophies (Davies, 2003).

In a faith-based school, the beliefs have been articulated and have defined the rules and procedures under which the school operates, framed by a particular religious character
or formal ties with a religious organisation. The accountability for sustaining these beliefs and guidelines is upheld by the school governance as owner-representatives (Bartlett and Campey, 2012; Justins, 2002). The role of governing boards is based on their accountability as owner-representatives, working in partnership with the principal and senior leadership staff to implement high-level decisions aimed at achieving the school’s vision (Davies, 2010). Austen, Swepson and Marchant (2012) noted that board membership of an independent school is controlled by the policies and procedures or constitution of the school, and varied according to whether the school is sponsored by a church, or governed by a company limited by guarantee. With respect to the latter, board members are elected at the annual general meeting by members of the company. The governing board model most appropriate for each individual school is based on its culture, mission, ethos and geographic and demographic characteristics (Tricker, 2010, 2012).

The role of the governing board of an independent school provides strategic guidance for the school, effectively overseeing and reviewing the school’s management (Carver, 2006). One of the key factors in successful schools has been acknowledged as effective governance (Caldwell, 2010). In their research, Jones and Ranson (2010) studied school governing bodies in England and their values, purposes, and practice of school governance. They identified three factors important to school success. These factors were student achievement, the quality of teaching and the quality of leadership and management. Good governance is defined by decision-making and the process by which decisions were implemented or not implemented. Effective governance also ensures that decisions are responsive to the current and future needs of society and ensuring they recruited a principal with the skills and expertise to implement appropriate and relevant strategies in responding to these needs for the success of the school (Graham, Amos, and Plumptre, 2003).
2.5. The Principal and School Success

The principal of a school has a pivotal role in achieving school success. This role involves leading and managing the processes and outcomes that contribute to the school’s educational purpose. Some of the major research in educational leadership, since the 1990s, is the result of the work of Canadian born Michael Fullan. Fullan (1994, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2010) is a key researcher in the field of educational leadership and includes: the qualities principals need to drive whole school change for long term improvement and sustainability; using case studies to research the way in which leaders can implement successful change in their schools, and increase the impact of the principal on school success. He particularly focussed on the positive strategies of principals and school leaders to reform school outcomes and drive successful outcomes. Fullan (2002, 2003) argued that significant educational change in organisations cannot be achieved without solid, united leadership in all levels of the organisation. Cohesive leadership demonstrates teamwork and develops others in the organisation with the capacity to drive the vision with confidence (Fullan, 2002). Increased decentralisation of organisations and team-based structures has challenged leaders to manage the actions of the team members when it conflicted with the overall vision of the school (Fullan, 2002).

Organisational leadership is dependent on its context and inherent variables. Research by Zaccaro and Klimoski (2002) into functional and leader-team dynamics found that strong relationships between leader and team influence each other and enhance the effectiveness of achieving goals. The influence of the organisation’s leader was based on the ability to reason and navigate the social and political dynamics of the organisation by providing direction and exercising influence (Zaccaro and Klimoski, 2002). Leaders who had the capacity to understand organisational leadership developed teamwork skills, effective communication, conflict resolution and team problem solving so they could articulate the organisation’s
mission and vision, foster staff morale and help staff grow to make a positive contribution to the organisation (Schneider, 2002; Zaccaro and Klimoski, 2002).

Iselin’s (2010) research found that the role of the principal in leading schools is important to ensure there is alignment to the values and beliefs and its culture. A school’s core values have provided a framework for determining the consistent way stakeholders in an organisation lived and what they should cherish. A school’s effectiveness, coupled with organisational routines, is overseen by its leadership. Successful school leaders communicate and define the school’s moral purpose. Values that provide a foundation for this moral purpose are linked to the school’s vision and the desired future (Iselin, 2010).

Effective leaders have developed trust and positive relationships with key stakeholders, especially when periods of leadership instability arise (Browning, 2014; Fullan, 2002; Harris, 2005; Schneider, 2002). Dirks and Ferrin (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of the research on trust and leadership during the last 40 years. They concluded that leaders build trust in their followers. They concluded that leaders’ actions and practices contribute to improved employee job performance, job satisfaction, increased staff retention, organisational commitment and correlates to confidence in the leaders, as well as care and positive relationships between leaders and their employees. Trust has also been associated with beliefs or perceptions of staff about honesty, integrity and satisfaction with the organisation’s leader (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002). The organisational leadership of the school impacts its legitimacy and credibility as a viable educational institution and the school’s capacity to improve student outcomes (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002). More recently, Browning’s (2014) research focussed on the relationship between the principals and the chairs of the governing bodies of independent schools, identifying strategies that enabled principals to develop purposeful relationships of trust with staff and governing body chairs. To be effective, this relationship requires trust between the governing board and the principal appointed to lead and manage this vision. Heystek (2006) highlighted the
importance of trust between the principal and the governing board of the school, because both parties were working towards the same goal, that of the best interests of the school and its vision. The position of trust was key to the effective functioning of schools and especially in developing strong relationships between the governing board and the principal of the school is important to the effectiveness of school leaders. (Heystek, 2006).

Research by Davies and his colleagues over the last decade identified the significant responsibility placed on school leadership teams: guiding its future direction as the vision bearers and guardians of the moral purpose, setting the direction of the schools whilst building capacity toward continuous improvement (Davies and Davies, 2005; Pont, Nusche and Moorman, 2008; Fullan, 2011).

The way in which the principal’s leadership style is aligned with the school and its community has been an important aspect of establishing his/her authority to lead the school towards successful outcomes. The research of both Schleicher (2011) and Stewart (2012) acknowledged that the contemporary demands on schools have changed the benchmark for school success. School success is now, they argued, no longer improvement by national standards, but improvement relative to the best performing international education systems. Research by Brown, Lauder and Ashton (2008) into European companies noted that education is believed to be the key to global competitiveness and the basis for social cohesion. They claimed that since education is the source of economic growth and international competitiveness, schools are now expected to solve national economic issues as well as be the means of effective social change, restoring and uniting families and communities. Government initiatives and policies have impacted on education, in part due to the increased global pressures. Principals who have been successful in advancing the vision of their schools become socially and diplomatically perceptive enough to align their personal and professional attributes in a particular context to a particular audience, thereby enhancing their cultural fit in the school (Iselin, 2010).
The 2009 OECD Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) stated that success is directly related to the way schools prepare students for their future. Successful leadership by principals who have the abilities to assess the schools’ needs and their students develop short and long term strategic goals that will achieve successful outcomes has been a contributing factor (Leithwood, Patten and Jantzi, 2010). Research by Davies and Davies (2010) into the leadership of principals and school success found that supporting the needs of students required collaborative and reflective dialogue on student performance data. This process is enhanced by coaching and supporting teachers in the continuous development of their professional practice. McKinney (2012) declared that assessing a school’s educational needs helped determine the best course of action to enhance student achievement and teacher self-efficacy. Improved literacy and numeracy, a well-defined philosophy, and a collaborative culture can enhance the school’s reputation in the community, and build positive relationships in a values-based culture (Leithwood, Patten, and Jantzi, 2010; McKinney, 2012).

School leaders have shown their members how to behave or not to behave, through cultural, sometimes unspoken, conversations that shape and influence school members (Blount, 2006; Lugg, 2010; Tooms, 2007). The legacy of a principal has been recognised as the intangible and values based cultural inheritance passed from one principal to the next, often defined by student outcomes, staff outcomes and wellbeing and curriculum reform (Hallinger, 2005).

Research by Walker (2011) into school leadership, maintained that developing schools as learning communities is dependent on three effects. First, cultural effects have been shaped by the values, beliefs, and rules of the school’s community over time, serving as a practical agency for moral formation. Second, structural effects have been designed by physical structures within the school community. Third, relational effects have been moulded by how people, within the school community, relate to one another personally
and professionally. A principal’s professional and personal skills included the ability to lead and manage these effects as the school develops and changes over time (Davies, 2003; 2010). Walker’s (2011) essential message about these effects on learning communities was that school improvement is a process of the principal working with students and school communities to achieve the goals as effective learning communities of practice in a safe supportive culture. The principal’s leadership style influences a school’s learning culture, which influences staff to be intrinsically motivated to make sense of what is being learnt by relating the subject matter to the real world (Iselin, 2010).

2.6. Principal Leadership

The leadership style of the principal is affected by the needs of the organisation and its members. Research suggests that some principals are more effective than others if they can read the environment and adjust their leadership style to address issues that are impacting the school’s development (Davies, 2011; Fullan, 2010).

Chopra’s research (2011) has identified that charismatic principals have often been appointed when schools have experienced instability and challenging situations. Spiritual leaders are the symbolic souls of the organisations they lead, encouraging all members of the school to pursue the main vision, serving the school and its members (Chopra, 2011). Charismatic principals are able to unite the school community and refocus the school community towards its vision and direction (Chopra, 2011).

Weber’s (2009) application of charisma was unique in distinguishing one of the ways principals claimed legitimacy. The legitimacy of a charismatic principal is founded on the perception by staff members of an exceptional leader within the context of the school’s life cycle, especially the way in which the principal relates to staff and inspires loyalty and commitment to the organisational vision (Iselin, 2010). This perception of a principal being charismatic is frequently attributed to the interaction between the principal and the exceptional circumstances in the life of the school. Charismatic principals use their
personalities to stimulate strong emotions in members of the school community and create great excitement about the vision of the school (Iselin, 2010). Babcock-Roberson and Strickland (2010) identified a significant positive correlation between charismatic leadership and commitment to the school through work engagement.

According to Davies (2003) strategic principals play an important role in ensuring a school is educationally successful in the short term while also having a clear framework and processes to translate the school’s purpose and vision into the longer-term future. Davies (2003) proposed that the qualities of strategic principals include a clear and discerning knowledge of the current state of the organisation and a capacity to envisage the school’s future success, and improving student outcomes. Strategic principals are able to identify the future direction for the school by responding to the future types of education needed for effective student outcomes (Davies, 2003). They build the capability and capacity of a school by continually improving the school, making decisions around the use of resources and working with the governing board to intentionally position the school for the best future and the school vision (Davies, 2003; Davies and Davies, 2006; Quong and Walker, 2010).

Essentially, strategic principals set the direction of the school by challenging and questioning current practices in the school, reviewing the key issues and areas that need development or review and modification. During the process, strategic principals use their personal and interpersonal skills to build personal and professional networks. In leading the school vision, strategic principals develop a number of planning approaches across the broad direction of the school activities to build frameworks that allow the school to progress forward towards the desired future (Davies, 2010).

A positive school culture promotes learning and engagement for students and staff. It also underlies the reason why other aspects of the school, such as relationships and a sense of belonging flourish (Habegger, 2008). Principals understand and develop the culture through sharing values, sharing beliefs, developing networks and understanding the
external environment. During this process, each school determines or discovers the core values that hold importance to those within it.

When values are not defined, the culture of the organisation is subjected to the vagaries of the personality of the principal. Principals need to be strategic leaders in their execution of the school vision and ensure that these beliefs and values are part of the core ideology of the school because they are inseparably linked to its organisational effectiveness. Collins (2001) argued the importance of strategically positioning people in the school to achieve optimum growth, development and success. The positioning of a strategic leader who is a good fit to the school is a critical part of achieving this success. During the growth and development of the school a principal sometimes repositions the school’s organisational structures if they are out-dated or not achieving maximum coherence between the organisation and student learning, teacher satisfaction, pedagogy and innovation (Carrejo, Cortez, and Reinhartz, 2010).

The review of literature has noted that while the leadership style of a principal varies, there are times in the life of the school where they were required to modify or change the way in which they lead the school to accommodate changing contexts, and the life-cycle of the school’s development. The continued recruitment of principals, however, has been threatened over the last decade by a shortage of existing or aspiring principals. The challenge, for independent Christian schools, is ensuring there is effective succession planning of principals, to ensure that the strategic leadership of the school is not disrupted.

2.7. Principal Succession and Succession Planning

The importance of addressing this issue of leadership supply was noted by Fullan (2014), who claimed that schools seeking to strive for excellence in education had to give urgent attention to ensuring they were led by exceptional principals. Deal and Peterson (2010) argued that once appointed, the principal works with the school’s cultural rich tapestry already woven by members of the school community. Tooms, Lugg and Bogotch
Pont, Nusche and Moorman (2009) reported that principals in OECD countries have faced unprecedented challenges in relation to increasing expectations for schools and schooling, in a century characterised by technological innovation, migration and globalisation. Fullan (2011) argued that every aspect of school leadership development is being scrutinised by governments and organisations, studying the competencies, responsibilities, practices, policies, regulatory frameworks, and professional development that support the school’s capacity to pursue its vision and maintain organisational legitimacy.

Similar findings were reported by Leo (2007), from the University of Dundee, who found a marked increase in the principal’s accountability requirements because of increased demands from government initiatives in funding, workforce reforms, human resource data and curriculum with almost no consistency or direction (2007). Strategically, the expectations of principals involved anything from leading and developing curriculum to being architects, lawyers, public relations experts, and anything in between (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson, 2005). Principals have had to advance the schools’ vision by managing decisions regarding the school’s culture, building positive relationships with members of the school community, ensuring that the appropriate resources were provided to support the teaching and learning process, as well as making effective decisions relating to the strategic planning in the short and long-term (Davies, 2006).
The growing recognition of the importance of school principals and their impact has seen a parallel concern for their recruitment and selection process, to ensure the final appointment is effective in pursuing excellent outcomes in the school (Barker, 2006; Huber, 2004; Nettles and Herrington, 2007). As Chapman (2005) argued, schools that desire to be excellent required excellent leadership which is the result of a coherent and systematic process to principal recruitment. Hargreaves (2005) similarly noted that successful effective principal succession was a significant factor for school improvement.

In recent years, many governments and organisations have committed significant resources to understand the role of the principal and succession planning (Cranston, 2007; Macpherson, 2009). Whilst job replacement has been the focus of succession planning in the past, Lacey (2001) and Cranston (2007) argued that attracting and developing future principals is now included in this focus, because the younger generation of leaders are likely to change their employers a number of times during their working life. Effective succession management is improved by training and on-going support for the principal (Hargreaves, 2003).

Successful and thoughtful principal succession processes have been sporadic (Hargreaves and Fink, 2003). In a study conducted in the United State of America, Quinn (2002) argued that principal succession was often disorganised and unforeseen. Recommendations, from this study, included the implementation of succession plans that had the support from the incumbent principal and the governing board. The plan should be part of a broader leadership plan, be based on well-defined competencies and skills for the potential applicant, and linked to the priorities, vision and long-term plans of the school. Hargreaves and Fink (2003) researched educational change over 30 years in Canada and the United States of America. They found that one of the main influences of positive change and continuity for long term success is leadership sustainability and leadership succession. Intentional and well-planned succession planning policies and processes were key factors in nurturing aspiring principals. Principal succession that was planned and
intentional was a priority if succession fatigue in a school was to be avoided (Hargreaves and Fink, 2003). According to Hargreaves and Fink (2003) identifying potential candidates to nurture them as part of a successful succession plan, which includes having an executive development program, is an essential tactic for successful succession planning. Rapid and repeated transitions from one principal to the next affected the culture and commitment of school staff. Achieving sustainable lasting improvement can also be hindered (Fink and Brayman, 2006). The concept of “revolving door” principal appointments become more frequent during periods of reform where there were times of high risk for principals and their schools (Hargreaves and Fink, 2003). Within a school community, the frequent turnover of the school principal raises concerns over the rigour of the succession process, the expertise of the governing board and the future legitimacy of the school (Collins, 2012; Tricker, 2010, 2012).

2.8. Principal Recruitment

The recruitment of effective strategic principals has been identified as a critical component of supporting schools in achieving their vision (Davies, 2003). Normore (2004) noted the important role that governing boards have held in determining the qualities desired in the principal successor to lead and manage the vision of the school. Davies (2006) and Thompson (2010) emphasised the important connection between recruiting the principal as part of the governing board’s strategic obligation to steer the development of the school’s future directions. A critical part of steering these future directions is ensuring the recruitment and employment policies and processes existed and were aligned to the strategic architecture of the school. In this way, there would be, it is argued, a cultural alliance between the school and the principal successor (Davies and Davies, 2010; Fullan, 2001; National College of School Leadership, 2007).

During principal transition, the continued long-term success of the school, is reliant on sound planning, effective engagement of leadership knowledge, to preserve and protect the
position from turnover frequency (Hargreaves and Fink, 2012). Collins (2012) cautioned schools to use discretion when recruiting and selecting principals, because making the wrong appointment has resulted in the difficult process of dismissing an incompetent principal to correct problems caused by his leadership or may result in poor learning outcomes, teacher fatigue and problems associated with negative outcomes. (Bush, Kiggundu, and Mooros, 2011; Hargreaves, 2005; Holland, 2006). When a school experienced frequent principal turnover or succession had been sudden and unplanned a school can find itself in a state of organisational crisis and its success and credibility as an educational body is threatened (Hargreaves, Moore, Fink, Brayman, and White, 2003). Schools can experience enormous cost associated with neglecting to carefully plan a principal recruitment and appointment process, because of the serious impact on the school community and its individuals, especially the students (AHISA, 2009).

Sturman (1994), Cocklin and Wilkinson (2011) and Hay (2013) found that the successful recruitment of the principal, enhances the school’s organisational legitimacy for the long-term success and development of the school. Research by Tooms, Lugg and Bogotch (2009) into the role and responsibility of a principal in the respective school culture maintained that appointing the principal with “the best fit for the job” (p. 97) to the respective school enhanced the school’s potential to deal with the global pressures, when all other qualifications and attributes are considered equal. This term is used to cover the implied means of power, within the social construction of a principal’s role and is understood as an interactive relationship between the principal and the school communities they serve, specific to its politics and relationships (Tooms, Lugg and Bogotch, 2010). The principal seeks to understand, accommodate and perpetuate a suitable role and identity as the necessary currency to obtain support and job security within the school culture (Blackmore and Sachs, 2007). The term “fit” develops into rational shorthand used by principals to make sense of and justify their decisions (Tooms, Lugg, and Bogotch, 2010).
In the case of an independent school governed by a church or religious entity, there has been a need for the principal to be a good fit for not only the culture and ethos of the school but also the related church body.

2.9. The Australian Perspective of Principals and School Success

Australian research has acknowledged that school success is something that the school does as well as what the student does (AITSL, 2011). Successful students are extensively engaged in their personal growth towards excellence within a supportive school culture. Schools that are successful have the capacity and capability to accept that students have different career pathways accompanied by different expectations, within a collaborative, equitable culture, irrespective of socio-economic backgrounds (AITSL, 2011). An examination by Teaching Australia (2007), into improving student performance in Australian schools, sheds light on the quality of schools, their teachers and the principals, and the importance of developing policies and processes to assist schools in achieving this success. Achieving school success involves a continual process of improving student results, especially in quantifiable test scores such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), which can then be applied as a benchmark against world’s best practice (Teaching Australia, 2007). Prasser and Tracey (2013) offered an alternate position by stating that using quantifiable measures, in Australia, such as NAPLAN, provided only one type of benchmark and one aspect of the school’s ultimate goal achieving successful student outcomes as a school. Davies (2007, 2010) argued that successful schools evaluate a range of data across all aspects of school life that informs continuous improvement measures.

In a study authorised by the Victorian Government (2005), principals remarked that school success was directly related to the school culture and improvement of student outcomes, through an ongoing process of inquiry. This process of inquiry enhances the capability of principals to respect and honour the diversity among students and view a
culturally inclusive educational environment as a benefit for teaching and learning, as well as enhancing achievement for all students (Lindsey, Roberts, and Campbell Jones, 2013; Smith, 2005; Terrell and Lindsey, 2008). In this way, knowledge is shared for the benefit of the community and the achievement of the school’s goals, vision and culture (Senge, 2006; Victorian Government, 2005). The vision created by the principal is based on the school’s culture and the principal communicates this vision to stakeholders by implementing strategic goals linked to the vision (Iselin, 2010). Principals achieve these goals by developing a process of combining a high level of consistency and unity with the school’s values and structures, while preserving the vision. The principal’s responsibility for the development of students is contextually bound in the belief that education has the potential to make a difference to the lives of individuals so that they can become strategic, competent and resourceful participants in a global setting (Barr, Gillard, Firth, Scrymgour, Welford, Lomax-Smith, and Constable; 2008).

Continued pursuit of school success and increased student achievement and motivation has increased the accountability of the principal’s role, which has been impacted by two major influences (Starr, 2009). First, the market-economy has received increased political prominence, galvanised by considerable reform over the past two decades. Prasser (2012) noted that the result of this reform has increased competition, enhanced parental choice and greater accountability on schools. The second influence, identified by Starr (2011), has been the need for diversification of program delivery to students, which has subsequently impacted on school governance and the school vision, greater regulation of schools’ curriculum and assessment requirements, professional standards for both teachers and leaders, and school performance comparisons based on student achievement, sometimes referred to as League Tables (Prasser, 2009; 2012). Starr (2011) and Prasser (2012, 2013) both acknowledged that the impetus, in Australia, for these performance comparisons, has been through government led initiatives such as the
Australian Curriculum, MySchool website and external assessments such as National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). They argued that whilst authority has been devolved to schools, especially in government schools, the effect on principals has been a significant increase in their responsibilities.

The Australian Education Act 2013, which gained assent on the 27 June 2013, has exacerbated this issue because of the related accountability requirements. For a principal of a large school, the role compares to that of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a large corporate business (Starr, 2009). This increased responsibility of a principal of an independent school meant that their role has been likened to that of a CEO, which has placed enormous pressure on the role that governing boards when defining the position description of the 21st century principal as part of the recruitment process of a principal in a 21st century school in Australia.

**The Australian principal’s role in the twenty-first century.** In Australia, the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2011) acknowledged that the school principal’s role in the twenty first century is to support students, staff and members of the community to constantly develop their learning communities by working in partnership with the school’s stakeholders in order to achieve the best possible learning outcomes for their students (AITSL, 2011). Achieving these student outcomes involved shaping a vision of academic success for all students, creating a climate that foster learning and a safe and supportive environment, foster a team-based leadership approach towards the school vision, continually improve teaching and learning through the management of staff, data and practices (AITSL, 2011). Other researchers also confirmed the importance of this collaboration due to increased expectations of schools, together with contemporary standards of learning, and changing education and assessment landscape (Dinham, Anderson, Caldwell, and Weldon, 2011). A school principal needs to have effective management and teaching skills, an understanding of 21st century leadership, business
management skills, an ability to create an environment which mentors, supports and inspires shared learning (AITSL, 2011). Principals need to encourage and support their staff in seeking new prospects for expanding their knowledge and experience and promote learning (Browning, 2014).

An Australian study into school leadership, “[I]nvestigation into how members of faith-based school management teams understand and practise educational leadership”, by Dr Michelle Striepe, used a multiple case study design. This study was conducted in three composite (K-12) faith-based schools; one Catholic school, an Islamic school and a Greek orthodox school all based in Western Australia. It focussed on how educational leadership is practised in faith-based schools. This investigation informed this study because it focussed on the qualities of leadership in faith-based schools. It did not include an examination of the principal succession and recruitment processes or the Christian school sector, which this study sought to address. Dr Striepe’s study and a number of others highlighted the need for further exploration into school governance and the succession and recruitment of principals (Bennett, Carpenter and Hill, 2011; Chapkan, 2005; Grace, 2009; Striepe, 2010). An increased trend in the shortage of principals has been noted in Australia.

The principal shortage in Australia. Australian research into principal recruitment has been scarce and mostly focussed on the shortage of principals and initiatives being taken to address this problem. An exception, however was a study undertaken in South Australia and Victoria by Barty, Thomson, Blackmore, and Sachs (2005). This study investigated the shortage of applicants for the role of the principal across all government school districts in both states. Whilst noting the difficulty in obtaining comprehensive data from the government school systems in each state, they found that interest in the role of principal remained relatively high but aspiring principals were more strategic in their applications, taking note of the school location, size of school, whether there was an ‘incumbent’ principal as well as the local educational politics, before deciding whether to
submit an application for the position. Another study conducted by Blackmore (2006) focussed on the principal selection process, finding that the process was unpredictable and dependent on the selection panels. The professional capability of panel members to know and understand the demands of the principal’s role was limited. The studies by Blackmore (2006) and Walker and Kwan (2010) highlighted the important connection between the capability of the recruitment process, determined from the applications and the shortlisting of candidates for interview to select the principal with the best fit for the respective school.

The Australian Council for Educational Research (2008) highlighted concerning trends that the principal shortage would be a continuing problem unless schools and governments implemented succession planning strategies, as an urgent priority. Supplementary research supports Watson’s study (Cranston, 2007; Dorman and d’Arbon, 2003; Lacey, 2002). In a study of Victorian schools, Watson (2007) examined trends, in response to the diminishing pool of principal applicants and to suggestions of a decline in potential applicant quality. Mulford (2008) stressed the never-ending nature of the principal’s tasks have been accompanied by the constant demands on their emotional intelligence, because the role requires empathy and sensitivity toward others in their community. Bennett and Carpenter (2011) also maintained that one of the critical issues facing the teaching profession, in Australia, is principal succession and recruitment. This crisis has been explained as the result of baby-boomer retirement trends, others retiring early due to positional demands or because of the shrinking pool of applicants for the role of principals in Australian schools (Cranston, 2007; McKenzie, Mulford, and Anderson, 2007; Thompson, 2010).

Successful principal recruitment has been exacerbated by a shortage of suitable applicants and rigorous recruitment processes (Watson, 2007). Previous studies into recruitment, across the government and independent sectors, highlighted poorly designed recruitment documents, inexperienced interview panels and hasty appointments because of
time constraints (Watson, 2007). Inaccurate knowledge about attracting, screening and identifying candidates of good quality to fit the roles and responsibilities of principals as well as a lack of relevant data has aggravated the issue of appointing principals who did not fit the culture and context of their schools (AHISA, 2009). While studies in recruitment have increased over the last 30 years, the results of these studies have accepted that there is insufficient evidence about recruitment activities, highlighting a need for more specialised approaches to the professional development of principals and school leaders.

There have been efforts to address the leadership shortage in Australian schools which has stimulated extensive research by governments and organisations. As a result, some programs and initiatives have been implemented to attract and retain leaders across state and independent sectors (Carlin, d’Arbon, Dorman and Neidhart, 2003; Lacey, 2002; Watson, 2007). One of the research priorities, identified in the literature, has been to formulate a model of school leadership essential for school improvement. This model is linked to the skills and knowledge required in a principal to implement the model (Cranston, 2007). This study sought to contribute to the relevant principal succession and recruitment data, because it has been a challenge in Australia.

