Leadership and Emotions: an exploratory study into the emotional dimension of the role of the post-primary school principal in Ireland

by **Eileen O'Connor**

Abstract*: This study is a qualitative exploration of the affective dimensions of the post-primary school leadership role. I examine the perceptions and attitudes of school leaders to the emotional facets of their role and how this impacts on their well-being and work. The data is drawn from in-depth interviews with four strategically sampled principals. The findings, whist tentative, suggest that emotions matter in school leadership, both in relation to principals' management of their own roles and those of others. Moreover, the data indicates that the job of school leader exacts a high emotional cost on principals and clearly more research is needed to investigate the issues raised by this exploratory study*

Introduction

This study is situated in the Irish education context where in recent decades the rapid pace of ongoing change in education has impacted significantly on post-primary schools and their leaders. Among the educational issues impacting on schools and school leadership include: the feminisation of the profession, the decline of religious leadership positions in schools, the rationalisation and amalgamation of schools with a consequent increase in school size, a wealth of curriculum innovation, educational legislation, a decentralisation of authority, changes in management structures, a consequent increased complexity in the role and workload of school leaders and teachers and finally a notable difficulty with leadership succession in schools. Post-primary principals have an ever expanding and complex role coupled with an increased sense of isolation as they strive to meet the expectations and demands of a broad school community (Leader & Boldt, 1994).

To date however, there is a dearth of research on all aspects of post-primary school leadership in