**Principal succession and succession planning in Australia.** The research of Lingard (2010) and McKenzie, Mulford and Anderson (2007) have identified that Australian schools have had no unified national approach to principal succession, because of their diverse and cross-sectoral nature. Overall, they argued that this lack of a unified approach has meant Australian research into principal succession has been fragmented, and important policy reforms have been vague. Further, the examination of literature identified little evidence that Australian schools have included succession strategies as part of their strategic architectural planning. Fink and Brayman (2006) and Striepe (2010) concluded that there were incomplete and inconsistent observations on the practice of principal succession and further research was needed to direct future policy and practice.
However, the importance to principal succession of the alignment of the principal to the school’s ethos and culture is consistently acknowledged.

The research on the role of the principal in shaping and sustaining a positive ethos in schools, and its impact on school effectiveness is limited. Those studies that have been conducted highlight the importance of a positive ethos developed through the school leadership in schools, because it seems to be the glue that unites the rules, expectations, beliefs and values of schools (Fullan, 1994; Murphy, 2002). Within this cultural ethos, the principal provides leadership and management of the vision that established the school as a successful educational institution and encouraged a sense of pride and ownership of the school. Therefore, schools increasingly manage their succession planning processes to provide a steady pipeline of leaders to feed into the organisation ensuring that the principal is a good fit to the school’s established culture and ethos (Kwan, 2012). School principals have acted as change agents of the schools’ culture. They have facilitated this change by initiating experiences, rituals and practices in the school community (Iselin, 2010).

In Australia, since 2001, a number of processes have been implemented, within governments and independent organisations, to address the issue of principal succession. For example, Canavan (2001) developed a 12-phase process for Catholic schools to enable principal succession, which resulted in the development of the Catholic Schools Leadership Program as part of the Catholic Schools Leadership Framework (Catholic Education Office, 2008). Similar programs were initiated by other organisations (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005). Lutheran Education Queensland developed a Leadership Dimensions Framework. The framework’s capabilities were theological, personal, relational, professional, managerial and strategic within the interconnecting leadership dimensions of spiritual, authentic, educative, organisational and community of the daily life of the school. These initiatives confirmed that leadership succession and development
of principals and leaders has been recognised as a priority for schools and school systems (Dinham, 2005; Lutheran Education Australia, 2005).

A national project into principals’ succession planning was overseen by Principals Australia and completed in 2004. The achievement of this project resulted in the development of Leaders Lead, a resource which focused on the development of quality, sustainable school leadership (Hurley, 2008; Principals Australia, 2007). The establishment of AITSL in 2010 led to a national approach to programs that would encourage and support succession planning in schools. These initiatives have attempted to attract and develop potential principals, as part of the link between recruitment, development and retention of school principals and the schools’ strategic planning processes (AITSL, 2011; Thompson, 2010).

There has been significant progress in Australia, during the last decade, around the improvement in programs and specialised institutions to promote the professional development to improve the pool of aspiring principals (AITSL, 2011). In advancing this progress, the independent school sector has been supported by their state associations and other initiatives such as the cross-sectoral Queensland Educational Leadership Institute. In 2011 the Australian Professional Standards for School Principals was endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA). Several researchers noted that, while these standards are aspirational, they were developed as a means by which the educational profession can be defined and provides principals with a document that articulates common qualities and capabilities that express what is meant to be an effective principal in the 21st century (AITSL, 2011; Dinham, Ingvarson, and Kleinhenz, 2008; Ingvarson et al., 2006). These capabilities include the ability for the principal to drive the efforts to improve and transform schools, applying a corporate model used by the business sector (Caldwell, 2005, 2006). In independent schools, principal recruitment is the responsibility of governing boards.
School governance and the principal as it relates to this study. This study investigates three independent Christian schools and their recent principal succession and recruitment processes. Two of these schools are governed by churches so the research sought to shed light on the extent of any involvement by members of the sponsoring churches in the succession and recruitment process. Albinger (2005), Striepe (2010 and Weiss (2007) found that principals who lead schools in organisations such as those governed by hybrid organisations have been challenged when managing the tensions and power dynamics between the centralised authority, the church leadership and the best interests of the school for the common good. A principal of a hybrid organisation such as a church governed school is endowed with the responsibility of maintaining a balance between making changes that respond to tensions between the school structures, protecting its credibility and buffering the school’s core business to achieve successful student outcomes through effective teaching and learning in the classroom (Albinger, 2005; Weiss, 2007).

In a context of uncertainty and ambiguity when there is a struggle between the rhetoric of policy and the realities of practice, confusion about where the decision making lies and who is responsible for leading the school can occur (Ball, 2012). The result is a blurring or confusion as to where leadership and authority for decisions is situated in regards to the principal and their governing board. This confusion can impact teaching staff, especially when work relationships between principals and their teachers directly impact teacher satisfaction, cohesion and commitment levels (Nettles and Herrington, 2007; Price, 2012; Robinson, 2007; Ball, 2012; Hargreaves and Fink, 2012; Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, and Dutton, 2012). Trust in the leadership of the principal and governing board can also be hindered (Browning, 2014). The important message here is that principals need to be concerned with how the organisational settings impact on the educational programs in their schools, because of the importance of their role in relation to stakeholder legitimacy and school success (Fullan, 2011; Sergiovanni, 2012).
2.10. Conclusion

In undertaking a review of literature for the study reported in this thesis, 240 research documents, including government and organisation reports relating to the leadership of principals and their impact on teaching and learning, student outcomes and the shortage of principals were critically reviewed. The majority of the studies reviewed in the literature focussed on school leadership, the role of school leaders, their role in achieving successful school outcomes, or evaluating the performance of the school principal. Whilst there were Australian studies into principal succession by Canavan (2001), and Carlin, d’Arbon, Dorman and Neidhart (2003), these studies focussed on Catholic schools as part of a sector and focussed on the systemic qualities of principals in schools of the same denomination. The findings of these studies and government reports confirmed that school leadership matters, leadership of schools is an essential component to its success, and there was a need for further research into principal succession, recruitment and selection.

This study is unique in examining important interactions of the three processes of succession, recruitment and selection, when the governing board of a school appointed a principal. The review of literature has highlighted the lack of empirical research evidence into school governance, especially in Christian schools within the Independent school sector. This study sought to address this deficit and contribute to research into both these areas. Much of the case study research in literature review has identified effective school models and the qualities of good governance. The literature studies supported the decision by this researcher to use a case study approach to this study, because it would be a well-established way of obtaining rich and meaningful data, allowing the participant’s voice to be heard. The study undertaken in this research contributed to case study methodology.

This chapter began by exploring schools as legitimate organisations and the important role principals play in the preservation and perpetuation of the organisation’s core culture and school success. Literature relating to principal succession and succession
planning, as well as the critical role governing boards play in ensuring due and diligent process is implemented when recruiting a principal was also examined. The body of literature relating to the concept of “strategic architecture” was reviewed. Research about the key role of principals as pivotal to school success and their impact on the school’s strategic architecture was investigated. Challenges in relation to the principal shortage, nationally and internationally were explored. The Australian context relating to school governance, the role of the principal and school success, the principal shortage and the way in which these topics related to the study were appraised. My critical analysis of the literature affirms the critical importance to school success of the principal. In turn, it is critically important that research into recruitment and selection processes is carried out. The review of literature identified key factors that emerged from the literature; in particular, relationships, strategy, vision, culture and trust.

As a result of the review, the work of Brent Davies emerged as providing a helpful conceptual framework through which to examine the influences for the selection and recruitment of suitable school principals. This is because of the research over a decade by Davies and his team to investigate critical characteristics that schools need in leadership. According to Davies (2003, 2004) strategic leadership requires a governing board with a balance of strategic skills, a strategic direction and well-established processes to advance the strategy continuum.

Davies explained how the role of governing boards is based on their accountability as owner-representatives. Ideally, the boards work in partnership with the principal and senior leadership staff to implement high-level decisions aimed at achieving the school’s vision (Davies, 2010). When this explanation is combined with Davies’ comprehensive research around effective principals, the researcher chose his Strategic Architecture Model as a conceptual framework. This framework and its application to the recruitment and selection processes of principals, is explained in detail in chapter three.
Chapter Three: Methodology and Conceptual Framework

“Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 5).

In this chapter, the research design is outlined and the manner in which data was generated for analysis is explained. The chapter addresses the selection of participating schools, including an explanation of a range of ethical imperatives that relate specifically to this study. This study applied a qualitative approach, which has been defined by Shank (2002) as a procedure for conducting an organised realistic inquiry into meaning. It is argued that, where little is known in the literature about a given event or experience, the researcher is able to learn more from the actual participants in that experience (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative data includes participants’ thoughts, words and actions, which are deemed as appropriate because an issue needed to be explored. (Creswell, 2007). All researchers, regardless of which approach they select for their chosen inquiry, are termed truth-seekers steered by theoretical principles (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). These theoretical principles underpin all the processes used in answering the research question or solving the research problem (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003).

Qualitative researchers share the understanding that reality is socially constructed and often there is a close relationship between the researcher and the topic of investigation. People interacting in a social organisation develop, over time, mental images of each other’s actions which eventually create meaning within that organisation (Phelan and Kinsella, 2009). In this study knowledge gained from the collected data was developed by analysing the participants’ responses to their experiences of principal succession, recruitment and selection, and identifying themes. The experiences described by those who were required to be involved in the selection processes, were framed within the school communities in which the participants lived and worked.
This study was informed by a qualitative-interpretivist paradigm. Silverman (2010) identified four benefits of this paradigm to the wider community; first, it enables the study of what people are doing in their natural context; second, it provides research flexibility; third, it permits the researcher to investigate processes as well as outcomes; fourth, it allows the investigator to make sense of the implications as well as the causes of the participants’ views of their personal world through their lived experiences. These benefits are relevant to this study, because the research was conducted in the natural context of school organisational decision-making, examining the processes, outcomes and implications arising from principal succession, recruitment and selection within the respective sites. The study gathered data that provided access to the impressions, reflections and personal views of the participants regarding their recruitment processes. Understanding these themes was achieved through an appropriate conceptual framework.

3.1. Conceptual Framework

In simple terms, this research investigated the important event of appointing a new school principal. However, nothing in education is simple. The recruitment of a principal has been recognised as a very significant responsibility for the members of the governing board. Thus, to direct the research, the pivotal work by Davies and his colleagues on Strategic Architecture (2003) was utilised as a lens through which to investigate the recruitment and selection experience in each site, guided by the research question.

Research conducted by Brent Davies (2003) with the UK based National College of School Leadership (NCSL), into leadership development for school principals, senior and middle managers investigated the ways in which effective principals led the increasingly complex educational environments that now comprise schools. The aim of Davies’ research focused on developing a framework that could support educational leadership development. The data used by Davies consisted of interviews with school leaders on how they went about improving their existing management strategies while leading the school
towards continuous strategic improvement. In particular, the research produced detailed case studies of 554 leaders in primary (elementary), and 420 leaders in secondary (high) (2005). Analysis of these cases provided insights into their strategic processes, approaches and leadership. The focus was on the features of strategic principals, in terms of what they did and what characteristics they displayed in order to ensure a successful and sustainable school. Davies’ research investigating the abilities and attributes underpinning all that the principal does in achieving the optimum future for their school, resulted in the Strategic Architecture Model, providing a framework for principals to (re) examine and prioritise the educational goals and the values that underpin those goals, within five key areas.

This model identified the major areas and elements to be developed by schools for the effective long-term success of a school. The overarching consequence of the interaction of these elements was what Davies termed the school vision. Davies (2006; 2007) argued that the degree to which principals influenced students and the school community was intrinsically linked to the prioritisation of particular areas at significant points in time during the life-cycle of the school.

Such categorisation provided by Davies’ model provides the means to analyse the data in order to identify the priorities used and the reasons underpinning the choices made by the governing boards in selecting their new principals in each of the particular contexts. In this way, Davies’ model provides the conceptual framework to answer the research question and investigate the subsequent management themes. Using the model enabled the researcher to highlight specific areas and elements from the data collected from members of the governing boards, in their principal selection processes.

Davies’ model has the school vision as the central purpose and outcome of strong school leadership. The vision comprises five areas: culture and values, strategy, learning, resources and relationships. These areas provide the focus for where the principal should focus attention in the school to build capability and long-term sustainability in the school.
Each area includes *elements* that unpack the area further. While Davies did not define the terms ‘area’ and ‘element’, he did provide an analogy to help understand their role in the model, likening *areas* to the roots of a tree, as underground branches serving to anchor the tree and prevent it from falling over. The *elements* were likened to the “branches on which the leaves absorb sunlight and release oxygen” (Davies, 2003; p. 308). Similarly, the areas of Davies model identified the five parts of a school in which to anchor the vision. Like the leaves on the branches that required pruning and protection from damage, the elements identified where strategic initiatives were to be focused to review, refine and develop to ensure they continued to be productive in furthering the school’s vision. The model is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

![Strategic Architectural Model](image)

**Figure 1** Strategic Architectural Model (Davies, 2003, p.309)

In Figure 1, whilst each area is separate and distinct, having its own set of elements, they are interrelated as identified by the black arrows. The interrelationship is critical to the stability and sustainability of the ‘architecture’ underpinning each school. Achieving this stability is the responsibility of principals as they continually monitor, review and
develop these areas in order to achieve the school’s vision. The red arrows have directed each set of elements to the respective area to which they refer. When the five areas are strong and well structured, the school is at the optimum state for achieving its vision (Davies, 2003).

Vision. In this current era of globalisation, rapid change and unprecedented technology growth, achieving the vision of an organisation is dependent on its ability to adapt and develop new practices. Schneider’s (2002) research found that these practices influence various levels of the organisation and its management, through a set of structural and sociocultural processes. These sociocultural processes are influenced by the core values of an organisation. The values of an organisation are situated within its culture and enhance the credibility of the organisation by making an open proclamation about how it expects everyone in its community to behave, intentionally communicated to stakeholders (Iselin, 2010). According to Iselin (2010), these core values are inextricably linked to organisational effectiveness in schools, further enhancing the legitimacy of the organisation.

The vision of a school has been explained as defining what a school will look like in the future and then setting the direction and goals of the school, over the medium to longer term to achieve the desired result (Davies and Davies, 2010). The review of literature (Chapter Two) highlighted the work of Senge (2006), who argued the importance of building a shared vision of the desired future that unites the organisation’s members around a common identity and goal for the future is another characteristic. Whilst many schools have articulated their vision, if it has not been translated in action and the key objectives continuously reviewed and monitored, it is unlikely to succeed. A vital part of the school’s journey to achieve its vision has been acknowledged as the way in which the principal has communicated the vision so that stakeholders feel empowered to share the responsibility and accountability for its success. A school’s vision that aligns to its culture, moral purpose, values and beliefs has created meaning in the lives of stakeholders,
established a benchmark for excellence and linked the present state of the school to what it will look like in the future (Davies and Davies, 2010).

Vision encapsulates the areas and their elements in Davies’ model. The goals and actions developed for the long-term direction setting of the school are encompassed in these areas, which then filter into the preferred future state of the school. Developing a vision has been described as a process that involves iterative reflection, action, and communication with all stakeholders to ensure that it provides a framework for action steps towards improvement shared by staff, students, parents and the school community. Vision influences the five areas of Davies’ model, guiding principles for school leaders with strategic targets, which could then be converted into actions for change and improvement. In his research, Davies (2003, 2011) found that a key part of the principal’s role in leading school improvement was building capacity and capability in all five areas to achieve directional shift towards the best outcomes. These outcomes benefitted the school and its preferred future. Vision has been central to the establishment of a strong professional culture founded on shared values.

**Culture and values.** Davies’ explained this area as the core ideology and values of a school or college, which are inextricably linked to organisational effectiveness. The elements within this area are:

- Shared beliefs, the foundation stone on which the culture is built;
- Values and norms, those standards and rules that convey an acceptable code of conduct in the school;
- Assumptions, the traditions and expectations in a school that convey meaning to its members about behaviour and those aspects in the life of the school that are celebrated;
- Leadership style, the manner in which the principal’s leadership aligns with the school culture; and
• Management style, the daily operations of the school that align with the school’s culture and values.

Davies maintained that effective schools were built on a success culture incorporating the elements encompassed in this area, as an amalgamation of good ideas and best practice. Advancing any future direction, he argued, was influenced by its context and culture. Culture is composed of the assumptions and beliefs of the institution shared by members of the school community. The review of literature recognised Davies’ (2003) research in this field, who believed that it was impossible to advance the vision of the college unless the culture, mindset and behaviour of the school were changed. For example, if the school prioritised improving academic outcomes as part of its vision, then there would need to be a change in the teaching approach, educational philosophy and conduct of the staff and students to achieve this change.

According to Iselin (2010) the shared beliefs, assumptions and values and norms impact the leadership style and management style of a principal because they establish the context within which a principal can lead and manage the strategic plan. The literature review acknowledged research by Collins (2001), who argued the importance of strategically positioning people in the school to achieve optimum growth, development and success. The positioning of a strategic leader who is a good fit to the school is a critical part of achieving this success. The organisation’s culture provides all members of that organisation with accepted ways of expressing and affirming their responses to uncertainties that occur within.

**Strategy.** In his research, Davies argued that the area of strategy is defined as an explicit approach for decisions and actions to be taken to achieve an organisation’s goals (Davies, 2003; 2011). Strategy is described as the pursuit of competitive advantage that focuses on the actions and decisions that add greater value to the school’s success (Davies,
Strategy encompasses five elements, which are:

1. Core purposes, those underlying principles for the establishment of the school. They explain why one school differs from another in the way they focus on enabling effective teaching and learning;

2. Futures perspective, an approach by principals to adopt a view of teaching and learning that reflects the way in which the school is structured so that resources are deployed to meet the learning needs of students;

3. Strategic intents, the capacity for a principal to articulate the school vision;

4. Strategic plans, the formulated long-term plan, using strategies and accumulated data, for understanding and approaching unpredictable changing contexts and shifts, in a controlled, safe manner; and

5. Criteria for success, those benchmarks that flow from the strategic planning that will assist schools in assessing their school outcomes and their educational effectiveness.

In an independent school, governing boards influence these elements, especially the futures perspective, strategic intents and criteria for success, because they set the vision of the school and how this vision will be achieved and evaluated (Carver, 2001). The literature review noted that governing boards evaluate the effectiveness of the principal to successfully advance the organisational vision by applying the criteria for success they determined would successfully achieve this vision (Schleicher, 2012). Principals applied these elements to develop strategic processes that schools may consider using one approach, such as strategic intent, at one time and at another time applying the development of strategic planning. Knowing which approach to use as the school develops is accepted as a critical part of the strategic principal’s role, especially if the school has experienced a period of significant change in leadership or other factors such as a
substantial reduction in student enrolments due to economic influences. As learning organisations, effective principals have made a difference in improving learning, so Davies’ model has included the area of learning.

Learning. Davies’ (2006) argued that sustainable long-term development required direction and guidance by the principal. The leadership of the principal is embedded in a culture dedicated to achieving educational success of all students. Effective principals influenced the teaching and learning in the school by establishing the climate to promote reform and improvements in teaching and learning through direction setting, professional development, performance management and focussing on the key organisational priorities. A key aspect of the positive classroom climate for successful learning engagement is establishing a positive learning environment and ensuring constructive and timely feedback is provided to students. To guide the principal, the four elements in the area of learning, outlined by Davies (2003), are:

1. The conceptual framework of learning, the features and content of the teaching and learning in the school;
2. Curriculum design, the aims, learning outcomes, syllabus, learning and teaching methods and assessment that enabled students to be active, engaged and successful learners;
3. Curriculum delivery system, the approach to the teaching and learning by the teachers that will enable students to be successful learners;
4. Curriculum monitoring and evaluation, the mechanisms that allow the school to examine and evaluate students’ progress and therefore the effectiveness of student outcomes in the school.

Effective principals ensured that targeted resources were provided to support the delivery of successful student outcomes.
Resources. Davies’ (2003) research in developing the model found that the resources of a school incorporate the skills and abilities of the staff and members of the community, as well as the financial and physical resources that support the strategic intent of the school. An important part of the strategic development of the school’s vision is dependent on the appropriate quality and skill level of human financial or physical resources, delivering capacity and capability (Davies, Davies and Ellison, 2005).

Successful school leadership by principals have ensured there is intentional and target resourcing to build capacity for assessing the performance of students and teachers, and then use the data from these assessments to inform decisions and improvement strategies for the long term (Davies, 2006). It is not surprising then that Davies’ model included the area of resources, with elements consisting of:

- Core competences, the skills and aptitudes of its staff to deliver the best teaching and learning environment to its students;
- Human resources, the recruitment of staff with expertise in skills and knowledge where needed to advance the vision;
- Finance, the acquisition and distribution of finances for the effective delivery and execution the school’s short and long-term goals;
- Physical facilities, aligning the selection and allocation of relevant resources to prioritise teaching to accommodate the changing learning needs of students; and
- Materials, the procurement of educational supplies to support the educational programs in the school.

Successful principals work to ensure that their decisions enhance the recruitment and retention of highly effective teachers and their budgets, through positive interpersonal relationship that enhanced the school climate (Andreas, 2015).

Relationships. Davies’ (2011) research found that the principal’s role was relational and relationships only developed when staff and members of the school community,
including governing boards, come into contact with each other and engage in strategic and collaborative conversations. These conversations were, ideally, built on stable and strong relationships amongst members of the community, founded on an understanding of the culture and values on which the college was established. (The interrelationships with other areas in the model are obvious here). Relationships between the principal, staff and the school learning culture had important implications about learning goals and excellence in teaching, as well as building partnerships with other organisations (Davies, 2006). Davies’ area of relationships comprised the elements of:

- Stakeholder relationships, relationships with parents, students and sponsors as productive partnerships;
- Staff relationships, relationships with staff that will fulfil and promote the school community and its vision;
- Decision-making processes, methods of making decisions that are effective and will progress the development of short and long-term goals;
- Organisational structure, effective systems that provide useful guidance and clarity on specific human resource issues such as executive abilities and skills; and
- Networks and alliances, establishing networks and relationships with leaders outside their schools and organisations as these enable them to share ideas, resources and provide professional development.

Stable and strong relationships establish an atmosphere for learning that influences school effectiveness and its organisational culture and structure (Davies, 2006; 2010). It was evident in Davies’ research that principals look for networks and alliances, such as business and technology, assist in achieving significant improvement in teaching and learning and support educational change.

These areas and elements enabled me to examine the data to identify the influences on the schools’ governing boards’ thinking behind their succession planning and
recruitment for principals in their schools. To help structure the findings, three themes contributing to the overarching question were used for the study. These themes emerged from the literature that made explicit the central importance of achieving the school’s vision to successful leadership.

The themes are: (i) the extent that succession planning is linked to a comprehensive organisational vision, (ii) the relationship between the selection process of the principal and the organisational vision, and (iii) the alignment between the recruitment process and the organisational vision.

**Application of Davies’ model in this study.** Framed within the vision, the five areas and elements in Davies’ model (for the purposes of this thesis, referred to as ‘the model’ from this point) have been used in the design of this study in two ways. First, the model was used to frame the interview questions and second, it was used to analyse the documents. Together with the literature review, the model informed the development of the interview questions. Further the data collected including the documents were analysed using these components. This is explained later in this chapter. The model has been used in the design of this study to determine the influences on the governing bodies’ recruitment processes in achieving the schools’ long-term goals. Understanding themes within the participants’ responses was achieved through an appropriate method of inquiry using a research design.

### 3.2. Research Design

The aim of this study was to identify the ‘how’ of recruiting principals by governing boards in three (3) Christian schools. A qualitative paradigm of inquiry was chosen to understand the personal world of human experience. One of the focus areas was to gain insights into the participants’ understandings and lived experiences of their involvement in selecting future school principals, within three themes of succession planning, selection and recruitment. A second key focus was to identify the meanings that the participants gave to their actions and decisions. The study is guided by the following research question:
“How do schools’ governing boards conduct succession planning and recruitment for principals in their schools?” This specific study applied a case study design.

**Using case study.** The qualitative interpretivist design of this study included case studies involving three Christian schools. According to research sources by Yin (1995), a case study is referred to as empirical inquiry, an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed, in which the research is focused on contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. The case study has been identified for researching the ‘how’ or ‘why’ of a phenomenon. Case studies can be exploratory, explanatory: useful for conducting causal explanations; descriptive: useful when a descriptive theory is developed prior to the starting the project; intrinsic: when the researcher has an interest in the case; instrumental: when the case is useful for understanding more than what has been obvious to the observer; or collective: when a group of cases is studied (Stake, 1995).

Stake (1978) argues that the benefit of using case studies, in the study of human affairs it because they are in accord with the participant’s experience and therefore, a natural basis for generalization. Further, Stake (1978) proposes that case studies are an effective way of contributing to understanding the natural experiences acquired in the daily lives of people through their words, experiences and illustrations. Case studies have been described as constructions that employed narrative conventions to explore issues the researcher has struggled with, whilst challenging and assisting the researcher in understanding a problem or issue in a new way (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). The case study extends or adds strength to what was already known, to understand a difficult issue, event or situation. Although case studies can have different purposes, they were intended to use different sources of data to bring out the facts from the viewpoint of the participants. The final analysis in case study method should show that it relied on all the relevant evidence; the most significant issues or questions of the study are addressed, and prior expert knowledge is conveyed in the study. In this research, a case study approach was applied because my investigation
was intentional and specific in identifying how the governing boards of the three identified schools had undergone their principal recruitment journeys. The nature of case study reinforced my approach to the data I collected and analysed – that is, conversations held through semi structured interviews, recruiting documents, policies and procedures relevant to the principal recruitment processes.

This study was a collection of three case studies. The common link in each case was a Christian independent school. The goal for the study was to identify, in each case, the particular influences on the decisions made by the members of each specific school community who were involved in the principal succession and recruitment process. While the study consisted of a small sample of Christian independent schools, as a qualitative study the aim was to present rich case studies which emerged from rigorous analysis of the data. In this way, a credible and reliable representation of the specific influences on selection in each case context was provided to respond to the research question. The settings for this study are outlined below.

The settings. There are 31 independent schools listed with the organisation where the researcher works. These schools are independent because they are accountable at the level of the individual school, have an autonomous governing body, are in receipt of government funding and are incorporated non-profit organisations. Table 1 below is provided to show statistical data on these member schools:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Members</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Enrolment Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>563 – 1663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Darling Downs</td>
<td>624 – 668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gold Coast</td>
<td>1477 - 1607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sunshine Coast</td>
<td>230 – 1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wide Bay</td>
<td>390 – 393</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Members</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Enrolment Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Brisbane / Wide Bay Region</td>
<td>104 – 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Central Qld</td>
<td>74 – 737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>North Queensland</td>
<td>135 – 820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Remote</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this list, three schools were chosen from a range of geographic, demographic and enrolment types. These schools were selected because of their recent experience in principal recruitment and their willingness to participate in the study. The three schools were geographically diverse, and across the settings student enrolments ranging from low to high socio-economic status of parents were represented. Their governance structures also differed in that one school was owned by a company, the second school was one of multiple schools governed by a national church denomination and the third school was governed by a single church from a different denomination to the second school.

To gain access to each of the three schools, a telephone call was first made to the board chairs and principals of each school that agreed to participate in the research. The reason for this telephone call was to discuss the purpose of the research, the school’s involvement, the time commitment of participants, and to respond to any questions they had in relation to the study and its potential impact on the school. The response from the board chairs and principals of all three schools was very positive and supportive of their school’s contribution to the study. Letters providing information about the research were then sent to the board chairs of each of the three identified schools (Appendix A). A form requesting permission for the schools to be involved was also sent to the board chairs of each school, after the phone calls had been completed and the letter of information about the research (Appendix B). When these signed permissions were received by the researcher, a follow-up email and phone call was made to each board chair and principal of the three schools to discuss any further concerns or questions about the research and to make arrangements and negotiate a time schedule for visiting the schools to undertake the data collection.
Participants. Participants from each of the three selected schools were nominated by the board chairs of the respective schools, based on their ability, experience in the topic, and willingness to contribute their expertise to this research. The researcher was not involved in the participant selection process. Polkinghorne (2005) argued that participants should be selected because of their ability to make a significant contribution to the research topic. Contributors were selected from the identified schools because they had been involved in the principal recruitment process within the five years prior to the initiation of this study. Their participation was dependent on their consent for involvement, and where applicable permission having been granted by their employers. When the researcher received the information about the participants, their consent was gained by sending a letter of information about the research (Appendix B) together with a statement of consent to be signed by each participant (Appendix E). Contributors were also sent a copy of the Interview questions (Appendix D) and the Focus Groups guidelines (Appendix C). Confirmation that the participants had received these documents was provided by the principals’ secretaries. The schedule for interviews and focus group discussions was also arranged by the principal’s secretary of each school. In the data analysis chapters, the plural possessive pronoun “their” has been used to ensure the anonymity of individual participants.

Data collection. The purpose of data collection in this study was to gather evidence in the form of explanations and interpretations that participants gave of their experiences in principal recruitment in their respective schools. The researcher then analysed the evidence to give a fundamental description of the experience, which was used as the basis on which the findings are compiled. In this study, data was collected through document analysis, 12 interviews and three focus group discussions. One of the methods of collecting data was through analysing documents that may be relevant to the research question.
**Document analysis.** Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or valuating documents in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop knowledge about the topic being investigated (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Document analysis has been a useful data tool for examining any incidence of patterns and themes of importance to the school, especially its culture and history as evident within documents relevant to the research question. Documents are produced in particular circumstances for particular audiences. In the case of principal selection and recruitment, texts have been produced for the governing board, advertising medium, the potential applicants, or the school community, depending on the purpose of the text and the particular audience. The purpose of document analysis in this study was to examine the format of the document, and the written or symbolic material to illuminate and discover features that may otherwise go unnoticed, as well as the relationship between the texts in the document and how accurately they represented the school, endeavouring to legitimately account for the event or situation. Analysing these documents also provided valuable insights into the historical and cultural aspects of the situation or event, showing how the components were defined or layered within the relevant community of practice and what was meaningful in the lives of the participants. It also reflected the knowledge and meaning of the participant’s experience and understanding in the principal recruitment process. Table 2 over the page provides a summary of these documents.
Table 2

Summary of the Case Study Documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lewis College</td>
<td>Information Booklet for applicants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradley College</td>
<td>Governance Policy and Procedures Manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job Advertisement for Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal Duty Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher College</td>
<td>Advertisement for new Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key Policies for new Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roles and Responsibilities of the Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Application Form for the Principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary list of Applications sent and shortlisted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These were the only materials available to the researcher. Their importance to this study is because they were developed by the three schools for the specific purpose of the principal succession and recruitment journeys that were investigated.

**Interviews.** The interview provided the researcher with the face to face opportunity to explore and illuminate with participants their responses to the questions, which were the first six questions listed on Appendix D of this thesis. Interviews are known as tools that researchers use to speak with and question the participants on a personal level. One of the best strategies to find out about people’s understandings and views is to ask them, thus gaining entry into the school’s educational world and its activities. Trochim (2006) argued that interviews are the simplest way of gaining access to a participant’s experience on a personal level. The reader is reminded, that in this study, the interviews were of two types: 12 individual interviews and three focus groups: all conducted face-to-face, audiotaped and then transcribed. The researcher was able to gain information about the participant’s knowledge and beliefs and motivations around recruitment using language as the medium for expressing or exchanging views and ideas. It was also a process of constructing the connections and relationships between the participant and the event. This process further
enabled the researcher to collect significant details on the beliefs, values and interest of the participants that could otherwise have been too vague. According to interview research literature, the foremost advantage to interviews was their adaptability as the process empowered people to become experts in their own lives (Gall, Gall, and Borg, 2003, Trochim, 2006).

The interview planning considerations in this study are outlined below.

1. The interview schedule was dependent on travel times, cost and the participant’s flexibility in accommodating interview times.
2. The researcher had to vary the timetable for site visits and interviews due to changes in school routines such as assessments and special events.
3. The responses to the interview questions and topic were influenced by a variety of factors outside the researcher’s control, which included:
   • Personal events in the life of the participant;
   • The time of day of the interview; and
   • The amount of prior interest the participant had in the topic.

The researcher was aware of the restrictions and planned accordingly, communicating regularly with the selected school and participants to minimise these limitations. Data was also collected through focus groups.

Focus groups. Focus groups are, according to research investigations, one of several tools that researchers use to validate information from participants as they influence each other through their responses to ideas and comments in the discussion (Krueger, 1988). Focus group interviews have become increasingly common in education and psychology to elicit greater in-depth understanding of perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences form multiple points of view (Silverman, 2010). Research studies have defined focus groups as consisting of a heterogeneous group of people, who have different viewpoints, coming together for a carefully planned discussion to clarify their perspective on defined areas of
interest. Group interviews are not simply about number of participants being interviewed at the one time by the researcher. Rather, it is the interaction between the participants that is the important part (Silverman, 2010). Data analysis of the documents, individual interviews and focus group interviews sought to gain insight on the specific nature of the principal succession and recruitment process in each of the three schools.

The questions used for the focus groups were Questions 7 and 8, listed in Appendix D of this thesis.

**Data analysis.** Data analysis has been described, in research studies, as a way in which the researcher stretched out meaning from the collected data by searching for patterns, by comparing segments of text to the research questions (Peters and Wester, 2007). These patterns and relationships that emerged from the data were often iterative and simultaneous. The analysis followed five steps suggested in Creswell’s research (2012). These steps are listed below.

1. The researcher collected the data: audiotaped interviews and official documents.
2. The researcher prepared the data for analysis. For example, with respect to interviews, the researcher listened to the interviews several times, and transcribed them, as soon as possible after downloading from the recording device, so that the concepts and themes were subject to detailed study and developed.
3. The researcher read and listened to the data, to gain an understanding of the overall meaning contained within.
4. The researcher coded the data.
5. The text was analysed to illuminate themes and patterns using the model.

Interpretation and analysis has been a search for understanding by looking for patterns and relationships that emerge from the data. Creswell, 2012; p. 213
These steps provided the researcher with researched and credible process to analyse
the collected data in this study. As this process unfolded, the researcher was able to
construct meaning from the collected data as to the reasons for particular steps undertaken
by each school during the succession, recruitment and selection process.

Individual interviews and focus group discussions were held with the selected
participants of each case site, because of their involvement in the principal succession and
recruitment process at their schools. Five participants participated in the Lewis College
focus group, four participants contributed to the focus group discussion in the Bradley
College case study and four participants were involved in the focus group discussion in the
Fisher College case study. Focus groups provided an opportunity for the researcher to
observe the cultural descriptions that were common among the participants. The semi-
structured interview and focus group questions used in this study are listed in Appendix D.
Of the eight questions, questions seven and eight were reserved for the focus group
discussions. The first six questions were used to initiate discussions and responses during
the individual interviews with participants. The reason for this was due to time limits,
allocated by the respective school, with each of the individual participants. The 12
interviews and 3 focus group discussions were recorded and the data was then transcribed.
As part of the analysis process, participants were referred to by pseudonym. Transcripts
were coded as outlined in Table 3 below.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding System used for Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This coding system was useful in gaining an understanding of the overall meaning of
the data collected the role of the relevant participant in the succession and recruitment
process, and the logical chain of evidence across the data as a basis for the conclusions of each site, beginning with participant interviews.

In using Davies’ strategic architecture model to analyse the data, the researcher identified both the qualities and attributes of the new principals who were recruited in the three case studies, and to investigate in these case schools, the impact of the governing boards – or specific members thereof – on the organisational vision of the three selected school sites, for which the recruited principal would be responsible to achieve. The process through which the data was analysed is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2  Data Analysis Method in Relation to Succession and Recruitment Process

**Considerations in collecting the data for this study.** As in all qualitative research, this study had limitations, including: the interview responses may have been influenced by the participants’ knowledge of the researcher. As a researcher known to the schools because of my professional role as executive officer of the over-arching organisation of
which they are members, I am aware of possible researcher influences. However, this in the main was a positive effect. This role enabled me to be sensitive to the dynamics of the respective school sites and selected participants, which gave me a better understanding of the school’s culture. As a frequent visitor to each of the three schools because of my role in the organisation, I was able to interact naturally with the participants and develop trust due to the positive relationship I had established with the leadership of the school and the participants. In addition, I was able to identify the dynamics that existed within each of the three school sites. I addressed these considerations through the processes outlined below to enhance the validity and credibility of the data.

3.3. Validity

Research studies confirmed that the establishment of validity involved processes to ensure the results were truthful and researcher bias was minimised (Yin, 2009). The researcher made attempts to be aware of personal biases during the review of the interview transcript by establishing and understanding of the participants’ points of view, without imposing a personal framework or meaning during the data analysis. To avoid any bias, participants were not selected by the researcher; they were selected by the respective case study site, according to whether they had been involved in the school’s most recent principal succession and recruitment process. In addition, findings from this study were reported according to the data. The researcher clarified that participants were willing to be interviewed, and they signed a statement to that effect. Finally, the research study satisfied defined evidence standards, as noted in research by Freeman, deMarrais, Preissle, Roulston, and St. Pierre (2007). These standards included a deep involvement and close connection to the scene, establishing enough distance from the phenomenon to permit recording action and interpretations relatively free of the researcher’s own sake, ensuring claims were based on a satisfactory selection of the total body of data, and that there was a consideration of inferences and interpretation of the data as well as the tangible facts.
Validity and credibility of the findings in this study were strengthened through the application of triangulation and member checking to the collected data.

**Triangulation.** Triangulation is described as a series of protocols employed by the researcher to ensure accurate and alternative explanations, in order to ethically confirm the validity of the processes used (Silverman, 2012). The triangulation process involved capturing multiple perspectives from the participants using different methods. This data was then brought together, and compared to judge the quality, consistency and credibility, to identify any inconsistencies in the data, and to strengthen the findings of the research. In this study, multiple sources of evidence were collected such as relevant documents, interviews and focus group discussion.

**Member checking.** Member checking of the data enabled the perspectives of the participants to be considered and was also a way of checking accuracy. In addition, once the recordings of the interviews and focus groups were transcribed, these transcripts were sent to the participants to clarify if they agreed with the contents. This was undertaken by participants being given transcripts from the accounts they contributed during the interviews and focus group discussion and asked to verify their accuracy. No participants requested any change to the transcriptions. This process was conducted to overcome any miscommunication between the participants and researcher that may have occurred during the data collection. Ethical issues were also important in this research and are discussed below.

### 3.4. Ethical Issues

With this research design, there were important ethical issues that required consideration. This researcher was granted Ethics approval by the Griffith University’s Ethics committee (http://www.griffith.edu.au/or/ethics/humans/), prior to the commencement of this research project. Informed consent was sought from participants. Informed consent was a written agreement that included statements about the voluntary nature of participation, anonymity and confidentiality as well as the use of coding during the research process.
Participants were informed that the interviews would be digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. After the interview, the researcher outlined the member checking process to each participant so that they could review and check the contents of their interview transcription.

Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants was the responsibility of the researcher. Confidentiality about the three case sites was managed by giving each school a pseudonym. Confidentiality was secured during the interviews by conducting the interview in a room located away from the main part of the school. During the interview, no one else was in the room except for the participant and the researcher. The recorded data was de-identified via codes, numbers or aliases in the place of names. Information about the qualifications, experience and work background of participants assisted in establishing data validity. No other participant information was collected or used. Because of the risk that a voice may be identified by reading or hearing the recorded information, all data was digitally stored then removed once the research was completed. In any study involving human participants care must be taken to protect their welfare, as outlined in the Griffith University Research Ethics Manual. All participants in the study were volunteers who were able to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty; other than they may have felt required to participate due to the nature of our working relationship. I minimised any risk to them by ensuring they were treated with respect regarding their welfare, rights, and beliefs, and their dignity and welfare took precedence over the anticipated benefits of the study. Procedures for ethical consideration during the proposed research complied with Griffith University’s Research ethics committee (http://www.griffith.edu.au/or/ethics/humans/), the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, as well as permission from the participants, and schools. Once completed, the research was disseminated to the relevant stakeholders, ensuring the study established validity and credibility.
3.5. Limitations of the Study

The three schools used for this study presented the following limitations:

1. This study was small in size, using only three schools and focussed on Christian schools. The findings cannot be generalised across schools in other sectors such as government schools although the findings do present insights that prove valuable for other schools when undertaking principal succession planning, selection and recruitment. These perceptions particularly relate to the qualities of principals to lead school reform and improvement, cultivate the school vision, and analyse student data to support instructional practices to improve student outcomes.

2. It is noted that Davies’ strategic architecture model, used as the conceptual framework for this study, was designed for employed principals to use in determining the well-developed and less-developed areas in their schools, and where strategic development is needed. While it was not designed to inform principal succession and recruitment, the need for further research to develop a suitable instrument to support principal succession and recruitment is informed by this application in this research.

3. The interview schedule was dependent on travel times and cost in relation to the researcher’s work commitments, as well as the participants’ flexibility in accommodating interview times. The researcher had to vary the timetable for site visits and interviews because of changes in school routines with assessments and special events, allowing flexibility to make tactical judgements during the conduct of the research.

4. Responses to the interview questions and topic may have been influenced by a variety of factors outside the researcher’s control, which include:
   - Personal events in the life of the participant;
The time of day of the interview; and

The amount of prior interest the participant may have in the topic.

5. The researcher was well-known to the participants, which implies the potential for bias to emerge in the findings. This consideration was minimised by adopting strategies including methodological triangulations using data gathered from two major sources- documents and interviews. The interviews were of two types: individual and focus group: all conducted face-to-face, audiotaped and then transcribed. As indicated above, the researcher conducted member checking of interview transcripts.

3.6. Conclusion

Any research problem is addressed through some understanding of reality. The method for addressing the research emerged from that understanding. In this chapter a rationale for the method of inquiry was outlined, based on an understanding of people and their lived experiences in the principals’ succession and recruitment process and the meaning that they gave to their actions in those experiences. An outline of the methodological structure of the study was presented, based on a case study design using a qualitative data gathering and analysis procedures. Strengths and weaknesses of using a case study design was discussed, how the three schools and their participants were selected and the manner in which the research ethics was applied. Data collection methods were outlined as well as the process used to undertake the data analysis. Davies’ Strategic Architecture Model and the reasons why it was selected as the conceptual framework for this study were outlined and discussed. Limitations were outlined in relation to conducting this study, as well as the manner in which the researcher established credibility and reliability while undertaking the study. Of particular value for this study is the possibility in this research to uncover and analyse policies and processes that may be considered best practice for conducting principal succession and recruitment in schools.
Chapters four, five and six report the data analysis and the main findings of each of the three sites related to their succession and recruitment processes. These sites were Lewis College, Bradley College and Fisher College. Short biographical vignettes of each participant were presented; the characteristics of the college’s founding, growth and development; its denominational links and site-specific school governance structures were provided as they delivered insight into the process that the schools used to recruit their next principal. The next chapter of this thesis presented the succession and recruitment process in the first case study, Lewis College.
Chapter Four: Case Study One: The Lewis College Story

“The spiritual headship is just absolutely critical” (LC_FG_BM2_line_547).

4.1. The Site

Lewis College (pseudonym) was established in 1985 as a secondary college with students in Years 8 and 9, with higher years added in subsequent years. A primary college was then opened in 1989 with just over 150 students. In the early years of the college’s development students were accommodated in demountable buildings, but an expansive construction program replaced the temporary buildings with permanent ones by 1995. The college is located in a densely-populated region of south-east Queensland, with a high socio-economic population. The college established an affiliate on-campus kindergarten, multi-denominational in character. At the time of this study Lewis College was a large P-12 independent college not connected to any church.

This college was founded on its Christian vision, purpose and mission. Under its vision “To know, to serve” (LC_DA_p. 1) the incumbent principal had permeated both parts of this vision into the college to develop the spiritual, academic and co-curricular activities of the college to the best standard possible, with results that were successful and credible: “well over 80% of our students opt for a Year 12 course that leads to university entrance, with most of them achieving that goal” (LC_DA_p. 13_lines-5-8). The two parts of the college vision were articulated in the school community through symbols and programs. First, To know was interpreted to members of the college community, by the incumbent principal, as knowledge of learning and achieving academic and co-curricular success. Second, the first part of the College vision was expressed, by him, as knowing and understanding the Biblical foundations of the college and what it meant to be a Christian. In addition, the faith based foundation of the college was symbolised by the placement of the Bible in the centre of the college logo. The second part of the vision, To serve was based on the statement of faith, reflecting its Christian foundations and the servant
leadership style modelled in the college by the incumbent principal. As discussed in chapter two, servant leadership style can be described as one who involved others in decision-making and was concerned with helping others to grow as people, allowing them to become self-managing and enabling their autonomy. Strengthened by the relationships developed with those in the community, principals who are described as servant leaders help and care for the members of their organisation (Spears, 2010; Striepe, 2014). In addition, their leadership style is embodied by a set of practices that improves the lives of others, built better organisations and created an equitable world (Greenleaf and Spears, 2002). The second aspect of the Lewis College vision, To serve was linked to the community service programs and activities, established under the leadership of the incumbent principal, in the local community and western Queensland.

The college was founded as a fully owned and operated public company limited by guarantee under the Corporations Act 2001 (Commonwealth). The company established a broad Christian membership base, actively involved in their own local churches. Members of the company are drawn from the college community, mostly current or past parents. These members appointed a board of eight directors from the company membership to administer the governance of the company and the college. In addition to their legal duties, the board was responsible for employing the principal and members of the college executive team. One board member (BM1) confirmed 75% of members had served between eight and thirteen years’ tenure on the Lewis College board, whilst the remainder were serving their first term of office.

The catalyst for this study’s succession and recruitment journey occurred when the incumbent principal gave the governing board three year’s notice prior to his intended retirement date. This advance notice meant that the governing board had a lengthy planning time to prepare for this important task. Because the incumbent principal had led
the college for eighteen years, a recruitment process had not been experienced by the
governing body for nearly two decades.

In this case study, participants were drawn from this governing board. Four of the
eight governing board members and the incumbent principal comprised the case study
participants. Further details about these participants are detailed in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Lewis College: Background Profiles of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position and Code</th>
<th>Background Profiles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal (P)</td>
<td>The principal has been the incumbent principal for eighteen years; was a long standing and successful leader at Lewis College, evidenced by the growth and development in the college enrolments, student assessment results, financial status and building development in the college, as per the MySchool website (<a href="http://www.mycollege.edu.au/">http://www.mycollege.edu.au/</a>). The principal had developed the college from a small college of approximately 200 students to a college in excess of 1000 students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board chair (BC)</td>
<td>The incumbent board chair had been a qualified health care professional, currently working as a chaplain in an independent faith-based college, outside of Brisbane; chair of the college board for more than five years and a past parent of the college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board member (BM1)</td>
<td>Board member 1 was a long-standing board member who was secretary to the selection committee. Within this role, all correspondence with candidates in terms of receiving requests for application packs, sending them out, receiving applications, was handled by this member who worked in a non-educational setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board member (BM2)</td>
<td>Board member 2 had been a board member for more than four years, fulfils the role of vice chair and a past parent of the college. This board member worked for a non-profit Christian organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board member (BM3)</td>
<td>Board member 3 was a board member for more than four years and worked for a Christian tertiary educational institution; a past parent of the college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board member (BM4)</td>
<td>Board member 4 was the newest member of the board and was a past student and parent of the college who worked in the finance sector.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of these participating board members, the fourth board member was valued in the principal recruitment process by the remaining board members. As a past student and parent of the college the other board members considered this member “brought the voice of the community” (LC_FG_line_749) to the conversations about finding the most suitable candidate as the next college principal. These participants suitably met the criteria protocol for inclusion and were selected because of their roles in relation to the planning and recruitment of the college.

The principal and seven members of the executive team managed the employment of staff as well as the daily operations of the company and the college. Part of the responsibility of this management meant that the executive team supervised the teaching staff’s teaching allocations as well as their working conditions. The college operated a parents’ association and an alumni association as a subset of the governing board. The principal was an appointed member of these associations, by default, and reported on their activities to the governing board of the college, during regular board meetings. On all matters the principal was required to report to and was responsible to the governing board for the effective operation and administration of the college.

Governing board members of Lewis College embarked on the succession and recruitment process with an intentional focus, hoping to improve chances of a successful outcome. There were three reasons for this concentration on the journey for finding their next principal. First, while not the first principal, the retiring principal was the longest serving to date, so there were no board members who had experience in the process of succession. Second, the college had achieved considerable success academically and in the sporting and performing arts subjects. They had achieved high academic results in the Year 12 that were comparable to the top tier of Queensland schools, as well as record championships in major team sports and accomplishments in performing arts through its dance school and musical eisteddfods. Third, the board members believed that, although
they had not undergone a principal recruitment process in eighteen years, they had established credibility as the visionary leaders and gatekeepers of the college. The well-established reputation of the governing board and retiring principal was a key consideration for board members as the succession and recruitment process began, so they were “really serious about this appointment and we were not going to leave any stone unturned in the process” (LC_FG_BM2_lines_151-153). The review of literature (chapter two) highlighted the research supporting the importance of the way in which board members conducted themselves, because it sent a strong signal to the school community about the behaviour that was expected of everyone at the school in supporting the development of the vision to the best of their abilities (Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia, 2009; Carver, 2001). In the case of Lewis College, the members of the governing board were very conscious of the potential impact on staff and other stakeholders, if the recruitment process resulted in an unsuitable appointment:

I think we all carried that responsibility um fairly heavily. That it wasn’t just us making a decision in this room, we were making a decision for all of those people out there whose careers and lives would be changed by this if it was done badly (LC_FG_lines_760 – 763).

Dirks and Ferrin (2002) argued that school leaders enhanced the strong foundation of the college community by motivating staff, students and parents to believe and support its vision.

4.2. Succession Planning and Recruitment

Using Davies’ model (2003), outlined in chapter three, as an analytical conceptual framework, the researcher investigated qualities and skills sought by the governing board in their next principal. The college vision, together with the goal for student graduates informed these qualities: “a compassionate human being, unafraid to be competent and willing to navigate life using their moral compass to make wise choices; a strategic participant in a global setting, a person of faith and integrity, aware of an eternal destiny”
Recruiting a new principal with the skill and aptitude to build on the established success of the college and embark on new goals within the vision was a priority. These new goals included “doing something better to care for students with special needs” while ensuring the core ideology in the college was sustained within the broad vision of the college. As they began the succession and recruitment journey the first step was to prepare the selection committee.

**Preparing the selection committee.** The significance of a successful principal succession plan to the future of the college was evident in the preparation of a well-informed selection committee. The inexperience of the board members in undergoing a principal recruitment process galvanised their agenda to upskill themselves in principal succession and recruitment processes, through specific readings about leadership in schools and a workshop focussing on key steps in the principal succession. In their viewpoint, professional development for the board members was an important aspect of their preparation, so that the school community would respect their professional capacity to make this decision. Part of this planning included the preparation of relevant college documents that would be sent to applicants. These documents included facts, figures and general information about the college vision, *To know; To serve* and the qualities sought in the next principal. In addition, their goal for students upon graduation was included in the information document. Creswell (2012) noted that analysing data from relevant texts helps identify important beliefs and attitudes about the participants involved in the study.

In the finalised document, the vision was stated on the first page, with no other text on the page. The positioning of the vision on the first page, in the centre, illuminated the emphasis of principal recruitment in this college to find a principal whose qualities and skills would be aligned to the vision. The goal for alumni was placed immediately after the introductory letter from the board chair. The prominence of this goal, as part of the college vision, was evident by its own position on its own page in larger text than the rest of the
booklet content, and in the same size font as the vision. The intentional way, in which the vision and the goal for graduating students were placed in such a prominent position in the booklet, communicated to prospective applicants the essential qualities required to be suited to lead the college.

The critical nature of finding the best candidate to lead this college, according to the governing board’s selection criteria, was evidenced in the contingency plan for succession that was put in place should the principal recruitment process not be immediately successful. This plan included a clause in which the existing executive team would be empowered to continue to lead and manage the college during an interim period. During the focus group discussion board member two remarked that, in preparing for the recruitment of their next principal, they ensured that all matters involved in the process were neatly and efficiently organised and all responsibilities completed. These responsibilities included renewing the existing contracts of current senior executives and appointing new senior executives where required. The data revealed the importance of recruiting a principal who was a good fit to the culture and values of the college, because if a suitable candidate did not emerge in the first recruitment phase, there would be no appointment: “We were very clear that if we didn’t find the right person, we wouldn’t appoint one” (LC_FG_BM3).

In the event that a principal was not appointed, the governing board members had determined that the senior executives would lead the college in the interim period. Members of the governing board who were the governance sub-committee of the board formed the selection committee. A key part of the succession planning process was determining the selection criteria for the next principal.

**Choosing the selection criteria.** The selection criteria focussed on three key benchmarks. These benchmarks were first, the succeeding principal would need to have the qualities that would align with the spiritual ethos of the college; second, the next principal
would need strategic leadership skills to maintain, review and improve the direction of the college, building on the success of their predecessor to translate vision into action; and third, to have the interpersonal skills to engage with students and other members of the school community, building on personal and professional networks in a relevant and relational manner for sustained improvement. These three key benchmarks informed the ten specific criteria that were sent to interested applicants. The board held a workshop that was facilitated by an external consultant so that all board members could be involved in discussing and compiling the selection criteria for the next principal. The information booklet – as a source of data for potential participants - presented these ten criteria that would determine the qualities that the governing board were looking for in their next principal. Because the retiring principal had been so intentional in pursuing the vision of knowing academically, spiritually and promoting service in the community and beyond, the governing board sought to develop criteria that would attract suitable leaders who would continue this successful trend. The correlation between the three key benchmarks, the ten selection criteria and the college vision can be viewed in Table 5 over the page.
Table 5

Correlation between Benchmarks, Selection Criteria and Vision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Benchmarks</th>
<th>Selection Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. The capacity to translate that faith into the language and experience of parents and students in a way that is attractive, persuasive, not divisive, and yet challenging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Strategic leadership skills to maintain, review and improve the direction of the college</td>
<td>3. A demonstrated capacity to develop and maintain high level of staff morale, effectively manage conflict resolution, and a capacity to enthuse teachers to be effective and dynamic educators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. An outstanding record of leadership and achievement as a senior administrator in the education sector, including evidence of excellence in curriculum development, student achievement and classroom practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. An understanding of contemporary management practices in independent education with particular respect to marketing, fundraising, risk management, compliance, finances and human resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. A willingness combined with the personal capacity to represent [Lewis] College professionally and vibrantly amongst education, business and Christian communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Interpersonal skills to engage with students and other members of the school community, building on personal and professional networks in a relevant and relational manner for sustained improvement.</td>
<td>7. A love of young people and a passion for their development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. A demonstrated capacity to lead and inspire staff and executive teams, working harmoniously with them as both leader and learner in that team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. A pleasant and professional demeanour, with excellent oral and written communication and relationship-building skills, accessible to all members of the College community and well able to engage and attract a wide range of families to the college.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Benchmarks</th>
<th>Selection Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. An ability to apply appropriate decision-making and conflict resolution skills to the complex issues arising within a College community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. LC_DA_p. 22-23; numbers as determined in the Information Booklet.

This table represents the outcomes of analysing the booklet. Analysis identified an alignment between the key benchmarks, selection criteria and the way in which the governing board members wanted the next principal to communicate the vision to the college community. The spiritual ethos of the college aligns with the first two selection criteria, demonstrating the priority for the governing board members to recruit a principal with personal knowledge, understanding and experience of the Bible and the Christian life, and of the particular spiritual foundations of the college. As the college was a multi-denominational Christian community consisting of a broad basis of the beliefs of staff and families from Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant faiths the implications for leadership were significant. The second key benchmark of strategic leadership skills to maintain, review and improve the direction of the college aligned with selection criteria six through to nine as listed in the information booklet. These four criteria provided links to the desire to recruit a principal who could understand and develop the culture, values and beliefs of the college, continuing to improve the college so that it is effective in its long-term development. The third key benchmark was associated with selection criteria 3, 4, 5 and 10 as listed in the information booklet. These highlighted the desire to recruit a principal who could develop interpersonal relationships to work together for the improvement of the college. Specifically, the third criterion showed that the selection committee was seeking a principal who would not be solely focussed on the administration and management of the college, but would always strive for the best outcomes for students to become successful learners. The use of the word “harmoniously” in the fifth criterion referred to a capacity
for their next principal to establish relationships with staff as their leader and team player, thus indicating the style of leadership they were seeking in their next principal. Although most of the ten selection criteria were aligned to the second and third key benchmarks, the data from participants stressed the importance of the first key benchmark, because, from their perspective, the spiritual quality was essential to sustain the vision and ethos of the college. Advertising the position was a key step to ensure that as many potential candidates were notified about the vacancy.

**Advertising the position.** The information document, prepared by the governing board, provided applicants with important background information about the college, the selection criteria, and the recruitment timeline. This timeline spanned five months, beginning in February through to June of that same year, confirming that the desire of the governing board was to have the new principal appointed by the date the incumbent principal was scheduled to retire, thus avoiding any loss of momentum toward advancing the vision. Reports from relevant research support this approach to ensure there was continuity of between principal tenures, to avoid the loss of the vision and institutional memory, teacher attrition and lower student outcomes (Hargreaves and Fink, 2012).

The board organised for this booklet to be published by an external company. The production of a professional document for dissemination to those who responded to the advertisement was an indication of the significance of this event in the life of the college and the desire to attract high performing professionals to apply. The pool of candidates was compiled as a result after advertising in the local media, and overseas networks. During the focus group interview one of the board members commented that the successful candidate was not an Australian citizen, underlining the global approach by the board to recruit the most suitable candidate according to how well each candidate’s values were a fit to the cultural ethos of the college: “I think that the main part of the curiosity came from the fact that … was English. So I think for us, um, there were questions about why we
appointed from overseas” (LC_FG_BM3_lines_81-85). Candidates were shortlisted for interview by the selection committee, based on responses to the selection criteria in their formal applications and accompanying documentation.

**Selecting and Interviewing the candidates.** In total, 25 applications were received. The role of the secretary in this part of the recruitment process was significant. First, to maintain confidentiality, the applications were sent to a post office box that was controlled by the secretary to the selection committee. Ensuring confidentiality was the main purpose of this strategy. Second, the secretary read through and categorised all applications received to determine those that had fully completed the application and responded to the selection criteria, as this was part of his role. Completing this task meant that any applications that were incomplete were eliminated from those given to the selection committee, which meant that these members only reviewed those applications that were completed in full. Third, a meeting of the selection committee was held on the weekend after the closing deadline for applications, during which they shortlisted candidates for interview. Prior to this meeting the secretary had already pre-read the applications and shortlisted them for interview according to the selection criteria and whether the applicants had fully responded to the application requirements. On this day the selection committee members examined all the applications, selecting seven candidates for interview from the 25 applications submitted. When the board members met to shortlist candidates for interview their task was specific: “Everybody had to read through. We’d developed a checklist or a sheet, you know, did they meet the criteria, did they submit the application properly, on the basis of our discussions” (LC_BM1_lines_113-115).

This step in the recruitment process highlighted the role the secretary played in ensuring the time spent on shortlisting applicants for interview was well spent, focussing on those applications that were completed in full. Seven applicants were offered interviews in the first round. During the first-round interviews, insights were gained from
the applicants’ responses to questions from the governing board members. These insights indicated that they did not satisfy a particular quality but were shortlisted for interview because of the value of their qualifications and experience. Of the seven candidates who completed first round interviews, three qualified for second round interviews. In the focus group interview, it became clear that during the second round interviews the spiritual quality was being investigated: “That was probably one of the key questions; tell us what it means to be truly human” (LC_FG_BM2_line_543).

The response to this question seemed to be critical to the final selection and confirmed the link to the first key benchmark; that the spiritual quality of the successful applicant was a key aspect of the selection process. The review of literature into leadership styles and the organisational vision noted that spiritual leaders are the symbolic souls of the organisations they lead, because they encourage all members of the school to pursue the vision, serving the school and its members, so spiritual leadership was an important attribute of the next principal of Lewis College.

**The selection decision.** The successful candidate was offered the position after the second-round interviews, strengthened by his response to the key question about being truly human. In comparison to the response from other candidates to the same question, the responses from the preferred candidate were above other candidates and most closely aligned to the criteria established by the governing board and the qualities they were seeking in their next principal. The alignment between the qualities to be the potential spiritual head of the college and the spiritual values and beliefs of the college was explained by the board secretary during the focus group discussion. From the view point of the selection committee “there were a number of very good candidates that just didn’t quite get it. And really the new principal, … did get it” (LC_FG_BM1_lines_524-530). The comment that a number of very good candidates “just didn’t get it” was referring to the spiritual qualities of the candidates. Second round interviews were different in format
to those of the first round. The secretary explained the change of format: “We narrowed down to just three candidates, the final three candidates; we mixed it up a bit in terms of how we actually did the interview. There was some role play” (LC_INT_BM1_lines_103-104).

The term “role play” in this instance meant that candidates were required to act out an imaginary scenario relating to a situation that could occur in their role as principal, which demonstrated that the board members were not just relying on evidence in the submitted applications, responses to the selection criteria and answers to questions asked during the first-round interview. This role play was intended to give deeper insights into the decision-making processes and abilities of the candidates. Inquiries into recruitment interviews, observed that role play contributed to deeper insights about the personalities of candidates and their core competencies (Paulhus, Westlake, Calvez and Harms, 2013). One of the key reasons for the appointment of the preferred candidate was based on their responses to the predetermined interview questions about spiritual leadership capacity, their personalities and core competencies. Priorities of this governing board in recruiting the next principal of the college and whether there was alignment with the areas and elements contained in Davies’ strategic architecture model are discussed in the next section.

4.3. Application of Davies’ Model

Using Davies’ strategic architecture model as a lens to the data, the priorities of the governing board for their next principal were viewed through its areas and elements. The process through which the data was analysed was illustrated in chapter three (see Figure 8). In viewing the data through Davies’ model, it was important to begin with the vision, because it synthesised the goals and actions of the five areas and their elements.

**Vision.** “To know, To serve” (LC_DA_p.2). Davies’ model placed vision as the overarching point of reference for the five areas and their elements. This model was examined in Chapter Three, showing that these areas, when strong, stable and mutually aligned, enabled the best results from short-term objectives while simultaneously building
capacity and capability for the long-term direction of the school (Davies, 2003). The model, its areas and connect to vision is adapted from Davies (2003; p. 310), in Figure 3 below. For a full view of the model, including the elements, see Chapter Three.

![Davies’ Model, Vision and Areas](image)

In the case of Lewis College, the recruitment and selection process of the governing board of the college was underpinned by a desire to continue the development of its vision, “To know, To serve” (LC_DA_p.2). Irrespective of whether the candidate had the best qualifications from well recognised institutions, if the candidate did not share the vision of the Lewis College, then it was perceived that its continued growth and success of the goals and actions would not proceed. The successful candidate would need to be a leader who could analyse and articulate this vision and common direction of growth in the five areas, so that all areas were synthesised under the banner of knowing and serving. Analysis of these areas would identify where each area needed strengthening or re-directing to ensure that the already established success of the college was not lost. The notion of serving was linked to the spiritual tone and mission of the college lived “out in the practice and tension
of daily, ordinary life” (LC_DA_p. 7). As an example of these programs were the College’s Service Connect trips to overseas orphanages.

The way in which the model is illustrated in Davies’ research may be interpreted by the reader that all areas are of equal position within the vision of the model, because the shapes containing each area are of equal size. In this study, this was not the case at Lewis College. Rather, the area of Culture and Values was a vital link to the first key benchmark, which was finding a principal who could embody the spiritual ethos of the college.

**Culture and values.** “[H]ow a principal leaves their mark on a college is not a name on a building, albeit that’s honouring. It’s the culture of the college” (LC_FG_BM2_lines_462-464). Data analysis revealed that culture and values, together with its elements, was the most represented area of Davies’ model in this case study. The elements of culture and values are represented in Figure 4 below.

![Figure 4 Elements Contained in Culture and Values](an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)

The governing board believed that a principal’s legacy– the impact of that individual on the organisation - was most apparent in the college culture because “you watch the culture of a school when they leave and if it’s good, you want to build on that. If it’s not good, you want it to improve” (LC_FG_BM2_lines_463-464). While Lewis College was not governed by a church from a particular denomination, the governing board still wanted the successful applicant to have personal and spiritual qualities that would fit the college ethos, to know about the Christian faith, its worldview and lifestyle and be able to serve the college community as its spiritual leader. The successful candidate would need to
accommodate the Protestant and Catholic doctrinal viewpoints of their enrolled families,
which was explained in the information booklet sent to applicants. Applying the model as
a lens through which to view the desired qualities linked to the college ethos, the
researcher identified the shared beliefs of the successful applicant would need to closely
align with those of the college. Although a number of well qualified candidates responded
to the criteria about their spiritual beliefs, the process of intentional, targeted questions into
the candidates’ spiritual capacity, during the first-round interviews, disqualified them from
progressing to the second round of interviews. The evaluation of this spiritual capacity was
from the personal perspective of the governing board members and it was influenced by
the impact of the previous long-serving principal. Whilst Davies does not specifically
identify spirituality when defining and articulating culture and values, his research
reinforces the importance of beliefs and values, within its culture, being at the core of
achieving the school’s purpose and vision.

The second element of the culture and values area in Davies’ model, values and
norms, referred to the morals and customs that would have a similar orientation, linked to the
college statement of faith (LC_DA_p.7). The way in which their new principal would lead
the college through their administrative and management decisions offered links to the last
two elements in this area. During his tenure, the retiring principal of 18 years had articulated
the Christian culture of the college through a values-based student leadership program. Its
purpose was to support the development of the students’ character traits which were the
desirable aspects of students’ behaviour and attitudes. In establishing this program, he had
articulated these traits through a set of core beliefs that were communicated to students and
the members of the college community through meaningful words and signs, in a distinctive
graphic, referred to as their “moral compass” (LC_DA_p.20). This program was a key part
of school life for Lewis College and was included in its educational and pastoral care
programs. An interview with the retiring principal of Lewis College offered their perspective
on the measure of success at the college: “We want to be really excellent because we want to represent what a college operating out of the principles of the Kingdom of God would naturally be good, effective” (LC_INT_P_lines_84-86).

As highlighted in chapter two, Davies (2003) suggested that to maintain an existing school culture, an incoming principal needed to be willing to embrace it. He found that successful students were extensively engaged in their personal growth towards excellence within a supportive college culture. The culture and values of a college defined the set of beliefs and implicit ways of behaving that offer acceptance to all members of the community (Davies, 2005). If the culture was strong, members of the college community understood the heart and soul of the college (Davies, 2011). Davies (2002) stated that building sustainable college improvement strategies was underpinned by a moral purpose reflected in the symbols and language used throughout the college. He argued that a successful culture was the keystone in the journey for continuous college improvement that advanced the college vision. An intentional criterion of the board was to select a principal who could pursue, develop and articulate a strategy for continual improvement and success.

**Strategy.** “We just cannot stand still. We need to be moving to the next level, whatever the next level is” (LC_INT_BM1_lines_151-153). In pursuit of the college vision, the next principal of Lewis College would need the leadership capability and educational capacity to maintain continuous improvement of student outcomes through a focussed and intentional strategy. The elements of the area of Strategy are depicted in Figure 5 below.

![Figure 5](image_url) Elements Contained in Strategy (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)
In the case of Lewis College, the purpose of the college was to accomplish its educational mandate “within an inclusive and vibrant Christian community” (LC_DA_p.3) which was the fundamental reason for its existence. The strategic intents of the college were those planned goals that directed the strategic plans and the key performance indicators by which the college would evaluate whether its strategy was successful. Using these elements as a lens to the recruitment process, selection criteria six through to nine were aligned to these elements. The second key benchmark, in identifying the successful candidate was strategic leadership skills, to maintain, review and expand the direction of the college.

The retiring principal had been a recognised academic leader, professional writer and role model to less experienced principals. Since the core purpose of the college was to provide primary and secondary education to enrolled students, he also provided advice to the governing board on the educational direction of the college, because none of the members of the governing board were knowledgeable in this field. The governing board wanted the next principal to continue to build on this foundation. Expansion was one strategy considered: “Might it lead us to doing something quite new and innovative on our existing, that’s, albeit related to the core business of what a K-12 college, is slightly different?” (LC_INT_BM1_lines_203-209).

Pursuing any new plans had to be aligned to the vision of knowing and serving. Advancing any new plan or redefining an existing plan began with articulating its strategic intent, building images of what the new or redefined plan looked like, symbols and experiences around the plan, and analysing any changes or modifications needed to accommodate this plan. This process also included dialogue with staff, students and parents so they had a shared understanding of the plan. Helping the staff, students and parents buy into any changes or new direction was dependent on whether the new principal could articulate how individual stakeholders were affected and the way in which these changes remained part of the vision of the college. In the review of literature, Hallinger (2011) noted
that achieving the vision whilst maintaining the school improvements is dependent on the principal successfully working with staff and the school community to ensure that the school’s vision and its goals are widely known and supported in the community. These goals must be focussed on the academic progress of students framed within the principal and staff working together for continuous improvement whilst achieving the school’s long-term goals. This data contributed to the conversation around strategic architecture and the area of strategy, confirming including stakeholders in the dialogue about changes in the development of the college can avoid loss of momentum in advancing the vision. Any loss of the original vision could impact enrolments and staff stability.

Engagement with staff, students and families of the college enhanced the ownership of change. Members of the college community had an understanding of where the college was headed and how it was translated towards the vision of knowing and serving. In brief, the governing board were seeking to appoint a principal who could lead Lewis College “with all that means for an outstanding educational experience for student in a global context” (LC_DA_p.23_lines_46-47). This data was consistent with research about strategic architecture undertaken by Davies (2011) to develop his model as a valuable framework from which to explore priorities for principals to focus on when developing the vision of their schools. This investigation confirmed that achieving the vision of the school involves the principal developing a strategy of looking at the school in the broader context of its current situation and the key regions of importance to the school long term goals, whilst influencing the present actions of staff members through relationships that build strategic actions for the future.

**Relationships** “The board chairman and the head had a good relationship, the head trusted the board” (LC_FG_BM2_lines_132-134). Forming positive relationships was a vital aspect of motivating the college community to cooperate in the attitudes, decisions
and actions, led by the principal and governing board, for the benefit of the whole college.

The elements of the relationships are depicted in Figure 6 below.

![Figure 6](image)

**Figure 6** Elements Contained in Relationships (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)

Stakeholder and staff relationships referred to the interactions and connections with any member of the college community with a share in the college as an organisation. In the case of Lewis College, these stakeholders included the governing board members, staff members, parents and enrolled students, so the new principal would need “a pleasant and professional demeanour, with excellent oral and written communication and relationship-building skills, accessible to all members of the College community and well able to engage and attract a wide range of families to the College” (LC_DA_p.22). The close working relationship that had been established between the governing board members, retiring principal, staff and parents of the college reinforced a common understanding that relationships only developed when staff and members of the college community came into contact with each other and engaged in strategic and collaborative conversations.

Decision-making processes referred to those methods used to guide actions that advanced the development of the college and its vision. The new principal of Lewis College sought to know who the key stakeholders were in the college and ensure that they were involved in making these decisions. Therefore, relationships in the college community would be embedded into its vision of knowing and serving, to drive the college towards success in
which everyone had collective ownership. In his research, Davies (2011) argued that, long

term engagement between key stakeholders, aimed to intentionally position the college as

a future focussed community of engaged learners, through stable and strong relationships

with members of the community. With each interaction, it was important for the principal
to express the reason for belonging to the college community.

The effectiveness of the partnership between the retiring principal and board

members, at Lewis College, was built on a trusting and strong relationship, framed within

established policies that clearly outlined their roles. These policies helped to guide

boundaries in the organisational structure of the college. In the interview with the board

chair, the boundaries were explained. Because the principal was employed as CEO,

responsible for employing staff and resolving decisions that affected the administration of

the college, they set the rules about when the board chair spoke to the staff members. This

was particularly noted by the board chair because they were the board’s spokesperson

when addressing staff: “there’s been history in this college, well, the principal has been

very strong in keeping distance between the board and the staff and so when, the few times

that I came and addressed staff, I held that very lightly” (LC_BC_INT_lines_170-183).

During the recruitment process, time was made available for the board chair to

address the staff, affording them the opportunity to ask questions about the progress of

finding their next principal. This was an important matter for the staff, because the

successful applicant would be responsible the overall leadership and management of the

college. Communication lines to staff members, parents and students were facilitated

through the principal. The final element in this area of Davies’ model, networks and

alliances, was an important one because the college, through the leadership of the retiring

principal, had developed strategic networks and alliances with institutions outside the

college. Jervis-Tracey (2006) noted that work intensification and new effectiveness and

efficiency measures to reduce costs and stress on staff have shifted to collaborative
platforms to maximise organisational effectiveness and synergy. In the case of Lewis College these networks and alliances included universities, networks in overseas countries, and organisations that provided strategic support to the college, such as Independent Schools Queensland. The governing board wanted these networks and alliances to be maintained under the leadership of the next principal, so they had included a statement to this effect in the duties: “It is expected that the Principal will continue to make a contribution to all of these and that membership will be maintained of all” (LC_DA_p.24_31-34). Strengthening these networks and alliances enhanced the progress of the successful learning needs of the college.

**Learning.** “A college that wants to be known for excellence in education and that’s academic, performing arts, sport, co-curricular, across the board” (LC_INT_BM1_lines_145-147). In addition to the leadership program, the retiring principal had led the teaching and learning, building a solid foundation for developing the learning programs and systems for enrolled students. The existing successful school culture valued and promoted learning, motivating students to be personally engaged in their learning pathways so that they graduated with success. Therefore, the newly appointed principal would be responsible for coordinating and influencing the physical and human resources, curriculum, teaching and learning to build on this success. This responsibility was part of the second key benchmark and encompassed in the seventh selection criteria. The elements contained in Davies’ area of Learning are depicted in Figure 7 below.

---

Figure 7   Elements Contained in Learning (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)
Using this area and its elements as a lens to the selection and recruitment process, the researcher identified that the next principal required educational leadership, knowledge and skills to sustain the successful academic outcomes already established. These attributes require the principal to be an instructional leader for the aching staff providing them with a clear instructional philosophy and learning framework. The successor would also be expected to understand and facilitate effective evaluation and monitoring strategies to meet the individual needs of the students. Under the leadership of the retiring principal, the Year 12 graduating students had consistently achieved high ranking scores in their end of year external assessments that were comparable to “the top tier of colleges in Queensland” (LC_DA_p.13). In addition, the college had achieved consistent successful student outcomes, with in excess of 80% of the Year 12 graduating students offered university places. Selection criteria six and seven were aligned to these elements. In particular, the following extract from each of these criteria linked to the area of Learning and its elements: “Selection criteria six: a capacity to enthuse teachers to be effective and dynamic educators” (LC_DA_p.23); and, “Selection criteria seven: evidence of excellence in curriculum development, student achievement and classroom practice” (LC_DA_p.23).

The college had been established as a place of learning for all members, including staff, and this had flow-on implications in relation to commitment and obligations of staff members and their professional responsibilities. This was affirmed during the interview with board member one who acknowledged there had been a significant program of professional development by staff within the college community during the previous year: “over the last twelve months there’s been quite a significant PD program undertaken by all staff and it’s been very well received” (LC_INT_BM1_lines_149-152). In assuming the role as the new principal of the college, the successful candidate would need experience and skills to work with teachers to identify a vision for their classrooms that continued to motivate and engage students in their learning. This vision included developing good
habits in students that supported continued achievement and success. At Lewis College, there were well established and articulated expectations where students of the college felt safe, comfortable and cared for, which supported research identifying key factors in attaining high student outcomes (Robinson, 2007).

In his research to develop the model Davies (2003) upheld that it was important for the principal to know and understand the learning needs of a college. Davies (2003) argued that school success was something that the school accomplished as well as what an individual student achieved. Davies (2007) argued that creating active involvement in sustainable learning for each student was a core measure of strategic success, advanced by teachers who were reflective practitioners. In the case of Lewis College, initiatives such as the student leadership program and the professional development of staff all required sound planning and use of resources. The successful candidate in this recruitment journey had to ensure that resources such as finances, physical facilities and staffing were developed to support the flourishing learning programs in Lewis College.

**Resources.** “The principal needs to be free to dream those dreams and present ideas to the board, and if they’re good ideas and resources are available, we are fortunate that the college is in a pretty strong financial position” (FC_INT_BM1_lines_180-183). Because of the lengthy and successful tenure of the retiring principal, the selection committee were seeking to recruit a new principal who had the capacity to continue the development of the resources and facilities already established. The elements in the learning area in Davies’ model are recognised in Figure 8 below.

![Figure 8 Elements Contained in Resources (an extract from Davies, 2003: p. 310)](image-url)
The retiring principal’s successor would be accountable for building on the existing accomplishments. The strength of the successful candidate to achieve this goal was addressed in criterion eight: “An understanding of contemporary management practices in independent education with particular respect to marketing, fundraising, risk management, compliance, finances and human resources” (LC_DA_p.23).

The new principal would need professional skills in understanding finances, marketing of schools, compliance and accountability to governments. Generally, the appointed principal needed to demonstrate the capacity to grow the professional, physical and spiritual capital of the college because “the college is looking to move to, from being good to great” (LC_INT_BM1_lines_175-176) and execute further development of the college to “go on to do more good things that will take us from good to very good to excellent” (LC_INT_P_lines_59-61). The college had achieved considerable success as a legitimate educational organisation, which had required the construction of appropriate learning facilities, over the years of the college development. The new principal would need to continue this momentum, to ensure the college continued to provide a range of learning resources and facilities committed to excellence in everything that the college undertook which would enhance the ongoing well-balanced and productive shared culture in which the college had flourished under the retiring principal. In his research, Davies (2003) maintained that the principal needed to be cognisant of the resourcing needs during their school’s development cycle. The data identified insights which emerged in this case study with respect to the principal recruitment journey. These insights are discussed below.

4.4. Emerging Insights in the Lewis College Case

Applying Davies’ model to the data identified two additional elements not depicted in the original model. These elements are legacy and trust. The first element, legacy, can be viewed as an element within the area of strategy.
Legacy. “Who we are as a school, is entirely coloured by his legacy” (LC_FG_BM2_line_506). Legacy was not an articulated concept in the conceptual model. The data analysis identified that it was an element that the participants identified as essential to be acknowledged under the leadership of the new principal.

This outcome from the data analysis supported other research underlining the importance of the principal’s legacy (Hallinger, 2005). The legacy of a principal was acknowledged, in the examination of strategic architecture investigations, as the intangible and values based cultural inheritance passed from one principal to the next, often defined by student outcomes, staff outcomes and wellbeing and curriculum reform (Hallinger, 2005). In the review of literature, Zepeda (2013) noted that the legacy left by a principal due to retirement, promotion or termination can be positive or negative. For example, if the departing principal does not have skills and knowledge in the financial management of the school, then the new principal was forced to initiate staff redundancies or postpone building programs, which impacted the way in which the principal successor embarked upon their own leadership in the respective school. In the case of Lewis College, the legacy of the retiring principal’s lengthy and successful tenure was positive and successful, so the governing board wanted their influence commemorated and perpetuated in the life of the college. This principal’s legacy influenced the selection and recruitment process, because it was evident that specific best practices in teaching and learning in well-resourced facilities, that positively impacted the lives of past and present students had been a result of their leadership.

Facilitated an exceptional period of growth and development for [Lewis] College. Over the past 18 years, student enrolments have almost doubled, and more importantly, our students have reached high standards in terms of their academic focus and commitment to personal achievement (LC_DA_p.3).

This legacy had been one that had a future focus and strategic intent towards student success and the development of students’ personal values that informed their choices after graduation. Therefore, the governing board wanted the selection of a principal who would
honour the legacy of the retiring principal while embracing his/her own goals and dreams for the college; in this way ensuring that the college improved its student academic success, and advanced the college in new initiatives. This meant that the new principal looked to gain trust amongst all stakeholders, networks and alliances. The second new element identified in the data analysis, trust, was viewed as an element of relationships.

**Trust.** “The board chairman and the head had a good relationship, the head trusted the board” (LC_FG_BC_lines_137-139). In the case of Lewis College, the retiring principal had served the college for eighteen years and had developed a professional and personal relationship with the current board chair of the college, so there was a reciprocity that was part of this dimension of trust. It was not just that one side trusted the other: but that the trust was evident on both sides. Lewis College has been established for thirty years. Although the retiring principal was not the inaugural principal, he was the longest serving principal in the college. This trust had developed, first through alignment between the values of the governing board and those of the principal. Second, the level of trust endowed upon the governing board was due to their record of governance: “the staff actually trusts the board because the board’s track record in running the college, importantly, is actually very good” (LC_FG_BM2_lines_121-124).

During the retiring principal’s tenure, Lewis College had grown in student numbers, expanded its facilities, and gained a credible reputation regarding student outcomes, especially with respect to NAPLAN results and Year 12 assessments. This record of accomplishments validated their leadership success because the board’s vision had been executed within the parameters of the college budget. For the new principal at Lewis College, trust would be a critical element of their relationships with the governing board and other stakeholders. The review of texts confirmed that trust was endowed on principals who did what they said they would do, which resulted in the perception that they were competent in their roles (Bottery, 2004). When leaders were trusted the self-esteem of
staff and members of their communities was raised. The result was that they were motivated to believe and support the vision, enhancing the strong foundation of the college community (Bottery, 2004; Browning, 2014). Davies did not explicitly identify trust in his model, although he did note that strong relationships were essential for the development of trust between the principal, governance and leadership of the college (2009). Much of what happens in college life is reliant upon trust among principals, staff and college communities (Browning, 2014; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Successful leaders have developed trust, aside from their leadership qualities, in order to bring about change within their organisation (Browning, 2014). In the case of Lewis College, trust in the newly appointed principal would be well established if they maintained the reputation and successful results of its student learning outcomes.

4.5. Conclusion

Lewis College provided one distinctive context for the experiences and perspectives of the key participants. Participants’ experiences highlighted the unique context that Lewis College presented in the process of succession and recruitment, due to the stable tenure of the retiring principal. The experiences of the governing board’s principal recruitment process, and the journey they undertook, provided the foundation upon which analysis could be undertaken, framed within the context of the strategic architecture model (Davies, 2003). Using Davies model as a lens, data analysis identified the areas of priority were culture and values, strategy and relationships. Two new elements were also identified, during the data analysis. These elements were legacy as an element of strategy, and trust, as an element of relationships. From this analysis, Davies’ model, with respect to the principal recruitment process at Lewis College, could be illustrated as outlined in Figure 9 over the page.
Data analysis highlighted that in maintaining the development of its vision, the areas of culture and values, strategy and relationships were the most important areas in the principal recruitment process. Two new elements identified in the analysis were legacy and trust. The next chapter introduces Bradley College, its context and its principal recruitment journey.
Chapter Five: Case Study Two: The Bradley College Story

“We were looking for cultural fit and understanding of our governance and structure” (BC_INT_PBC_lines_64-65).

5.1. The Site

Bradley College (pseudonym) presented a different context to that of Lewis College, for two reasons. First, Bradley College was a church-governed school, whereas Lewis College was a non-denominational school governed by a company limited by guarantee. This means that if there was dissolution of the company, the liability of the members was guaranteed to be a nominal amount. Second, principal tenure at Lewis College had been stable and lengthy, whereas principal tenure at Bradley College had been unstable and brief during the previous four years.

At the time of this study, Bradley College was a P-12 co-educational independent Christian college with approximately 860 enrolled students. The college was governed by a sponsoring church. Both the church and the college were located on a single campus outside a large metropolitan centre. The college has been established for 36 years. Bradley College was owned and governed by the Church’s national executive, operating through the local sponsoring church. Membership of the national executive consisted of a chairman, deputy chairman, secretary and advisory pastors and was recognised, by statutory authorities, as the governing body of Bradley College. The national executive determined the powers and responsibilities and the manner in which the direction and control of the college was administered. These powers and responsibilities included changes and rulings that affected the overall governance and management of the college. The local church appointed a church board, called the committee of management, which delegated authority for governing Bradley College to a different governing board that was separate to the committee of management. The church committee of management had oversight of the college, which was administered through the College Board. Membership
of the College Board was determined by the local church committee of management.

Members of the College Board and committee of management are approved by the national executive. The senior pastor chaired both the committee of management and the college governing board. The governance structure showing the tier of decision making affecting the role of the college principal is outlined in its charter (DA3) and is illustrated in Figure 10 below.

![Governing Body Diagram](image)

- National Executive
- Local Church Committee of Management
- College Board
- College Executive

Figure 10 Governance Structure of Bradley College

Note: Structure developed from College Governance Policies and Procedure Manual (BC_DA1_p.6)

The national executive members were elected for a term of three years by the members of the church body at an annual general meeting. A national executive member may hold office for more than one (1) term. Nominations for the position of national executive members were ratified by the chairman of the national executive. The local church committee of management were elected by the local church members and ratified by its senior pastor and then formally ratified by the national executive. The principal was not a member of the national executive. The college executive was composed of the principal, business manager, head of secondary, head of primary, director of studies and director of student development. The principal chaired regular formal meetings of the
colleague executive, but the local senior pastor had discretion to join these meetings with the consent of the principal.

Whilst Figure 10 illustrated the formal hierarchy from the national executive to the local college, it did not show the reciprocal reporting mechanism and process of decisions. Formal reporting and ratification of decisions by the local College Board from the college executive was undertaken through the minutes of the formal College Board meetings. The local church senior pastor acted as the representative of the local college at the annual general meetings when the national executive members were elected. Decisions made by the college executive were ratified by the College Board. The local church committee of management had the authority to overturn decisions of the College Board. The national executive could overturn decisions made by the local church committee of management or the College Board.

The most significant feature of this governance structure was the authority of the senior pastor. When this case study was undertaken, the senior pastor of the local church chaired both the local church committee of management and was the Chief Executive Officer and authority of both entities, highlighting the significant authority and influence that he had in making decisions in both the church and college. At the time of the recruitment process reported in this case study there were six members on the governing board. The board chair was appointed by the local church committee of management and presided at all meetings of the College Board. Other members were church members, some of whom had children enrolled at the school. The principal was the only member of the College Board with education expertise.

**Bradley College: study participants.** The study participants comprised the senior pastor of the sponsoring church, the board chair, the immediate past board chair and the incumbent principal. This principal was the successful candidate in the recruitment process which was the focus of this study. All participants who were interviewed were also
involved in the focus group discussion and comprised four of the six members of the college governing board. The two remaining members were not available for interview. The participants had been accepted into the research because they met the inclusion criteria established by the researcher and outlined in chapter three. They also had the capacity, experience and willingness to provide a significant contribution to the research topic.

Details of the participants’ profiles are outlined in Table 6 below.

Table 6

**Bradley College: Background Profiles of Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position and Code</th>
<th>Background Profiles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incumbent board chair</td>
<td>The incumbent board chair had less than two years’ experience as board chair. Directly involved in the most recent principal recruitment, as a member of the interview committee; a parent of students enrolled at the college and a full member of the board with voting rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IBC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate past board</td>
<td>The immediate past chair was a board member for ten years and board chair for seven years. Therefore, was board chair during the principal turnover years and led the College Board through the most recent principal recruitment journey; was also a past student of the college and a full member of the board with voting rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chair (PBC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbent principal (P)</td>
<td>The incumbent principal was in the third year of principal – this was first appointment at that level. Prior to taking up the role as principal of Bradley, they had more than eighteen years as deputy in a large regional independent Christian school. The incumbent principal was an ex-officio board member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Pastor (SP)</td>
<td>The senior pastor of the sponsoring church was the incumbent for approximately 18 years. The senior pastor was a full member of the board with voting rights.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data from the participants’ backgrounds revealed that the immediate past board chair and the senior pastor were members of the governing board during the previous years of principal instability. In the review of literature, it was identified that frequent principal succession suggested possible issues in relation to the distribution of power in an organisation, resulting in the termination of principals as “scapegoats” in response to organisational problems (Fink, 2010). This frequency of change provides an important context for studying the recruiting and selection processes in this case; providing insights into principal succession practices that may have contributed to such instability. In this study interviews with selected participants and relevant documents were analysed to examine the principal succession and recruitment process at Bradley College. The next section has outlined the qualities and skills the board required in their next principal.

5.2. Succession Planning and Recruitment

The governing board of Bradley College was unprepared for a new principal recruitment process, due to the unexpected departure of the previous principal. A three-month review of employment policies and processes was initiated by the board, after the departure of the previous principal. The purpose of this review was to identify reasons for frequent principal turnover of three principals during the previous four-year period. The report from the review into the reasons for principal instability helped the governing board:

We had our own specific governance model and we as a board had only been able to really come to grips with the implications of how our movement is structured ourselves and it’s very hard for someone coming in from outside to really get an idea of what they are in for (BC_PBC_INT_lines_67-72).

Because the College Board did not have a succession plan, it empowered the deputy principal and college executive to lead the school during the six-month principal recruitment phase. This strategy was also used during previous periods when the college was without a principal. Delegating the leadership of the college to the college executive
supported the review of literature that such lateral models of leadership proved effective in schools experiencing difficult or challenging contexts (Harris, 2005).

The outcomes of the review identified three significant problems with previous principal tenures. First, since the establishment of the college, a condition of employment had been that the principal was a member, or became a member of the sponsoring church. Second, the dual role of the senior pastor as board chair was identified as an issue for previous principals. Third, previous principal recruitment processes had prioritised the principal’s personal faith commitment over their educational capacity and leadership skills.

Three changes to the recruitment of the college principal resulted from the review:

1. The principal was not required to become a member of the sponsoring church and its denomination upon appointment to the role of principal.
2. A policy change was made regarding the role of the senior pastor which meant that this role no longer could also fulfil the role of board chair, by default. Under this new policy, the board chair was elected by the College Board, but sanctioned by the church committee of management; and,
3. an amendment was made to one of the selection criteria for the role of principal to seek a strategic leader with educational abilities and skills. The priority in previous recruitment processes had been to appoint a principal who was aligned to the denomination of the church. The educational abilities and skills had been of secondary importance.

During the interim six months, the deputy principal supplied stability for the team as they had been employed at the college for over 20 years. This person was also an applicant for the position of principal in this case study.

Preparation the interview committee. An interview committee was formed from the current board, by board policy and agreement amongst members of the governing board. As chief executive officer of the church and college the senior pastor was a member of the
interview committee, by default. Other members of the interview committee comprised the past board chair, the incumbent board chair, the business manager and another board member who was also a member of the sponsoring church. There were no members from college executive on the interview committee. There were no members with education expertise on the interview panel. This feature in the data was significant and supported the focus by the interview committee on recruiting a principal to advance the faith vision more than the educational vision, to be a good fit to the national church denomination. Despite the review recommending that the senior pastor’s influence be withdrawn or reduced, their involvement and impact was still evident in the recruitment process. This data highlighted continuing influence applied by the senior pastor in ways that were unintended, yet had impact on the requirement process. The involvement of the senior pastor highlights concerns raised in other research about the make-up of interview panels, the competency of its members and the power dynamics within those panels (Mullen and Slagle, 2005; Walker and Kwan, 2012). The interview committee comprised members from the church. College board members who were not part of the interview committee were informed of the progress of the recruitment and selection process at scheduled board meetings.

**Compiling the selection criteria.** Formal selection criteria were not compiled because the review relating to the employment of the principal occupied so much time. Rather than utilise key benchmarks of selection criteria, this college chose to present those selection criteria as key responsibilities in the principal’s duty statement (BC DA2). Eight strategic responsibilities for the new principal were included in the duty statement. These were:

1. Administration: creating conditions conducive to Christian team-work; the formulations and implementation of policy and procedures; the setting of educational goals based on an annual operational plan; determining the annual schedule of events; forecasting future enrolments; determining all course offerings; the oversight and preparation of the college budget; implementations
of study and student structures to produce successful outcomes; student assessment and reporting outcomes; coordination of college programs; oversight of accreditation; oversight of enterprise negotiation agreements.

2. Management: communication; oversight of government accountability and compliance documents; oversight of student enrolments; marketing of the college; oversight of the college heads of school.

3. Curriculum: oversight of curriculum evaluation and developing within policies and aims of Christian education; planning of subject choices; work programs and assessments.

4. Staff: exercise educational leadership of staff consistent with the aims and denominational position of the college; employment of staff; monitoring of staff teaching standards and professional development in line with the faith perspective of the college.

5. Students: oversight and management of students educational and pastoral needs; communication with parents regarding student progress; implement the college mission statement relevant to the students.

6. Board and parents: report to the College Board and committee of management as to the development of the college; support the board in the development of the college; maintain effective communication with college parents and other stakeholders.

7. Outside bodies: negotiate with relevant government and statutory bodies.

8. Sponsoring Church: attend church services and regular staff and leadership meetings; negotiate with the senior pastor in relation to church commitments.

(BC_DA2)

The data collected in this case identified that the eighth key responsibility in relation to the sponsoring church emerged more strongly than the other seven during the selection
and recruitment process for the new principal. This suggests the continuing influence of the senior pastor:

“The church knows the infiltration of our pastoral team and our governance, local church governance is in place, so there was never a fear of losing, um, our board is primarily of my church and, ah, so I don’t think there was any concern” (BC_INT_SP_lines_76-80).

Therefore, there was potential for educational responsibilities to receive less attention if a principal with educational skills and abilities was not appointed.

The duty statement, prepared as part of the documentation, was only useful as a guide for the candidates who submitted a formal application. From the viewpoint of the past board chair and the successful candidate, these duties and responsibilities were not aligned to the vision and strategic plan of the college, because an established vision and strategic plan had not been developed when the principal recruitment process was underway. Data to support this was identified in two comments: one from the past board chair who stated that “it wasn’t particularly well-linked at that point to the strategic goals of the school because we really didn’t have a solid strategic plan” (BC_INT_PBC_lines_223-225). The second comment was made by the successful candidate who said that the duty statement “was just terrible, absolutely woeful – a list of dot points, not even subheadings or areas of it. No, there was no alignment at all” (BC_INT_P_lines_393-396). This final duty statement was made available when the position was advertised.

Advertising the position. The members of the interview committee compiled the advertisement for the principal’s role. The completed advertisement was then advertised in newspapers and on relevant websites, as part of the job advertisement (BC_DA_1). There were two key qualities communicated in this advertisement, which were that applicants needed educational leadership and management experience; and that it was essential that they were “committed Christians” (BC_DA_1). Interested applicants were sent the duty statement to enable them to respond to this statement in their applications. Unlike Lewis
College, there was no information booklet, possibly because of the short time frame in the recruitment process. The next step in the recruitment process was to shortlist candidates for interviews.

**Candidate interviews.** After the closing date for submission of applications, candidates were shortlisted for interview by members of the interview committee. They were shortlisted according to their responses to the 8 responsibilities (in the Duty Statement). The principal’s duty statement indicated that the main purpose of the role was providing effective management of the college applying their educational leadership skills and personal qualities as a Christian. The duty statement also wanted the principal to cooperate positively with the wider community of the college. This statement suggested that the successful candidate was to have the personal and leadership qualities to be able to work well with the senior pastor. In simple terms, the governing board was looking for a principal who could fit the culture of the college and work with the governance structure: “first base for us is to make sure that whoever we employ is able to commit to and to support our vision for the Christian witness and foundations of the college” (BC_INT_IC_lines_150-153). Potential candidates with educational and leadership qualifications and experience may not have been selected for interview, because of the unwritten understanding of the board and interview committee that the focus was on recruiting a principal who could work within the governance structure and the senior pastor. This was further emphasised by the lack of a member of the interview committee with educational skills and experience. After the closing date for submission of applications, the plan was then to have two rounds of interviews. As per the first recommendation from the governance review, candidates who were shortlisted were not restricted to those from the denomination of the governing church. Data analysis noted the influence of the senior pastor when the pastor stated that they “allowed our team to go outside that requirement so we could actually see what quality of people would come in”
The “requirement” referred to the previous policy where the principal of Bradley College had to be a member, or became a member of, the relevant denomination of the sponsoring church. This seems to suggest the senior pastor was intervening in the process and permitting a change to policy. This would establish a view by the interview committee which suggested it was critical to find a principal who could work within the governance structure and co-operate with the senior pastor. This influence on the panel’s focus had the potential to disregard goals in the long-term development of the college.

Four candidates were interviewed during the first-round interviews. As a result of the first-round interviews, two were selected for second interviews. These two applicants included the current deputy principal. As part of the interview in the second round, each candidate was asked to present their vision for Bradley College. At the conclusion of the second-round interviews, the interview committee identified their preference for the external applicant.

The selection decision. After the second-round interviews, members of the interview committee, led by the past board chair, organised a second meeting with the external candidate. They organised for this meeting to be at this candidate’s residence and outside of business hours. Meeting the candidate outside of business hours was an unusual strategy to follow and outside of accepted practice for principal recruitment. The purpose of this meeting was to explain the governance structure of the college, the relationship between the church and college, and the prominent and positional authority of the senior pastor. Explaining the governance structure of the college was intentional as this was the preferred candidate and they wanted to ensure that the expectations of undertaking the role as principal of Bradley College was clearly understood. Communicating the role of national executive, its powers and responsibilities, was an important part of this meeting.
Potential pressures in relation to authority and decision-making processes between the principal and the senior pastor were flagged in this meeting:

“This is the structure we are in. This is what’s gone on before. This is what happens here. This is how we operate. This is our governance structure. This is what you need to be dealing with. Do you think you could cope? People had come in and not realised maybe the level in which the church and the pastor and everything is all integrated in a very close environment” (BC_INT_PBC_lines_151-154_161-164).

The desired outcome of the meeting with the preferred candidate was to ensure that, if appointed as principal, they would be fully informed about the college structure and the need to work with the senior pastor for the good of the church and college communities. This meeting was intentional and robust, during which the past board chair “basically laid it out. I actually said to the candidate, ‘We are here to scare you away, because we want to frighten you off and if this doesn’t frighten you off, well, then we can maybe talk’” (BC_INT_lines_155 – 159). In this meeting, the senior pastor stressed the new principal had to conform to the lines of authority and in particular, the pastor’s influence, in the decision-making processes of the college. A similar meeting was not held with the second candidate - as the current deputy principal of the college they would already understood the vision, culture, governance structure and authority of the senior pastor. There was no mention of the vision or culture of the school. In his research, Iselin (2010) confirmed the importance of ensuring principals knew and understood the vision, culture and values of the organisation’s life cycle to their preservation and perpetuation.

The selection decision was difficult for the governing board members because of the emotional conflict between their allegiance and perceived obligation to the deputy principal, the extent of their contribution to the college during current leadership tenure, and the future of the college. At the second-round interviews, the preferred candidate and the current deputy principal were required to deliver presentations on their vision for the college because vision had been neglected during previous years of principal instability. This meant that the preferred candidate had three interviews in total; a first formal
interview, the interview held in his home outside of the formal process, and the second formal interview. Two interviews were held with the deputy principal, both of which were part of the formal recruitment process. At the end of the second-round interviews, the committee felt that the demeanour of the deputy principal, “was tired, .. knew what needed to be done but … was coming from a place of, I think … was trying to see … way through how we would have handled the next six months, twelve months” (BC_INT_lines_120 - 124). This candidate had been appointed as acting principal during the previous years when the college had a principal vacancy. Whereas, the view of the preferred candidate by the incumbent board chair was that this candidate:

“Came with vision, …came with purpose, … was articulate and all of those things which [the deputy principal] had in … capacity but [the preferred candidate] blitzed the interview. … vision and … obvious capacity for leadership were the things that impressed me about … or that I remember most about the interview” (BC_INT_IBC_lines_147-151_153-155).

The governing board members of the college felt they needed a principal who was able to lead the college vision, due to the previous years of instability. After the second round of interviews, the decision to appoint the preferred candidate was made. A significant feature of this part of the recruitment process was that the decision to appoint the preferred candidate was influenced by their presentation for the vision of the college during the second-round interview. This data supported the continuing dialogue in research about the influence of the interview and the way in which candidates presented themselves, including their attitudes and body language. As with Lewis College, the recruitment, selection and appointment process at Bradley College was heavily influenced by the context of the school and its stage of development. Applying the lens of Davies’ strategic architecture model to the data, determined whether there was alignment with the five areas and the overall vision.

Precedence was given to those areas that had greater focus.
5.3. Application of Davies’ Model

This section synthesises the priorities of the governing board for recruiting their next principal through the lens of the model. As in the case of Lewis College, not all areas are of equal value. As the data analysis unfolded, evidence showed that the board members placed great priority on finding a principal with suitable personal qualities to be a good fit to the college culture and prepared to work within its governance structure and, especially the senior pastor. This style of leadership would not be one that was authoritarian. As discussed in the review of literature (Chapter two), authoritarian principals apply a top-down management style to make decisions, which would not be effective in the governance structure and culture of Bradley College. Rather, this college would need a principal who was not autocratic and willing to be participative and accepting of other leaders in the community making decisions that impacted the vision and long-term direction of the college. It was imperative that the next principal had the ability to manage decisions that may, at times, be overturned by the governing board, the senior pastor or the national executive. These qualities were critical to this appointment, if their tenure was to be stable and effective. Data that reinforced the willingness of the successful candidate (the principal at the time of the study) to work within this cultural hierarchy was implied from their comment:

“I’m a pretty good follower. If there’s a chain of command, the board chair’s the boss. I don’t have any ego problems like that. I’m not intellectually a pushover. I will debate things but I think sometimes there can be a, I’ve seen, in my time, I’ve seen pretty well principals having too much of an ego” (BC_INT_P_lines_188-193).

A link was identified between the selection process and the cultural fit and the successful candidate. In her research, Striepe (2010) emphasised the influence that relational and religious affiliation of selection panels have on the quality of successful candidates in faith based schools. Subsequent research by Walker and Kwan (2012) noted that where non-educational members were involved in the selection and recruitment of a principal, there was a need for greater specification of selection criteria, a greater
understanding of the principal’s role and responsibilities, and a shared understanding of what these meant in the context of a school. In the case of Bradley College, the appointment was endorsed through the local church committee of management and national executive, so the successful candidate had an obligation to ensure that the college vision was aligned to the church vision at both local and national levels.

**Vision.** “Develop students to be Christian disciples and capable young adults who make a valuable contribution and difference in society” (BC_DA3_p.57). The vision of a school is related to its purpose and has typically communicated the values, ethos and long-term direction of the school. Davies’ model, encompassed by the overall vision, is depicted in Figure 11 below.

![Davies' Model, Vision and Areas](adapted from Davies 2003; p. 310)

Bradley College was established as a ministry of the sponsoring church governed by the national executive. This governance structure meant that the educational philosophy, its aims and goals of the vision had to be aligned to the doctrines of the relevant church and be approved by the national executive and local church, which was noted in the
governance policies and procedures manual. The manual stated that the “written statements of philosophy and aims are to be approved and adopted by the Governing body” (BC_DA_p.7). Therefore, although the next principal was not required to become a member of the sponsoring church, they would need to adopt the denomination philosophy of the church and lead the college in ensuring it was endorsed in college programs and activities in advancing the overall vision of the college and the national board. Advancing this vision would encompass a fostering of enrolled students in the particular doctrinal perspectives of the governing church. The sixth responsibility was contained in the principal’s duty statement: “implement the college mission statement to the students” (BC_DA2_p.3). As the vision of the college suggests, the new principal would need the personal and professional qualities to facilitate goals and actions associated with the cultural ethos of the college, so this quality can be associated with the area of culture and values, encompassed in Davies’ model.

**Culture and values.** “The big thing that we were looking for was cultural fit and understanding of our governance and structure” (BC_INT_PBC_lines_63-65). As in the case of Lewis College, this area and its elements was the most important one in this principal recruitment process, because it was important to engage a principal with personal and professional values and beliefs that were a good fit to those of the church. The elements of culture and values are depicted in Figure 12 below.
Viewing the desired qualities of the next principal through the lens of Davies’ model, it was important for the successful applicant to know and understand the senior pastor’s leadership style. Data analysis identified the strength of the continuing influence of the senior pastor. This was noted in the requirement of the new principal, once appointed, to attend relevant church meetings so that “… gets familiar with my culture and the best way for that would be to come into my staff meetings so … also attends my staff meeting where I do leadership training” (BC_INT_SP_lines_125-128). Upon appointment, the new principal would be obliged to accept those tenets, rules and traditions in the college that had already been established, especially where they linked to the governing church, and any correlated influences in the college. It was considered that previous years of instability in principal tenure had eventuated because the appointed principals were not fully cognisant of their responsibilities in relation to the senior pastor and their involvement in the life of the college. This involvement included visiting “with the leaders once a month and I give devotions, go on the roster for devotions with the college at the church once a week” (BC_INT_SP_lines_114-117). Key responsibilities in the principal’s duty statement included leading and managing staff, so the principal’s leadership style would be an important aspect of establishing their authority to lead the school towards successful outcomes. For the new principal to be effective, they were obligated to understand and navigate the community environment, adjusting their leadership style to address issues impacting the continued development of the college imposed by the senior pastor. In the review of literature, this leadership style was identified as participative, which embraced shared decision making and group participation, respectful of the contribution made by its members (Deal, 2010). Working within the college and church communities located in close proximity required an ability to engage with staff and other stakeholders, so relationships would be a critical focus area for the next principal and was the second most important quality the interview committee identified.
**Relationships.** “We have our personal time together, every week. And that’s when we come in a relationship building exercise as … two leaders” (BC_INT_SP_lines_114-117). Building relationships with the senior pastor, as noted in the above comment, was a critical quality needed in the new principal’s skillset. The elements of relationships in Davies’ model are depicted in Figure 13 below.

The new principal required the necessary skills and capacity to lead and manage these areas with the full support of the senior pastor. They would also need to navigate any tensions between priorities in decisions that may affect both entities because they are located on the same campus. The senior pastor confirmed this when they said that “the church feels very safe in the governance of our college via the leadership of our church” (BC_INT_SP_lines_72-73). This comment alluded to a key requirement of the next principal to not only work proactively with the senior pastor but also the national executive.
and be supportive of its mission and vision. The abilities and attitudes of staff and members of the community were important if meaningful solutions to improve current practice succeed. One of the goals of the college was to promote collaboration amongst students and teachers. These conditions were enhanced by:

“Our relationships between each other, relationships with kids, relationships with parents, what our classes look like, what they feel like, the way we do things. Staff developed these really great sentences that if we believe this, then this looks like on the ground, those sorts of things” (BC_INT_P_lines_251-255). Davies (2011) stated that high-quality interpersonal relationships were an essential part of inspiring the school community as a coherent team to work together towards a common goal. Improving current practice entailed defining a successful learning community and determining which aspects of the college needed reviewing or redeveloping as a successful learning community (Hopkins and Harris, 2013). Davies (2011) argued that without effective relationships between the principal and important stakeholders in the community, executing the vision of the college would be hindered or stagnate.

**Strategy.** “Setting a strategic plan is probably the key thing that the principal is tasked with” (BC_INT_IBC_lines_217-219). The area of strategy, in Davies’ model, was another important area identified from the data in the recruitment process. Strategy was absent in the college during previous years of instability, and as a result there was no coherence any short-term plans in the college. Because of previous years of principal instability and the lack of board expertise in education, there was no definitive strategy or vision articulated for the future of the college. In addition, the governing board lacked the educational expertise in preparing and executing the college vision through a strategic plan. The recruitment of a strategic principal who could undertake this task was a key focus of the interview committee. Previous years of instability had impeded the long-term strategic development of the college. This focus aligned with the area of strategy and its elements which are depicted in Figure 14 below.
One of the responsibilities of the governing board, included in the governance policies and procedures manual, was to formulate a strategic intent and strategic plan for the college. The new principal would be the crucial driver and enabler of school improvement. One of the reasons for appointing the successful candidate as their next principal was because of the presentation made at the second-round interview on the future direction of the college, during which “…addressed every single criterion that we had. …came with vision, … came with purpose, … was articulate” (BC_INT_BC_lines_145-148). This presentation addressed the vision of the college and its future development in a manner that was articulate, determined and energising. Therefore, when appointed, the governing board delegated their first task:

“Taking the lead in setting a strategic plan. Where it’s to do with governance, where it’s to do with the vision of the college, that’s where the board is particularly interested. The board has been very much involved in the process. Many of the board members are parents” (BC_INT_IBC_lines_206-215).

Developing the strategic intent of the college and its future required the new principal to negotiate with the local church, senior pastor and the governing body in a cooperative manner because the criteria for success of any strategic plan would need to be approved by both entities. The college philosophy and aims were to “maintain the future direction of the college in relationships with the local church to the wider Christian Community and within the vision of the Movement as a whole” (BC_DA3_p. 7). This evidence reflected the review of literature noting that a principal looked to give significant attention to the plans and
processes where the outcome depended not only on the principal’s actions but also on the actions of other members of the college and its community (Davies, 2011). In the case of Bradley College, the development and execution of the strategic plan would need to take into account the existing learning capabilities at the college.

**Learning.** “Education qualifications and the person being qualified for the job.” (BC_INT_IBC_lines_28-31). This area aligns with the third responsibility in the principal’s duty statement that would require the successful candidate to oversee the development and evaluation of curriculum in the college within the aims of Christian education that aligned with the doctrine of the sponsoring church. The new principal would also supervise planning of subject choices, work programs and assessment routines. Within this area of learning are contained the following elements represented in Figure 15 below.

![Figure 15: Elements Contained in Learning](an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)

Applying these elements as a lens to this selection and recruitment process, the new principal would require the educational capabilities to lead and manage the vision. These capabilities would include reviewing the existing curriculum, work programs and methods for delivering teaching and learning; and develop future plans to advance the vision because of previous principal instability resulting in loss of vision. A comment by the senior pastor indicates that the successful applicant would need to possess and demonstrate “academic and the visionary qualities” (BC_INT_SP_lines_19-20) needed to lead the college. The philosophy and learning elements relating to the teaching and learning of the
college were encompassed within the philosophy of Christian education adopted by the college, through a framework using the Bible as a lens through which students viewed what they learnt. In the case of Bradley College, this framework was constructed around the particular denomination so, upon appointment, the next principal of the college would need to lead the curriculum design, delivery and assessment within this unique philosophy. Relevant staffing, finance and physical resources had to be developed in the school. For example, the college business manager was part of the senior pastor’s staff for one hour a week (BC_INT_SP_line_131) and some resources, such as the site entry and car park were common to both the college and the church.

**Resources.** “Decisions around staff programme, behaviour management, stuff around marketing, um, or even, here’s a good example, what we need to do to acknowledge academic achievement, and our key messages at assemblies and presentation nights” (BC_INT_P_lines_332-335). The successful candidate was appointed because they had demonstrated, primarily during the second interview that they had the capacity to plan for the needs and development of the college. The elements contained in this area are depicted in Figure 16 below.

![Figure 16](image)

Key elements in this area of Davies’ model aligned to the principal’s duty statement. First, core competencies aligned with the first key responsibility of administration and the formation of educational goals within the annual operational plan; second, human resources supported the fourth key responsibility of overseeing staff; third, finance brought
into line administration involving the provision and supervision of the college budget; fourth, physical facilities aligned with administration and the building of the relevant facilities required for educational delivery; fifth, materials was associated with administration and decisions on subjects. Internal environments encompassed the culture, organisational structure, financial and physical assets, recruitment and training of staff, as well as the way in which the college was managed on a daily basis. Since the new principal was tasked with re-igniting the vision of the college and strengthening the community, they required skills relevant to this duty statement. A key obligation of the new principal in the recruitment of staff was to ensure they complied with relevant employment policies and practices contained in the “employee code of conduct, the Christian character statement, the commitment to the statement to abide by that by the employee, church affiliation” (BC_INT_PBC_lines_189-192) ensuring the links to the Christian ethos were upheld. External environments include the demographics, political, legal, competitive and financial conditions of the college. The researcher was not involved in the interviews themselves and so the original data was not available. Walker and Kwan (2012) acknowledged that it remained important to interview panels that the candidates demonstrated understanding and linkage to the context of their school, so candidates needed to research the school, its foundations, beliefs, and history, offering a plan for the future of the school if they were appointed (Walker and Kwan, 2012).

5.4. Emerging Insights in the Bradley College Case

In the case of Bradley College, the new principal had the responsibility of working with the committee of management and senior pastor. The appointee required a knowledge, understanding and acceptance of the governance structure and its levels of authority, formal and real. This outcome from the data analysis recognised an element not explicitly depicted within Davies’ model, which was socialisation. Socialisation could be viewed as an element within the larger area of relationships. Socialisation aligned with the
other elements in this area, such as stakeholder relationships, decision-making processes and organisational structure.

**Socialisation.** “Know specifically where their position lies within an organisation and just who they are accountable to and who is accountable to them completely” (BC_INT_PBC_lines_96-103). Socialisation of a new principal is the process whereby they acquired a knowledge and understanding of the norms, values, and skills relevant to their position. The element of socialisation was a strong feature in the data and a key part of ensuring a smooth transition into the school community and its specific context. Vision in the college had been halted because of the succession of principals in less than five years, so the college was effectively in crisis mode and any development and improvement in the college had stagnated. As a result, the new principal needed to re-establish the vision. Since there were no members with educational expertise on the governing board, there was a reliance on the successful candidate to not only lead the vision, but propose a strategic plan for the college. Requiring candidates to give a presentation on their vision for the college, in second round interviews, was a key indicator of this dependence on the new principal. Accountability for proposing and then leading the vision by the new principal was not going to proceed without the approval of the senior pastor and the national executive, because the college “was integral to the mission and vision of the church and are ministries of their respective local church” (BC_DA3_p. 6_lines_26-27). In practice, the senior pastor and the national executive could veto the appointment of the governing board’s preferred candidate, so it was important for this candidate to be one that would be endorsed by all levels of governance.

The process of socialisation provides a new principal with understanding of the critical importance of the interdependence of the vision of the college with that of the local church and denomination. Preparation for this process with the successful candidate was
Challenges of Principal Succession and Recruitment

Evident in the data, meeting with the preferred candidate in their home, prior to formal appointment, was significant:

“Just privately, not secretly, but just personally we went down for just more of a ‘get to know you’ session before we made any formal offer we went to the house for a cup of coffee one night and basically laid all our cards on the table” (BC_INT_PBC_lines_142-150).

Socialisation, within the organisation, was unique and specific to this school context. In the case of Bradley College, the newly appointed principal was obligated to orient and adapt to the college, and its governance structure. Preparing and implementing the strategic plan, would require constant reshaping, restructure and refinement of the goals and actions relating to the strategic plan. The newly appointed principal must adjust to the relevant complex milieu of the organisation and the authority of the senior pastor to gain occupational identity, but only within the boundaries of the authority of the national executive, senior pastor and College Board. The past board chair was also concerned about the response from staff members regarding the recruitment process, and the credibility of the governing board, because past principal tenures had been unsuccessful. The newly appointed principal of Bradley College was an “outsider”. This principal was not known to staff as would have been the case with the deputy principal. He was not a member of the respective denomination. To reduce any apprehension by staff, the past board chair and the governing board maintained an open channel of communication for staff, parents and other members of the church community through a dedicated email address “to try and maintain communication so grumblings could come to the board and they felt that they were heard not just sort of simmer under the surface” (BC_FG_PBC_lines_190-194). Steyn (2013) highlighted the impact that principal recruitment had on stakeholders in schools. As a result, periods of apprehension and fear of the unknown about the successor were often created, so principals were required to take actions that engendered trust in the school as a provider of credible education (Steyn, 2013; Browning, 2014).
5.5. Conclusion

In this case study, vision had retreated due to the crisis mode that had developed as a result of the sequence of principals within four years. This succession of principals reinforced the governing board’s resolve to recruit a principal who knew what was required to turn the vision into outcomes and would be supported by the senior pastor and national executive. The board chair affirmed this in his comment: “the role of principal is so critical to the direction of the whole school and to the welfare of staff and the welfare of the whole community” (BC_INT_BC_lines_250-253). This direction, referred to by the past board chair was one that linked to the vision of the local and national church bodies.

The potential impact of this data on the strategic architecture of the college and its vision, suggests a misalignment or heavy reliance on one area of the model more than others, that could lead to further challenges, particularly in the area of relationships. This selection decision was fully focussed on recruiting a principal who would advance a vision but vision was that of the church, not of the educational organisation. The literature on hybrid organisations affirms the need for the organisation to be open and transparent, communicating the way in which the resources are managed and distributed was important to prevent the relationship between the centralised authority and the subsidiary entity from becoming toxic (Weiss, 2007). Further, there also needs to be alignment of vision between both entities.

Priority was given to finding a principal who could fit the existing culture of the college as part of the church community. This priority meant that other areas for successful leadership of the college, depicted in Davies model, would be limited until the culture and values area and relationships area of the model were stabilised and consolidated.

Applying the model as a lens to analyse the data, overall, the areas of culture and values, relationships and strategy emerged as a greater priority than learning and resources. Cultural fit and establishing productive relationships with the local and national church bodies were key qualities identified in the data analysis. In the area of strategy, it was
critical for the new principal to articulate a way forward in establishing criteria for success.

The socialisation process required the principal to undergo a process of orientation, adaption, reshaping, consolidation and refinement in leading the college and its community (Saks and Gruman, 2011).

From this analysis, Davies’ model, with respect to the principal recruitment process at Bradley College could be illustrated as outlined in Figure 17 over the page. The most important areas have been highlighted in green. The new element of socialisation, within the area of relationships, is identified in red, which was not depicted in Davies’ original model.

![Davies Strategic Architecture Model, Post Analysis](image)

This chapter described the contextual landscape within which the key participants within this case study were seeking to share the story of the journey they had undertaken in the principal recruitment process, after four years of principal instability. The distinctive context of Bradley College provided the foundation for the experiences and perspectives of the key participants. Stories shared by the participants highlighted the unique experiences, processes and challenges that presented themselves during the succession and recruitment
process. Participants’ stories of the governing board’s principal recruitment process, and
the voyage they undertook, provided the foundation on which analysis could be undertaken, framed within the context of the strategic architecture model (Davies, 2003). Fisher College and its principal recruitment journey is the third and final site, in this research, is introduced in the next chapter.
Chapter Six: Case Study Three: The Fisher College Story

“Ultimately the success of our site is going to be how well I work with the principal” (FC_INT_BC_lines_61-62).

6.1. The Site

Compared to Lewis College and Bradley College, Fisher College (pseudonym) offered the third different setting, for two reasons. First, Fisher College is a church-governed school as a single entity, whereas Lewis College was a non-denominational school governed by a company limited by guarantee, and Bradley College was one of four church-governed schools, overseen by a governing body termed the national executive. Second, whereas principal tenure at Lewis College had been stable and lengthy, and principal tenure at Bradley College had been unstable and brief during the previous four years, principal tenure at Fisher College was terminated before completion. This decision was made by the board chair of the college resulting in the unscheduled departure of the incumbent and a subsequent principal vacancy.

Fisher College is a P-12 co-educational independent Christian college with approximately 700 enrolled students, located in regional Queensland. The college opened in the late 1970s as an Accelerated Christian Education College in Queensland. Accelerated Christian Education started in Australia in 1976, and was an affordable method of providing curriculum to the Christian school sector at minimal cost. Originating in the United States of America this program provided schools with ready-made Christian curriculum documents and a system of schooling that was available without the expense of physical facilities, because students were placed in cubicles for most of their learning each day and progressed through booklets on each unit of work known as “pacers”. This system did not employ teachers because they believed it could operate with supervisors and monitors, who fulfilled the role of teacher aides.

Currently Fisher College is accredited with qualified teachers and has remained a ministry of the local sponsoring church. The members of the governing board of the
college were appointed by the church and the senior pastor was also the board chair. At the
time of this case study, the principal was completing the third year of a first appointment
as principal and was the successful candidate in this recruitment case study. The
governance structure outlining the organisational decision-making flow, which affects the
college principal, is illustrated in Figure 18 below.

![Figure 18 Governance Structure of Fisher College](image)

Information about the site participants involved in the interviews and focus groups is
provided below.

In this case study, the interview participants were the principal, the senior pastor of
the sponsoring church and three board members. These participants comprised five of the
six board members of the college. These board members were also the interview
committee for the principal selection process. The current principal was the successful
candidate in this recruitment process. The principal was not part of the focus group
discussion due to school commitments. Details of the participants’ profiles are outlined in
Table 7 over the page.
Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position and Code</th>
<th>Background Profiles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal (P)</td>
<td>The principal was in the third year of his first appointment as principal. Prior to taking up the role as principal of Fisher; had taught at a large independent, coeducational Christian school for 14 years, finishing as a head of department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Chair (BC)</td>
<td>The incumbent board chair has been senior pastor and board chair of the college since 2007. Prior to entering the church ministry, he was a journalist; also a parent of the College.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board member 1 (BM1)</td>
<td>Board member 1 was a member of the school board for 10 years; a retired nurse, teacher and married to a pastor from a different church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board member 2 (BM2)</td>
<td>Board member 2 was the church secretary for many years, but is now retired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board member 3 (BM3)</td>
<td>Board member 3 worked as a project manager for the city where the College is located.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants were selected because they met the inclusion criteria as outlined in chapter three. The qualities and skills required in the next principal and the steps undertaken to recruit the new principal were examined in the data. Data was collected through interviews, one focus group discussion and analysis of the relevant documents made available by the college. Six documents were analysed as part of the case study and provided insight into the duties required of the new principal, professional and personal information and qualifications required from candidates in their applications, rules and guidelines that affected the principal’s role, questions asked of candidates who were shortlisted and information about the key personnel in the sponsoring church and college that with whom the successful candidate met. These documents were the advertisement for the principal (DA1), the principal’s position description (DA2), the application template for interested applicants (DA3), key school policies requiring action that
underpinned the selection of the principal (DA4), and interview questions for shortlisted applicants (DA5) and travel itinerary for the principal (DA6). Steps taken in the succession and recruitment process are discussed in the next section.

**6.2. Succession Planning and Recruitment**

Data was analysed to identify key aspects in the process of recruiting the new principal of Fisher College. In contrast to Lewis College, there were no succession plans at Bradley College and Fisher College. The difference between this principal recruitment process and that of Bradley College was that the contract of the incumbent at Fisher College was terminated prior to completion by the board chair. The decision to not extend the contract of the previous principal at Fisher College was because of staffing and confidence problems, a lack of morale and a lack of direction and dysfunctional processes in the college, under their leadership:

“the numbers of teachers who had been here quite a while, there was starting to be verbalised a lack of morale in the school and people looking at other options” (FC_INT_BC_lines_45-47).

Another board member remarked that “there were some significant process and cultural issues causing quality staff to up and leave in a very short period of time” (FC_INT_BC3_lines_99-100).

Additional concerns of the board members regarding the incumbent principal’s leadership related to a growing culture separation between the college and church. Two of the board members commented on this, saying:

“We were suffering, from my point of view, some significant culture problems in this school which I would say were classic culture problems in an organisation that was lacking in clear direction, having clear, having a real sense of leadership and vision” (FC_INT_B3_lines_87-88)

and

“We didn’t want the school to be a separate part of the church, and we had church and school boards set up so that church and the school were governed, not really
together. We never really wanted the school to be its own entity.”
(FC_INT_B2_lines_111-112_130).

The impact of this principal’s leadership on the school culture, management and credibility as an educational organisation was so serious that the governing board would, in any case, have terminated their contract due to the negative impact of their leadership on enrolments and staff morale:

“We were seeing teachers, very good teachers that were coming in very excited about working in a Christian school, even from New Zealand or South Africa or up from (capital city), coming here very excited to start and within a year were leaving very disgruntled and very shocked that they thought they were coming to something very good, came here to apparently dysfunctional processes, dysfunctional in the school and couldn’t make sense of what was going on and they left. We saw four staff, if I recall in the last year the former principal was here that that occurred”
(FC_INT_BM3_lines_91-98).

It was this action that provided the catalyst to initiate a new principal recruitment process.

After the departure of the previous principal, the college board recalled and appointed a retired past principal of Fisher College to lead and manage the college for the interim period. At the time of recruitment, this past principal was still actively involved in the college and church communities. The next step was to form an interview committee and determine the qualities the governing board were seeking in their next principal and include them in the position description for the principal.

Preparation of the interview committee. An interview committee was formed from the current board, by agreement amongst the current members. There was one member on the interview committee who was not part of the school or church. This member was the principal of a school and was invited by the Fisher College board chair, because of the cultural and church alignment of the two schools. Both schools were governed by separate churches belonging to the same denomination. The members of the interview committee compiled the advertisement and position description for the principal’s role.
Compiling the selection criteria. There was no formal selection criteria compiled; the main focus was to find a principal whose skill set aligned with the school culture. In particular, the successful applicant would need to have a good fit with the sponsoring church and an understanding that the college was a ministry of the church and not a separate entity. In this specific context, having a good fit meant that the priority was to appoint a principal who had the religious, spiritual and personality qualities to relate to, and work well with the board chair. The reader is reminded that the board chair and senior pastor were the same person. These religious, spiritual and personal qualities were encompassed in five key accountabilities within the roles and responsibilities of the new principal, which are outlined below (FC_DA3_p. 2).

1. Vision: Ability to develop strategic plans.
2. Pastoral/Spiritual: Close walk with God; proactive in Christian witness; desire to see the college community grow in faith.
3. Leadership: Proven leadership skills; ability to work with and support other leaders; accessible to and supportive of all College staff; humility in dealing with others; communication skills in dealing with the wider community and the college community.
4. Educational: Demonstrate educational credentials; experience in liaison with curriculum organisations and curriculum development; appropriate teaching qualifications and registration; ability to empathise and communicate with students.
5. Financial and Business Management: Demonstrate financial management credentials; experience in liaising with finding bodies; experience in co-operation with college board and its appointees on financial management.

To assess the spiritual qualities in the second key responsibility, applicants were asked to provide a personal faith testimony with their applications. As part of the
recruitment process the board chair contacted known colleagues in other similar church
governed schools and enquired as to whether there were potential candidates within their
schools. One of the colleagues, contacted by the board chair, recommended a candidate
who was currently employed in their school. This candidate resulted in being the
successful applicant. Coincidentally, it was this colleague who was also the external
member of the interview panel.

**Advertising the position.** The board secretary procured a selection of principal
application forms and advertisement templates from websites of other schools that had
been posted on social media websites and newspapers. During the four-month recruitment
period, these resources informed the board members in determining the content and format
of the media advertisement, roles and responsibilities and policies articulating the
employment of the next principal. After the deadline for submission of applications,
candidates were shortlisted for interview, based on the quality of their formal applications
and accompanying documentation.

**Interviewing the candidates.** The shortlisting process was conducted by the
interview committee, which resulted in four candidates being selected for first-round
interviews. Concurrently with this step, the board chair held an informal face-to-face
meeting with one of the candidates, who had been recommended by the principal of the
school (also on the interview panel) where the successful candidate was employed. This
meeting occurred after the position had been advertised but before the deadline for formal
applications to be submitted. After this face-to-face meeting, the board chair encouraged
the candidate to submit a written application for the position of principal, which they did
and submitted prior to the closing date for applications:

“We put the advertisements out, we’ve got all the résumés back, by that stage I’ve
met (current principal name), I’ve talked a bit more with (name) and encouraged him
to apply. As chairman of the board I know who I want” (FC_INT_BC_lines_126-127).
At the conclusion of the first round interviews the interview committee identified their preferred candidate. The preferred candidate was the applicant with whom the board chair had held an informal meeting and had subsequently submitted an application. In the case of Fisher College, the face-to-face meeting, which was held outside the formal recruitment process, was the dominant selection strategy. This meeting further highlights the importance of the personality of the applicant to the selection process.

The selection decision. The preferred candidate was appointed as principal at the end of the interview process. The selection decision was heavily influenced by the context of the school. As a faith based college that was a ministry of the local church, the new principal would be an ambassador for the church within the college and wider community, which was affirmed by one of the board members:

“the principal needs to establish within the school the sense that the original vision for the school is the mission of the church and not the other way round” (FC_INT_BM3_lines_106-107).

The board chair, who was senior pastor, was also a key part of the principal recruitment context in this college. The pastor viewed the recruitment process for staff employed in the church to be appropriate for the principal recruitment for the college. This process involved networking with known colleagues with whom he had an affiliation.

Once the board chair had met with the candidate, who had been recommended by the principal where the successful candidate had been employed, the decision to appoint this candidate as the next principal was resolved, from their viewpoint: “as chairman of the board I know who I want … I’ve pretty much decided that’s our guy” (FC_INT_BC_lines_129-130). This course of action by the senior pastor highlighted concerns raised by researchers about members of the selection panels operating without a clear specification of the profession, its role and responsibilities, and potential conflicts of interest in the recruitment and selection process. Other studies also noted that interview committees identified the person they wanted to employ and other candidates were only
interviewed to fulfil legal requirements, to give the appearance of fairness and the perception of due process (Macbeath, Oduro, Jacka, and Hobby, 2006; Mullen and Slagle, 2005; Walker and Kwan, 2012).

Data analysis emphasised the influence of the sponsoring church on the college leadership, demonstrated by the appointment of a past principal of the college as acting principal. In this way, the college could continue, albeit temporarily; through a leadership team that was trusted as capable of minimising any disruption until a final decision was made. This leadership team consisted of the acting principal, the head of secondary, the head of primary and the business manager. The members of the leadership team were not involved in the recruitment process and were not available for interview by the researcher due to school commitments. Applying Davies’ model to the data, the researcher provides insights into this particular principal recruitment process.

6.3. Application of Davies’ Model

Applying the model as a lens to the data, the areas in Davies’ model were not of equal value in the principal recruitment process at Fisher College. Members of the governing board were seeking a new principal who could advance the college vision as a ministry of the sponsoring church.

**Vision.** “Our vision is to graduate young people of strong Christian character who will become an influence for good in their world” (FC_DA3_p. 2). With this vision as their overarching focus, the governing board of Fisher College sought to recruit a principal who could facilitate the growth of students in knowledge and experience of the Christian faith within the doctrinal philosophy of the sponsoring church. There is no explicit reference to education in the academic field or learning that would support students’ entry into universities or apprenticeships. As with Bradley College, this vision was a faith centred vision and focussed on the spiritual culture of the college, imparting the values of the respective denominational beliefs to enrolled students. When considering candidates, who
had applied for this position, there was a conscious awareness of the particular
denomination culture. Confirmation of this insight came during the focus group
discussions when one of the board members reflected on the applications from candidates
that had applied for the position: “…church on Sunday morning and what’s that
relationship going to look like? There was a real concern that we were in trouble with that
if we didn’t find the right person” (FC_FG_BM3_lines_75-81).

The college board wanted a principal who could establish positive and stable
relationships with the board chair, as well as other key stakeholders. This priority can be
aligned to the relationships area of Davies’ model.

**Relationships.** “The heartbeat of any school has to be relationships”
(FC_INT_P_line_72). Developing strong relationships with key stakeholders, especially
the board chair, and was a recurring thread throughout this principal recruitment process.
Relationships were a critical area because of the instability resulting from the previous
principal’s contract and the dual role of the senior pastor as board chair. Within Davies’
model, this area is composed of the following elements, depicted in Figure 19 below.

![Elements Contained in Relationships](an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)

First, the board chair considered hiring staff through known relationships was more
successful than the formal process: “finding a new principal through existing relationships.
Maybe that’s my background in church work is that things tend to operate a lot more through relationships” (FC_INT_BC_lines_74 – 76). Second, the greatest qualities of the successful applicant were building relationships with staff members as a united team and motivate self-confidence in their capability to work with the principal in advancing the vision. This view was expressed by the successful candidate. Studies into leadership styles noted that principals were the symbolic souls of the organisations, responsible for motivating staff to pursue the vision (Chopra, 2011). The style of leadership needed in the new principal, to be successful, had to convince staff in the college community to collectively partner in developing the college as a ministry of the sponsoring even if they were not members of this church. Therefore, the successful candidate would need to embody the quality of a servant leader, based on teamwork and community. As with the Lewis College case study, servant leaders have been identified as being inclusive of others in decision-making and concerned with allowing staff to become self-managing and enabling their autonomy (Spears, 2010; Striepe, 2014). The preferred candidate was considered the best applicant based on the initial relationship established with the board chair during their first meeting, prior to the formal interview, and was prepared to progress the college vision and the church vision as one. The next principal of Fisher College was also expected to manage the variety of expectations and accountability requirements imposed by the sponsoring church. The newly appointed principal evidently understood what was required in working with members of a church governed school community, possibly because of his previous employment experience. The rationale behind this process was to restore stability and dissolve the fear that had developed under the leadership of the previous principal. For Fisher College at this time, the selection of the next principal needed to be strongly focussed on a person whose leadership style would complement that of the senior pastor, developing trust through the relationship, and successful negotiation skills. Trust was also an element identified in the Lewis College case study, yet not
explicitly identified in Davies’ model. The senior pastor wanted someone who would develop, nurture and preserve the social relationships prioritised by the church and the college: “I was sure he was the right one the relationship network, where he was from and his philosophical understanding of how we do church schools, and from just spending time with him and feeling the chemistry, the affinity. I’m trying to build the next ten, twenty years with this person and I don’t want two silos (FC_INT_BC_lines_158-160_168). Trust was fostered through these positive relationships. Another important area in Davies’ model was that of culture and values, because the principal had to be aligned with the values and shared beliefs of the sponsoring church.

**Culture and values.** “Culture will consume vision. If you don’t have a culture that is real and loving and supportive, it will chew up your vision and your vision will never be achieved” (FC_INT_P_lines_822-824). This participant comment indicates clearly the view that recruiting a principal who was a good fit to the sponsoring church would help to ensure there was alignment with the relevant doctrine as well as being an advocate for the sponsoring church within the college community. The document of the roles and responsibilities of the principal’s role described this quality as a “close personal walk with God. Proactive in Christian witness. Desire to see the College Community grow in faith” (FC_DA3_p.1_lines_26-28). This quality can be aligned to the culture and values area of Davies’ model. The elements of this area are depicted in Figure 20 below:

![Figure 20](image.png)

Figure 20  Elements Contained in Culture and Values (an extract from Davies, 2003: p. 310)
Cultural fit included philosophical fit which meant “an alignment of thinking; they had to see the school as a ministry of the church” (FC FG BM2_lines_115-115). Instability experienced under the previous principal’s leadership had resulted in long serving staff members resigning from the college. The view of the newly appointed principal, interviewed for this study, was “a culture of fear in the school” (FC_INT_P_line_148) had developed under the previous principal’s leadership, although he did not elaborate what actions of the previous principal may have caused this fear culture. These problems were also acknowledged by one of the board members, who commented on the lack of clear direction, a lack of leadership in decision making processes and a lack of trust in the leadership of the principal by both the college board and staff. Through their personality and relational leadership style the new principal would need to unite the school community to bring about excitement in relation to the vision of the school and ignite a renewed commitment to work engagement as a staff member. The incumbent principal offered a personal perspective on this quality:

“Leadership is about serving people. My job is to serve my team. I see my role as an enabler. It’s to enable my directors, my executive team, my heads of department, my team leaders; it’s to enable them to do their job. I have a huge amount of power to be able to change and do things but my responsibility with all of that power is to enable my team, not to create a situation that feathers my own nest” (FC_INT_P_lines_819-826).

The frequent mention of the word “team” illustrated this principal’s view of leadership. The literature review (Chapter Two) noted the work of Senge (2006) in articulating the role of leaders translating vision into a shared one and its future intent within their organisations (Senge, 2006). Senge (2006) identified the notion of team learning as a critical component to establishing and strengthening a school as a learning organisation. As the board’s delegate, the new principal of Fisher College was an essential part of galvanising staff to commit to the long-term goals of the school. As such, the successful candidate would need the ability to lead, model, foster and engage staff in conversations about how their work is valued and contributes to the future success of the school. The review of literature
identified this leadership style as charismatic. Charismatic leadership has the potential to achieve credibility when there has been leadership instability in the life of a school (Iselin, 2010). It has the potential to re-ignite the communities’ passion and belief in the higher calling of achieving the organisation’s vision. The third area of focus that can be linked to this principal recruitment process was strategy.

**Strategy.** “The driver and enabler of school improvement is the strategic planning process” (FC_DA5_p. 1). Since one of the key responsibilities of the new principal was to build a strategy for further development of the college framed by a strategic plan, a key personal attribute of the successful candidate was expertise in developing strategic plans. The elements contained in this area are depicted in Figure 21 below.

![Figure 21: Elements Contained in Strategy (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)](image)

The ability to develop a strategy for the future was listed in the roles and responsibilities for the new principal (FC_DA3_p. 2). However, it was not explicitly stated that this strategy would need to be inclusive of the whole church future development plans. The depth of this desired quality was emphasised during the interview with one of the board members: “a lot of the issues that we talk about in the board are all about the strategies for the next five, ten years down the road, where the church and school will be and look like in ten years” (FC_INT_BM3_lines_142-144). The data was significant in highlighting the strength of the symbiotic connection that existed between the college and
sponsoring church and the importance placed on the principal of the college contributing to
the vision of the church. When they discussed the future development of site, both entities
were considered in the deliberations. These discussions encompassed a strategic planning
meeting that was held during the first three months after the newly appointed principal
took up their appointment. To further progress the leadership development of the newly
appointed principal after this strategic planning meeting, the principal who had facilitated
the meeting was retained by the board to mentor him by providing professional
improvement, growth and support. This mentoring process was arranged once the decision
to appoint this principal had been resolved, as it would be their first appointment as
principal. As this process unfolded, the mentor supported and guided this principal in
decisions and actions. This strategy was successful; possibly there was a pre-existing
positive relationship between the two principals. Research has found that there was
increased effectiveness of mentoring where there is a positive, established relationship
(Megginson and Clutterbuck, 2007). The result of the new principal’s leadership, during
the first six months, was improved teacher morale, increased student enrolments and
positive feedback from parents, which had the effect of strengthening the school culture
and stabilising and unifying the community. In the recruitment and selection process at
Fisher College, data analysis showed the area of resources from Davies’ model was given
less priority than culture and values, relationships and strategy.

**Resources.** “Plan, oversee and apply the physical and financial resources”
(FC_DA3_p.1). This quote from one of the documents affirmed that one of the
responsibilities of the new principal would be to lead and manage the provision of these
resources to promote effective teaching and learning. In his research, Davies (2003)
examined data which demonstrated that, within the strategic architecture model, it was
important for the principal to know and understand the resource needs of a school to
enhance its development and successful outcomes. The elements of the area of resources in Davies’ model are shown in the Figure 22 below.

Figure 22 Elements Contained in Resources (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)

The fifth quality the governing board was seeking in their next principal was the ability to manage the financial and business operations of the college including “a pool, sporting facilities, the ability for us to open the pool to the community because families come to use the school for kids’ swimming lessons” (FC_INT_P_lines_170-171). The effective oversight of managing these operations meant aligning and allocating the relevant resources, employment of the specialised staff and providing an effective and safe learning environment. Managing the financial and business operations of the college encompassed the implementation of relevant polices and strategic plans ensuring that agreed budgets were adhered to. Because the church and college were located on one site, the principal was required to work with the senior pastor and church to accommodate the symbiotic resources of both entities, such as site entry and car park. No decisions regarding the future plans of the college would occur without the involvement of its senior pastor. Even in this area, therefore, the new principal would have to navigate priorities of the senior pastor, the church board and the college board to ensure the best outcomes for the college were achieved. This quality and the area of resources in Davies’ model can be associated with
the areas of strategy and relationships. The successful oversight of resources in the college would impact on the learning programs in the college.

**Learning.** “We offer a high-quality Christian education to families is core to how we operate” (FC_INT_P_lines_726-727). As the educational leader of the college, the governing board had included the desire to employ a principal with educational qualifications, teaching qualifications, relevant educational experiences and effective communication with students. These qualities aligned with the area of learning in Davies’ model, the elements of which are shown in Figure 23 below.

![Elements Contained in Learning](image)

Figure 23 Elements Contained in Learning (an extract from Davies, 2003; p. 310)

Although the successful applicant had educational leadership experience as a head of department, he had never fulfilled the role of head of school, deputy principal or principal prior to this appointment. Data analysis identified differing views amongst board members as to whether to recruit a principal who already had the experience and skillset or support the development of these skills and experiences through professional development, study tours and other leadership development events. One board member who commented, “I more or less look at the person and of course their academic standards are needful but they can always be improved through further studies anyway” (FC_INT_BM2_lines_58-59). Another board member acknowledged the importance of the principal’s capability as an education leader if the college was to progress in its educational outcomes, “a principal has to be on the cutting edge and know what’s going on in the nation as far as education is concerned” (FC_INT_BM1_lines_146-147). Research acknowledged that some principals and other school leaders navigated towards focusing on skills within their role that they
were best suited for, so they sometimes developed a ‘de facto’ relationship with curriculum design and teaching, because they became out of touch with teaching practice (Fink and Resnick, 2001; Iselin, 2010). In this case study, because the new principal did not have the credibility of past leadership experience as a principal, and his leadership experience had been as a department head on one specific subject, improving the learning culture in classrooms would need the support of the executive staff. This reliance was enhanced by his team leadership style. Emerging insights in relation to this case study have been explored in the next section.

6.4. Emerging Insights in the Fisher College Case

As with Bradley College, socialisation was an emerging insight gained from the data, yet not depicted in Davies’ original model. The vision of Fisher College was linked to the spiritual foundation of the college and its sponsoring church, so the personal and professional qualities of the successful candidate were those that enhanced the personal relationship and professional partnership with the senior pastor to understand the social mores of the community. In particular, a proactive strategy for the new principal would be developing knowledge and context of the senior pastor’s role and influence in the college community. The successful candidate also required knowledge and understanding of their role as a first-time principal.

Socialisation. “To be able to work with the board as well as the church because the school, you know, appoints the board and the church governs the school” (FC_INT_BM1_lines_45-48). The successful candidate in the Bradley college principal recruitment journey was not cognisant of the college culture and the governance structure. In contrast, the successful candidate of Fisher College was familiar with this type of culture, because he had been employed in a college governed by a church of the same denomination. There were four stages in the socialisation of the new principal, which aligned to the relevant review of literature (Bengtson, Zepeda and Parylo, 2013). The
orientation stage began when the successful candidate was employed at their previous school. In terms of orientation, this successful candidate personally developed his bearings about the college prior to his appointment, because of the networks that had been established through the respective denomination. Orientation continued during the informal meeting with the board chair prior to submitting a formal application for the position. This meeting provided the opportunity for the new principal to acquire the knowledge, values and behaviours required to undertake the role of principal in the specific site context. The adaptation of the new principal into the college community continued after appointment, when the principal intentionally embarked on a process of helping members of the community understand how the principal could lead them. Analysis showed that this development involved two key actions during his first week as principal. First, on the first day the principal parked the car as far away from the school buildings as possible, which then provided opportunities to greet and communicate with parents, students and staff members walking to the buildings; thus developing immediate impressions that would be communicated to other parents within informal parent communication networks. Second, an introductory meeting with the college and church staff was arranged by the board chair. At this meeting, the new principal was introduced, where the principal had the chance to speak about:

“Why I was here and what I felt God had asked me and my family to do. And inside of that, spoke about why I love education, my journey and I used specific experiences that I had had with my students over the last, you know, eighteen, nineteen years of teaching” (FC_INT_P_lines_75-80).

Communicating past experience as a leader to the church and college community was important for staff and church members to see and also to know the passion held for the college, despite being a newcomer. As a first-time principal, the interactions with members of the college community were substantial in providing the appointee with an understanding of their role and shaping their professional identity, image and self-worth, without being overshadowed by the senior pastor in the college. The new principal had to establish an
educational platform within the faith based culture of the community, ensuring the vision and mission of the church did not dominate that of the school. In the Literature review (Chapter Two), the degree to which principals established self-efficacy in their schools was dependent on the capability to establish trust in meeting the challenges, expectations and demands of the position, through the element of trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

Socialisation was enhanced by the modelling of the principal from their previous school, and the subsequent mentoring received after their appointment. Strengthening their adaptation to the culture and community through engagement with stakeholders was achieved during the strategic planning day which involved church members, teachers and senior staff members, of the college, in communicating to the community that “the original vision for the school is the mission of the church and not the other way around” (FC_INT_BC_lines_103-108). The new principal of Fisher College engaged the senior pastor and church board in advancing the vision, working with them in setting the direction of the college community. Like Bradley College, the effect of this cultural inclusion, was a leaning toward culture and values.

Advancing the long-term plans of the school would be enhanced by the Christian lifestyle of the new principal and staff members who were willing to uphold the beliefs, values and teachings of the sponsoring church, promoting the purpose of the college in the local congregation and wider community, and actively pursuing every opportunity to maximise the college’s effectiveness as a mission agency of the sponsoring church. The third stage involved a reshaping of his leadership style to work with staff in developing their capabilities:

“I don’t have the level of student contact that I used to which I thought, oh, this is going to kill me. What I have now is I have that with my team. It’s not that I’m having those conversations with students. I am now having them with my teachers” (FC_INT_P_lines_341-349).

This extract highlights an approach that encouraged the sharing of a common goal, whilst acknowledging that each member of the “team” had an important contribution to make to the vision of the college. This was consistent with the work of psychologist Franz,
(2012), who argued that understanding and evaluating the dynamics of teams in an organisation enhanced the ability to establish procedures and structures to optimise their performance. The fourth and final stage of a principal’s socialisation was the consolidation phase, to strengthen the alignment between culture, leadership style and staff relationships. In the case of Fisher College, this principal, affirmed that an important part of a principal’s role was to build relationships and develop staff capacity and capabilities in teaching and learning, viewing their role as facilitator. The data is retrospective as when interviewed the newly appointed principal had been in the position for nearly three years. Establishing transparency through relationships and open communication between the principal, governing board, staff members and parents of the college community was critical in creating credibility as a first-time principal in a school culture that was unstable.

Given the context of Fisher College and the legacy of the previous principal, there was a need to hire a principal with relational qualities that could rebuild staff morale. The governing board may not have been aware of the fear culture that had developed under the leadership of the previous principal:

“The previous principal had been removed in difficult circumstances; the board had stood him down, there was a lot of fear. There was a culture of fear in the school. The principal to his credit, was as open and as honest as he could be. Um, if I had of known how much the fear culture existed in the school, and, look, I don’t say this lightly, they were all, it was on the verge of being a toxic culture in the college” (FC_INT_P_lines_146-152).

This situation provided a catalyst for staff resignations, possibly dissuading them from speaking up and voicing their concerns. The impact of this culture can hinder or destroy the advancement of the school vision. Therefore, the leadership style of the next principal would need to be one that was empowering, inclusive and enabling of others to make a positive contribution to the college, through an intentional strategy: “whenever you are in a conversation, whether it be with parents, families, what have you, or other team members and someone else gets put into that conversation, guess what our default position is. We talk them up” (FC_INT_P_lines_551-554). The new principal of Fisher College
was charismatic; his qualities were such that people were drawn to him because they considered that “You are about people. That’s what we need” (FC_INT_P_line_191). The preferred candidate’s focus on building relationship as a team was important in this context because of the impact from the previous principal’s leadership.

Studies have identified the importance of religion when selecting a principal for a Christian school and the advantage for candidates whose values, beliefs and viewpoints are consistent with those of the respective school, its sponsoring church and pastor (Walker and Kwan, 2009; Weiss, 2007). This is not surprising; however, it is valuable to research how a judgement is made and by whom in regard to such a requirement. In this case, the preferred candidate matched the viewpoint of one member of the interview committee, which was the senior pastor. The influence of the senior pastor in the recruitment process raised questions over the reliability of the process. Inexperience in the leadership, management and educational qualifications of the successful candidate was disregarded in this principal recruitment process, because of the senior pastor’s preference for this candidate. This distinctive aspect of this process supports research by Walker and Kwan (2012) acknowledging the face to face interview as the dominant selection strategy. This strategy was especially evident where there was a trusting relationship between the potential employer and referee (Walker and Kwan, 2012). In this case study, data indicated that the appointment of this principal was successful in the first year of their tenure:

“The feedback I was getting was that people were suddenly quite refreshed with this new leadership and were quite happy to see where this was going. And that hasn’t stopped at this point in time. I continually get feedback like that, that this is a good year; everything’s working really well” (FC_INT_BM3_lines 120-125).

In this case study, data analysis showed that the governing board recognised that hiring a principal that was a charismatic relational leader, aligned to the cultural ethos of the community was more important that the structural components of administrative and educational priorities. The capacity to build strong personal relationships with key stakeholders in the community was also important.
6.5. Conclusion

In this case study, the new principal would need the capability and capacity to bring stability and a restoration of trust within the community. Trust would be built by rebuilding staff morale and strong, positive relationships, and building confidence in the community. Effective communication of relevant directions and resolving decisions that would enable the college staff to achieve the goals for further development of the college vision was a factor in the success of this recruitment process.

Socialisation was an element that strongly featured in the data analysis yet was not depicted in Davies’ model. It was important that the new principal adjusted and adapted to the expectations of the stakeholders, internalised and aligned himself with the culture, values and beliefs of the school and its community. If effective, they behaved in such a way to be compatible with the church’s expectations but not confined by them.

From this analysis, Davies’ model could be illustrated as outlined in Figure 24 below. This model identifies the most important areas considered by the governing board, including the new element of socialisation, contained within the area of relationships.
This chapter described the site and its context within which the key participants within this case study were seeking to share the account of their principal recruitment process, following the unscheduled termination of the previous principal. The distinctive context of Fisher College provided the basis for the experiences and perspectives of the key participants. Stories shared by the participants highlighted the unique experiences and challenges that presented themselves during the succession and recruitment process. Participants’ stories and the voyage they undertook, provided the foundation on which analysis could be undertaken, framed within the context of the strategic architecture model (Davies, 2003). A discussion of the findings from the three case sites is explored in the next chapter.
Chapter Seven: Summary of Findings and Discussion

This study explored the research question “How do schools’ governing boards conduct succession planning and recruitment for principals in their schools?” Davies’ Strategic Architecture model was used as a conceptual framework to explore three case studies in depth guided by the following themes:

1. The extent that succession planning is linked to a comprehensive organisational vision.
2. The relationship between the selection process of the principal and the organisational vision.
3. The alignment between the recruitment process and the organisational vision.

The findings from this study shed light on the qualities and capabilities sought by the governing boards of each school, especially the role of the board chairs. This chapter is divided into two parts. Part one contains a discussion of the overall findings. Part two offers suggestions for further research.

7.1. Findings

In this study, it was evident that principal succession and recruitment are very much context and time dependent, and the processes followed/or not followed. While the findings from this study cannot be generalised, a number of important issues arose in the cases examined that could have significance in improving principal succession, selection and recruitment processes in similar sites. Of particular significance is the possibility in this research to uncover and analyse policies and processes that may be considered best practice for conducting principal succession and recruitment in schools.

Each of the three cases exposed different principal succession, selection and recruitment journeys, due to the context and complexities of the respective schools. For Bradley College and Fisher College, the link between the sponsoring churches and the individual schools was a critical factor. In particular, the lack of succession planning and
the influence and intervention of the senior pastors in these schools were distinctive features of their principal succession, selection and recruitment processes. Members of the governing board of Lewis College were conscious of maintaining the vision during their succession planning, and understood the importance of ensuring it was sustained during principal transition. This was evident in their resolve to ensure that the retiring principal’s successor preserved the vision and cultural values embedded in the college through the student leadership program which he had established.

Unlike the board of Lewis College, the boards of Bradley and Fisher College held no articulated college vision or strategic plan, and the previous years of principal instability had resulted in a lack of commitment by the staff to the respective schools, as analysed in chapters five and six respectively. These findings were consistent with research by Hargreaves and Fink (2004) who noted that failure in succession planning was due to the stresses of crisis management. This study extends the conversation about the need for governing bodies or institutions to establish protocols, policies and strategies to sustain the tenure of the principal appointments. The focus on finding a principal that could establish positive relationships amongst members of the college community follows an assumption nested in contemporary leadership theories. Davies (2010) and Ospina (2012) noted the importance of relationships as the centre of leadership practice. This study has extended this conversation, especially in hybrid organisations, where the need for positive relationships between the principal and key personnel in the church or institution are imperative to the success of the principal’s leadership.

As hybrid organisations (encompassing the church and the college), the organisational vision is the overall vision of the entity whereas college vision only pertained to the college. The organisational visions of Bradley College and Fisher College were intended to combine the goals of both the sponsoring church and its respective college. The lack of vision had the consequence of the governing boards of both Bradley
College and Fisher College choosing to wait for their new principals before embarking on a new strategic plan. This is consistent with research by Dinham (2005) and Fullan (2011) who noted the reluctance of some schools to embark on a new strategic plan without the leadership of the principal because the principal is a key driver of the college vision. This study advances the discussion regarding the role of the principal in leading and managing the strategic plan and the desired qualities of a principal to work with the governing board, ensuring that the college vision is perpetuated. The findings from this study and the connection between the succession planning to the organisational vision of the entity are presented below.

The extent that succession planning is linked to a comprehensive organisational vision. This study identified the following main insights regarding succession planning and the school’s organisational vision:

- Succession planning was dependent on specific contextual factors such as the school’s governance structure, and clarity of knowledge by those leading the recruitment of the overarching culture and values of the organisation.

- The expertise and personal preferences of the governing board members influenced the ways in which the respective school determined the qualities sought in their next principal.

- The different succession planning methods adopted by the three schools were designed to protect each school’s organisational cultural heritage.

- The legacy of a principal can impact the qualities sought in their successors by the governing boards of the respective schools.

- In the two church governed schools, priority was given to candidates with qualities that could serve the corporate entity.

Davies’ (2003) model was a useful conceptual framework in analysing the succession planning of each school site and any links to its organisational vision. The
model encompassed five areas and their elements that supported all that the school did to achieve the optimum future for the school. In this study, each school had a different impetus for principal change – the retirement of principal in Lewis College after lengthy stable tenure, successive principal instability in Bradley College and the termination of the principal’s contract in Fisher College. The extent of communication about the principal succession planning within the three school sites and their communities was a feature where approaches differed. In the case of Lewis College, the process and steps in succession planning were well known across the college community and conveyed to staff, by the board chair, at relevant stages in the process. The process involved an extended timeframe of three years. At Bradley College, an email address was established for staff and parents to communicate any questions or concerns to the interview committee through the board chair. The board chair was the only board member who monitored this email address, for confidentiality purposes. In the event that staff and families in the college were anxious about the continuing viability of the school, due to the recent series of principal tenures, it was hoped that this communication opportunity would have resolved any concerns. In the case of Fisher College, no communication regarding the principal succession and recruitment process was provided to staff or members of the college community, until the appointment was finalised. No other updates were provided to the community. Rothwell (2001, 2010) noted the importance of helpful communication throughout the organisation if the succession planning process was to be received well by the school community (Rothwell, 2001, 2010). Conger and Fulmer (2004) also argued that for an entity’s succession process to be effective, the steps in the process have to be well-known across the organisation.

A second point of difference in the succession planning by the governing boards of the cases was with respect to the board chairs. The roles and responsibilities carried by the respective board chairs were distinctive. In the case of Lewis College, the board chair
ensured all board members were included in the discussions. At the instigation of the incumbent board chair, all board members of Lewis College undertook professional development preparation before the succession planning process began and ensured the vision and mission of the college was reviewed during the board retreat. This step was undertaken as part of the procedure to identify qualities that were being sought in the next principal. The board chair of Bradley College involved other board members in the three-month review of employment policies and processes to identify reasons for frequent principal turnover, as part of their succession planning. Some of the board members formed the interview committee. The remaining board members were informed of the progress in finding a new principal at regular board meetings. The succession planning process at Fisher College was intended to find a principal who would be aligned to the sponsoring church and embed it into the college as part of the organisational vision. Relevant literature studies relating to this topic document those board members of church schools were often disconnected from the needs of their schools because of their lack of educational skills and experience and their primary loyalty to the church-related entity (Rexroth, 2015). Whilst there was limited research identified in the review of literature about the role of board chairs in school governance, Weiss (2007), stated that one of their responsibilities was to ensure that the governing body worked as a team and was involved in decisions affecting the future of the school. The board chair of Fisher College did not involve board members in the decision to terminate the previous principal’s contract. In addition, the other board members did not challenge this decision. This may be because they were members of the church, so did not contest the senior pastor’s decision out of deference to his leadership role. These church members were beneficiaries of spiritual support from this pastor, so may have been reluctant to comment.

A third feature of difference in succession planning in the school sites was in relation to the board chairs, and the way in which they led the principal succession planning to
achieve the organisational vision. In the case of Lewis College, the board chair had begun researching and upskilling herself through relevant readings and attendance at conferences two years prior to when the recruitment process began, so that she was equipped in leading the board through the journey. In addition, she arranged the succession planning day, which gave the board members the opportunity to reflect on the organisational vision of the college that had been developed under the leadership of the retiring principal, and then determine which parts of the college required further development under the leadership of the next principal. This balanced approach to reviewing the status of the vision presented the opportunity for board members to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school’s vision and its long-term goals. Research into principal succession endorses the benefits of a well-planned approach enhancing a school’s long-term competitive advantage (Rothwell, 2001; 2010). While research is limited, Allen and Mintrom’s (2010) research into school governance indicates that effective board chairs were able to build good relationships with the head, let other governors take particular responsibilities, but also ensured that the board worked as a team and were involved in its work and strategic processes. These factors were identified as important to the continued viability and credibility of the organisation (Allen and Mintrom, 2010). In this study, the board chair of Lewis College understood the importance of effective and strategic relationships with the principal and members of the board, which was acknowledged in the mutual respect for their respective boundaries in the decision-making structure of the college.

The board chairs of Bradley College and Fisher College did not undertake the same preparation process. In the case of Bradley College and Fisher College, the school’s organisational vision had little relevance to succession planning because of the predisposed personal focus of the senior pastors on fulfilling the vision of the church. One of the key issues of concern in these case studies of Bradley College and Fisher College was the significant influence and power in key decisions taken. This ‘interference’ is a key issue in
the process of recruitment and selection. The use of the Davies’ Model as the conceptual framework for this study is based on the comprehensive research around the characteristics of the effective principal and hence the effective school. For these two particular principal recruitment journeys, because one individual held such power during the principal recruitment process, there is limited evidence of certainty of selection for long-term effective school leadership. This study did not collect evidence of the senior pastors’ influence in similar ways during previous principal recruitment processes.

This strong focus on the church vision only and the lack of succession planning in Bradley College and Fisher College meant that other important issues affecting the school context did not emerge in the evidence. Such issues might include emerging demographic, economic and enrolment trends in the surrounding environment that would affect future actions, the relationships that the schools should be cultivating, and the way in which the board could support the school’s continued development. In the case of Lewis College, these issues were resolved during the board planning day held as part of the principal succession process.

As discussed in chapters five and six, the members of the governing boards of Bradley and Fisher College lacked educational expertise needed to consider the qualities desired in their next principal. Rexroth (2015) raised concerns about the lack of expertise at board level relating to principal leadership qualities in the current education context.

Hargreaves (2005) found that strong leadership cultures ensured the succession planning was more effective because of leadership continuity and strength. In this study, contingency strategies in the event that a successful candidate was not appointed in each school were similar across all three sites. Lewis College board empowered the existing executive team to continue to lead and manage the college during an interim period, in the event that a new principal was not appointed. Lewis College was different to Bradley College and Fisher College in that it was the only college where the incumbent principal
was still in office when their successor was appointed, and thus able to conduct a successful handover to the new principal. The planned continuity of succession planning in Lewis College, as a result of the long lead time, enabled a smooth transition from the retiring principal to their successor, whilst maintaining cultural heritage and continuance of its strategic development.

In the case of Bradley College, the existing executive staff members were empowered to lead and manage the college during the six-month principal vacancy period. Fisher College appointed a past principal as acting principal during the recruitment period, supported by the college executive staff. So, both colleges implemented similar strategies; consistent with research outcomes noting the use of a distributed leadership models during periods of principal openings, especially during difficult or challenging circumstances (Harris, 2005; 2013). Hargreaves and Fink (2003) arrived at similar conclusions in their studies, arguing that the platform for newly appointed principals relied on the groundwork of their predecessors. Such a strategy was found to enable sustainable and significant improvement in the continued success and credibility of schools. The second theme in this study discerned the relationship between the selection process of the principal and the organisational vision.

The relationship between the selection process of the principal and the organisational vision. The connection between the process of selecting the principal and the organisational vision was dependent on the life cycle of the school, the legacy of the previous principal and the priorities of members of the governing board involved in the recruitment process. Although this research focussed on Christian schools, this study highlights the importance of a principal’s legacy and the way in which it contributes to or inhibits the vision of the governing board or institution. This study also advances the discussion of previous researchers, regarding the credibility of the principal’s legacy, upon departure, to leave a cultural inheritance often identified by student outcomes, staff
outcomes and wellbeing and curriculum reform (Hallinger, 2005; Marzano and Waters, 2009). The central points in relation to this theme are:

- Culture and values in a school were a critical aspect for selecting a pool of candidates that were a good fit between principal and school.
- Relationships between key stakeholders affected decisions relating to the selection of potential candidates.
- Personalities and individual preferences impacted formal employment processes and procedures.

Macbeath, Oduro, Jacka and Hobby (2006) stated that the purpose of selection is to ensure there is a pool of applicants from which the candidate with the best fit for the respective school and its culture is recruited. In his research on culture in school, Iselin (2010) highlighted the importance of preserving and perpetuating the school’s culture, core ideology and values. In this study, an important conclusion from all three cases was that, while culture and values were consistently evident in the data, these areas were the basis for difference in each case study. Where Bradley College and Fisher College were seeking principals with the capacity to work with the sponsoring church and senior pastor, Lewis College was not governed by a church so the culture and values based qualities sought in the new principal were much broader and not denominational, referring to the need for the successful candidate to have a “Christian lifestyle”. The lack of principal stability in Bradley College and Fisher College meant there was a loss of educational vision, with the result being that the church vision was imposed on the respective schools.

The governing boards of the three schools sought to recruit principals who would be a good fit to the culture and values of the respective schools. This is similar to Walker and Kwan’s (2012) research, who found that links between religion to leader effectiveness in a Christian school contributed to building a stable school within the specific site context. In the case of the two church governed schools, the focus of both colleges was tilted toward the
culture, values and shared beliefs of the respective church. Research studies into hybrid organisations such as church and schools educating together have noted that the essential focus of the organisation was to convey the Christian experience as the mission of the church (McLaughlin, 2008). In this study, the board chairs of Bradley and Fisher Colleges focussed on finding a principal suitable for the church culture. The long-term effect of this selection meant that the colleges may have become, in the long term, simply mission agencies of the church. Further, the colleges would have no credibility as teaching and learning entities.

In contrast, the strategic development of Bradley College was more severely damaged because it had experienced years of principal instability. Despite this, and a subsequent review of employment policies and procedures, the governing board of the college was not prepared for their school’s most recent principal resignation. Davies (2003, 2006) argued that when this happens in a school, the result can have detrimental long-term effects on the development of its vision. Rothwell (2010) also found, in his research, that the sudden and frequent departure of a principal, as was the case in Bradley College, can result in its decline as a credible and legitimate educational organisation. In the case of Bradley College, the new principal spent the first two years of his tenure leading the development of the college strategic plan. With the principal recruitment process lasting almost six months, this meant that the college experienced a delay in re-igniting its vision, and stabilising the school.

A key observation in the selection process was the different ways in which candidates were shortlisted. For example, the way in which the board chair of Fisher College diverted the formal selection process by contacting the principals of schools belonging to the same denomination and the board secretary of this college shortlisting candidates according to the denomination identified in their formal application, underlined the subjective selection procedures applied in the process. Subjectivity in principal
recruitment has been an issue identified by other researchers (Walker and Kwan, 2012; Palmer and Mulloly, 2015).

There was a common approach across all schools in this study to the appointment of one of the board members as the secretary during the selection and recruitment process. In the case of Lewis College, the secretary received the applications, pre-read and shortlisted them. In a similar way, the secretary of the Fisher College board undertook the shortlisting process. In the case of Bradley College, the board chair assumed this responsibility. The purpose of the selection process was to determine which of the candidates should be shortlisted for interviews. The role of the secretaries was to review the material presented by applicants, in relation to the potential cultural “fit”, whether the applicants had submitted all the requested information and responded to the relevant questions or selection criteria, and other evidence the applicants sent such as their personal faith statement.

This action by the secretaries of the three colleges is considered an essential aspect by Walker and Kwan (2012). They noted that the value and skillset of the applicants with regard to educational capacity and capability was sometimes uncertain, because the school favoured the religious convictions of the candidates. This was especially evident in Fisher College. Palmer and Mullolly (2015) noted concerns regarding the use of “fit” as a selection determinant. Selection by “fit” was understood as the principal being cognisant and considerate of the school community and its politics, which had little or no relevance to merit. This was particularly evident at Fisher College, because the principal appointment was the first for the successful candidate; his only leadership experience prior to undertaking this role had been as a head of department. The critical focus at Bradley College was to appoint a principal who could work within the respective governance structure and the senior pastor. It was also important to select a principal who could lead the governing board in developing a vision for the college. The capability of the successful
candidate in leading this strategy highlighted the importance of Davies’ areas of culture and values, relationships and strategy in the selection process.

The third theme in this study focussed on the recruitment process undertaken by the three sites and the alignment between the recruitment process and the organisational vision.

**The alignment between the recruitment process and the organisational vision.**

The following dominant ideas were identified in relation to the recruitment process and the organisational vision of the three schools in this study:

- Davies’ area of Culture and values was critical for ensuring a good fit between principal and the organisational vision of each school.
- Emotional dispositions of candidates, during interview, impacted the final decisions about which candidates to recruit.
- The areas focussed on during the recruitment process were prioritised by the governing boards of each school and reflected the individual school circumstances and the legacies of the previous principals in each school.

In this study, the three schools used a range of approaches to the recruitment of their next principal, to ensure a good fit between principal and their respective organisational visions. Lewis College followed recognised recruitment procedures. In particular, the governing board of Lewis College had established a clear set of objectives and qualities for the new principal. Breaugh and Starke (2000) noted the importance of established objectives that provide the framework for the recruitment process. In the case of Bradley College, the final decision was based on the way in which the two final candidates presented their vision for the college. As a result, the way in which the incumbent deputy principal of Bradley College presented their vision for the college disqualified them from consideration. Blackmore, Thompson and Barty (2006) highlighted a contrasting trend where schools appointed incumbents because of their service to the entity. The analysis of the three cases studies in this research has identified how their recruitment processes have
worked with the ways in which Davies talks about the essential elements of the school vision. The following dominant ideas were discovered, depicted in Figure 25 below.

![Figure 25: Summary of the Areas and Key Elements from Davies Model, Post Research](image)

Culture and values was a critical area for consideration aimed at ensuring a good fit between the principal and the organisational vision of each school. The successful candidate of Fisher College already had cultural familiarity because he was employed in a school of the same denomination and was recommended by his principal, who was a friend and colleague of the board chair of Fisher College.

In the case of Lewis College, the stability and legacy of the retiring principal were key factors influencing the decision of the governing board in recruiting their next principal. Because the college was not governed by a sponsoring church, its ethos was strongly influenced by its statement of faith, and the broad-church representation of enrolled families. This influence determined the content of the formal applications for the principal vacancy because there was no specific doctrine. Therefore, applicants were required to submit a statement about their personal Christian faith and lifestyle, church
attendance and the way in which their faith informed their personal philosophy of education. This requirement reinforced the importance of recruiting a principal who would be aligned to the overall organisational vision of a college.

In contrast, the link between the recruitment process and the organisational vision at Bradley College was heavily influenced by the governance context of the college and the personality of the senior pastor. One of the significant differences in the recruitment processes at Bradley College and Fisher College, compared to Lewis College, was the way in which the board chairs of these schools initiated meetings with the preferred candidates outside the formal process. These meetings held with the successful candidates of Bradley College and Fisher College, outside of the accepted recruitment process, have been referred to in studies into employment interviews, as “gatekeeping encounters” (Kerekkes, 2007, p. 1943). In employment interviews the purpose of a gatekeeping encounter is to determine whether the candidate is a suitable fit for the organisation and its vision, based on the candidate’s performance as well as the interactions between the candidate and the interviewer. Kerekkes (2007) argued that the success of a gatekeeping encounter, for the candidate, was more successful if these interactions were compatible and the responses by the candidate interpreted in a positive manner by the interviewer. These gatekeeping encounters were successful for the preferred principal candidates of Bradley College and Fisher College, supporting the view of other researchers that the face to face interview was the dominant selection strategy, and was especially evident where there was a trusting relationship between the potential employer and candidate (Walker and Kwan, 2012; Whitehead, Boschee, and Decker, 2012).

The alignment then, between the recruitment process and the organisational vision in the case of Bradley College and Fisher College was tilted towards culture and values, relationships and strategy. Shober and Hartney (2014), noted that the responsibilities of governing boards were to ensure that the cultural ethos was protected, the future strategy of
their schools continued towards its long-term goal, and the way in which relationships between the principal and governing board members impacted the vision. Reasons for the governing boards not giving consideration to the learning and resources area may have been because candidates provided strong accounts of their educational expertise and experience in their formal applications. This was evident for Lewis College applicants and Bradley College applicants. It may also have been due to a lack of governing board knowledge about the educational qualities required for a principal in the current education context, as in the case of Bradley College or an assumption that relevant skills and knowledge would be gained through professional development, as in the Lewis College case.

The three schools, in this study, were well resourced at the time of principal recruitment, with respect to buildings, staffing, and financial reserves. The need therefore for principals to possess skills and experience in the resources area was not a priority at the time of recruitment.

The insights gained from the principal succession and recruitment process in these three colleges’ emphasised ways in which their governing boards favoured some areas of their organisational vision and not others. The governing boards of Bradley College and Fisher College focussed on areas that would strengthen the weakest ones, such as relationships, and perpetuate the alignment of the college and church under one vision for the whole organisation. Lewis College had benefitted from a long-serving principal who had comprehensive knowledge and skills across all areas of the school, so the governing board focussed on ensuring the school’s credibility and the status of its organisational vision, at the time of recruitment, was not threatened.

One of the key contributions of this study to the principal succession and recruitment process in a school is that to be successful in their schools, principals need to understand the relevant context, key stakeholders and governance structure of their schools and be prepared to work within them and the best way to develop productive relationships with
key decision-makers in their schools. This study has moved the research on with regards to governing boards of independent schools and their principal recruitment processes. In the case of Lewis College, the governing board wanted a principal who could build on the retiring principal’s legacy. The brief legacies of the previous principals’ leadership in Bradley College and Fisher College did not provide time, continuity and opportunity for relationships with key stakeholders to develop, let alone flourish, resulting in a loss of vision, direction and college unity. This study makes an important contribution to the area of principal succession and recruitment with respect to governing boards. Carver (2001, 2006) noted the role of the board chair in leading the principal selection and recruitment process. In this study, the governing boards of all three colleges initiated and led the principal recruitment process, and the process of all three colleges was led by the respective incumbent board chair.

The conclusions from this study acknowledged an interrelationship with the organisational vision and four key aspects of a school. These aspects were the leadership of the college community, the governing board, the principal and the principal succession, selection and recruitment process to ensure the organisational vision of the school remains undamaged. The governing board, as gatekeepers of the organisation vision, need to ensure that there is alignment between the qualities needed in the next principal of the school, the way in which the leadership of the college community maintain the direction of the school, if there is an interim period where a principal vacancy exists, and the selection and recruitment process ensures the successful candidate is a good fit for the organisational vision and its culture and ethos.

This study has shown that governing boards should ensure that the progress and status of the school’s organisational vision is given due consideration before and during the principal succession, selection and recruitment process. In particular, the two hybrid case studies, showed that the appointment of a principal whose qualities fit those of the
organisation as well as the respective school is even more important. The findings from this study offer recommendations which are outlined below.

7.2. **Recommendations from this Study**

This study has provided some useful insights into the important factors that should be considered by the governing board of a school when undergoing its next principal succession, selection and recruitment process. As a framework, Davies’ Model provides a way of both articulating and drawing together the many and varied issues that were identified in this study. The effectiveness of Davies’ Model for providing a useful framework for examining the recruitment process is not limited to this sector, and would be appropriate for employing authorities in other sectors and states. In particular, Davies model presents the expected capabilities of an appointed principal to achieve not only immediate but long-term goals to advance the vision of the school. In addition, the elements within each area also assisted in identifying operational goals held by the governing boards of each school in the study. Recommendations for governing boards include where possible they should:

1. Work with their incumbent principals, regarding timelines for their retirement or departure.

2. Undertake regular reviews of principal recruitment documents within the college, especially selection criteria and the principal’s position description.

3. Undertake regular reviews of the executive leadership positions within the college including their tenure, roles and responsibilities to ensure that leaders fulfilling these positions have the capacity and capability to lead the college during the principal recruitment process in the respective school.

4. Undertake periodic professional development to inform and upskill their knowledge and expertise in the role of a principal and his responsibilities.
5. Undertake periodic reviews in relation to their governance structure to identify and resolve issues of conflict and power tensions that can hinder the principal’s leadership.

Davies’ model has proven useful as a framework for this study and as such has demonstrated possible value for the recruitment process:

1. The areas and their elements offer a base from which to compile the personal and professional attributes the employing authority desires in their next school principal.

2. The model may be useful when analysing the qualities and skills of their preferred candidate, during the recruitment process, against those of the executive leadership team in their schools.

3. A skills matrix of the qualities and attributes of the newly appointed principal and executive staff could be compiled. This skills matrix can then be used to analyse any gaps in their skills for consideration in future recruitment processes.

The second part of this chapter offers suggestions for further research.

7.3. **Suggestions for Further Research**

This study builds on the literature regarding principal succession and recruitment. It provides a platform from which further research could be undertaken, such as:

1. Investigation of principal succession and recruitment within and across other sectors.

2. A second direction future research could take is through longitudinal studies investigating over a period of three years, newly recruited principals in several cases using the strategic architecture model to identify their impact on the respective schools.
3. A third direction is investigating the succession recruitment processes of the school executive leadership teams within these three schools. This study would provide insight into the influence of the principal on the process and outcome and the links to the respective school’s strategic architecture.

4. A final direction for future research is investigating the process of socialisation of newly appointed principals in a selection of different schools and the impact of this process on their performance in relation to their roles and responsibilities.

7.4. Conclusion

This study examined the principal succession, selection and recruitment practices in three Christian schools in Queensland. Unpacking “How do school’s governing boards conduct succession planning and recruitment for principals in their schools?” has investigated how the explanations and decisions of the members of the governing boards when recruiting new principals reflected areas of Davies’ model of strategic architecture for effective school development and leadership. The study has used the strategic architecture model developed by Davies (2003) as a lens to shed light and gain insights into the policies and processes of the three schools in relation to their recent principal recruitment journeys that would advance the organisational vision of each individual school. The study identified areas contained in this model that were prioritised over others during the principal recruitment process. The study found that the culture and values area was important in finding a principal who would be a good fit to the respective school’s culture and values. Relationships were also important because the principal requires the personal and professional qualities to develop strategic and positive relationships with key stakeholders in their schools. Strategy was a key priority area that embraced relevant strategic processes, approaches and leadership. To be effective and successful, the new principal needs the capacity to prioritise their own strategic thinking and learning.
understanding personal leadership practices and the skill to build on these through personal and professional networks. The insights gained during this study have facilitated an analysis of the perceptions and attitudes of participants towards principal succession, selection and recruitment in their respective schools. The stage of each school, context and situatedness also impacted the appointment of the successful candidate. Further, the study has identified a range of tensions and contradictions associated with principal succession, selection and recruitment.

This study has made a substantial contribution to a limited area of literature by providing in-depth case studies of the process of principal recruitment in educational hybrid organisations. In this study two of these organisations were governed by churches. The findings highlighted the issues of the hybridity and how it impacted the recruitment processes. This control and related tensions blurred the ability to achieve consensus on key issues such as those key qualities necessary to be a principal in 21st century education, and maintaining legitimacy for the two schools as educational entities. This study has contributed significantly to the research literature on governing boards of educational entities in relation to principal selection and recruitment processes. The findings from this study have highlighted the significant role of governing boards and, in particular, the board chairs, highlighting their impact on the selection and recruitment process of principals.

As noted in the literature reviewed for this study there is currently a limited amount of research into educational leadership in relation to faith-based schools (Striepe, 2011). The expansion of Australian faith-based schools over the past four decades has resulted in this sector being responsible for educating a third of all students (Crump and Slee, 2005; Striepe and Clarke, 2009). The field of educational leadership and principal succession and recruitment in these schools deserves more attention and focused research.
References


Dumas, C. (2010). *Building leadership: The knowledge of principals in creating collaborative communities of professional learning*, University of Nebraska.

http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cehsedaddiss/33


Fullan, M. (2010). *Positive pressure*. In Second international handbook of educational change (pp. 119-130). Netherlands: Springer


Fuller, E., & Young, M. (2009). *Tenure and retention of newly hired principals in Texas*. Austin, TX: University Council for Educational Administration, Department of Educational Administration, University of Texas at Austin.


tblContentItemendid=75


Merry, D. (2014). The changing role of human resources in urban schools: Perceptions of human resources leaders in the recruitment and retention of quality teachers and principals, University of Maryland, College Park.


Ng, P. (2011). How the world’s most improved school systems keep getting better. 

*Journal of Educational Change*, 12(4), 463-468.


Non-State Schools Accreditation Board. (2012). *Cyclical Review Program Guidelines* 


http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1042andcontext=sferc


Principals Australia (2007). *Learn: Lead: Succeed A resource handbook to support the building of leadership in Australian schools*. South Australia: Principals Australia


Stewart, V. (2012). A world-class education: Learning from international models of excellence and innovation. ASCD.


Striepe, M. (2010). Management Teams' Understandings of Educational Leadership: Case Studies of Western Australian Faith-based Schools. Doctor of Education in the Graduate School of Education. The University of Western Australia.


Appendix A

Participant Information for Griffith University Research Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Team Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lynne Doneley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EdD Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 0457 736 882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:lynnedoneley@griffithuni.edu.au">lynnedoneley@griffithuni.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Title of Project: “How do schools’ governing boards conduct succession planning and recruitment for principals in their schools?”

Letter to potential case study sites requesting assistance in identifying potential participants.

Dear James,

I am researching how governing boards recruit principals in their schools. This letter describes my research project, and includes a request for you to circulate the attached information to staff members who may be able to provide relevant information regarding policies and practices currently implemented by governing boards in recruiting their principals.

The purpose of my study is to explore the relationship between policies and practices currently implemented by governing boards in recruiting their principals, and the implications on the school’s strategic architecture, based on that appointment.

I have also attached a number of copies of a letter with information about the proposed research project, inviting staff to participate in this research project. It would be appreciated if:
The letters could be distributed to the appropriate staff who may be able to provide information regarding their involvement with principal recruitment at your school.

You could complete the attached form and return it to me, by email, to let me know if you are willing to distribute the invitation to staff, to participate in the research or if you decide not to do so.

You could indicate your response at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Description
My research project is entitled “How do schools’ governing boards conduct succession planning and recruitment for principals in their schools?” This project is being undertaken as part of my doctoral research program at Griffith University. My Principal Supervisor is Dr Paula Jervis-Tracey. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between policies and practices currently implemented by governing boards in recruiting their principals, and the implications on the school’s strategic architecture, based on that appointment.

Participants who contribute to the research inquiry will potentially benefit from opportunities to reflect on their own policies and practices in the recruitment of school principals. The schools themselves will also potentially benefit from research feedback into recruitment practices as well as possibly being of benefit to other schools.

This study involves my interviewing members of the school community who have been involved in the recruitment process for the principal of your school. It also involves a discussion with a group of teachers, which will add and clarify data in relation to the research project.

The data collected will be made available to the board members and the principal of the college to inform and assist in the development of policies and processes relating to the succession and recruitment of the principal.

Participation
Participation in this project is voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time during the project without comment or penalty. Their decision regarding participation will in no way impact upon yours, or their current or future relationship with Griffith University or
Associated Christian Schools. Participation would involve a one on one interview with myself (which will be recorded) and participating in a focus group with five or six other participants from the school community. The one on one interview will take no more than one hour as will the focus group discussion.

Expected Benefits
It is expected that this project would benefit participants as a form of reflection on their experiences in the succession and recruitment of the school principal, as well contributing to information which will lead to a resource to support schools in this process.

Risks
There are no risks beyond normal day-to-day living associated with your participation in this project.

Confidentiality
All comments and responses will be treated confidentially. The names of individual personas are not required in any of the responses. Comments you have made within research conversations will be verified by you prior to final inclusion in the written report.

The student researcher may use audio recordings. Where audio recordings are made:

- Transcriptions of audio recordings are to be verified by the participants prior to final inclusion;
- Access to the audio/video recordings will be limited to those involved in the research project; and,
- It is possible to participate in the project without being recorded.

Consent to Participate
All participants will be asked to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm their agreement to participate.

Privacy Statement
The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and / or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further
information consult the University’s Privacy Plan at http://www.griffith.edu.au/privacy-plan or telephone (07) 3735 4375.

Questions / Further Information about the Project

Please contact the student researcher or supervisor named above to have any questions answered or if you require further information about the project.

Any complaints or concerns about the research project may be discussed with myself, my principal supervisor or can be directed to the Manager, Research Ethics to 373 54375 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Doneley

Telephone: 0457736882   Email: lynne.doneley@griffithuni.edu.au
Appendix B

Participant Information for
Griffith University Research Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Team Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lynne Doneley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EdD Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 0457 736 882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:lynnedoneley@griffithuni.edu.au">lynnedoneley@griffithuni.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Paula Jervis-Tracey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 3735 5848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:p.jervis-tracey@griffith.edu.au">p.jervis-tracey@griffith.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Title of Project:** How do schools’ governing boards conduct succession planning and recruitment for principals in their schools?

Dear Participant,

I am writing to ask you to participate in a research project that I am completing as part of my Doctoral studies at Griffith University.

**Description**

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between policies and practices currently implemented by governing boards in recruiting their principals, and the implications on the schools’ strategic architecture, based on that appointment.

**Participation**

Your participation in this project is voluntary. If you do agree to participate in the project, you can withdraw at any time, during the project without comment or penalty. Your decision will in no way impact on your current or future relationship with me.

Your participation will involve being interviewed about your involvement with Principal recruitment at your school. The interview will focus on your experiences with Principal recruitment in your school.

The project will occur during 2013 and 2014.

**Expected Benefits**
Your contribution to the research inquiry will potentially benefit from opportunities to reflect on their own policies and practices in the recruitment of school principals. The schools themselves will also potentially benefit from research feedback into recruitment practices as well as possibly being of benefit to other schools.

Risks
There are no risks beyond normal day-to-day living associated with your participation in this project.

Confidentiality
All comments and responses will have identifying names removed and will be anonymous and treated confidentially. The names of individual persons are not required in any of the Responses. Where audio recordings are made:

- Transcriptions of audio recordings are to be verified by the participants prior to final inclusion; and
- Access to the audio recordings will be limited to this involved in the research project;

Consent to Participate
We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed to confirm your agreement to participate).

Questions / Further Information about the Project
Please contact the researcher team members named above to have any questions answered or if you require further information about the project.

Concerns / Complaints Regarding the Conduct of the Project
Griffith University is committed to research integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. However, if you have any concerns or complaints about the ethics conduct of the project you may contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on (07) 3735 4375 or (research-ethics@griffith.edu.au). The Research Ethics Officer is not connected with the project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner.
Appendix C

Focus Group

Guiding Principles for the Group

At the beginning of the focus groups the guidelines of “ground rules” that help establish the group norms will be outlined:

- Only one person talks at a time.
- Confidentiality is assured. Confidentiality – “What is said inside the room, stays inside the room”.
- Please refrain from giving advice, but rather offer and illicit information sharing experiences.
- It is important for us to hear everyone’s ideas and opinions. There are no right answers to questions – just experiences and opinions which are all valuable.
- It is important for all group members’ ideas to be equally represented and respected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about the last time when you recruited the principal in your school.

2. What were the main criteria you were looking for in the applicants? Were they pre-determined? Had they been discussed?

3. What was the background and experience of the people on the interview committee? Why were they chosen? With hindsight, was there anyone else you feel should have been included on the committee and why?

4. Do you believe the recruitment process was successful and, if so, what do you believe contributed to its success? If not, why do you think it was not successful?

5. Describe the expectations, standards and code of conduct that you have for employees and how do they guide your actions in defining the direction long term direction of your school?

6. Describe the duties and responsibilities (position description) of the principal in guiding the direction of the school and making decisions on allocating resources to pursue this direction (strategic plan)?

7. Walk me through the response from staff members and how they felt about the appointment of your latest principal?

8. What factors do you believe are essential for any school to successfully recruit principals?
Appendix E

Statement of Consent from Participants

Griffith University Research Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Team Contacts</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lynne Doneley</td>
<td>Dr Paula Jervis-Tracey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EdD Candidate</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 0457 736 882</td>
<td>Phone: 3735 5848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:lynnedoneley@griffithuni.edu.au">lynnedoneley@griffithuni.edu.au</a></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:p.jervis-tracey@griffith.edu.au">p.jervis-tracey@griffith.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Title of Project:** How do schools’ governing boards conduct succession planning and recruitment for principals in their schools?

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- have read and understood the information letter regarding this project
- have had any questions answered to your satisfaction
- Consent to the research described taking place at Fisher College
- understand that you are free to withdraw your consent for the research to take place at Fisher College at any time, without comment or penalty
- understand that the project will include audio-recording of one on one interviews and focus groups
- understand that the information and audio-recordings can be used for research and educational purposes

Participant’s Details and Signature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>/      /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>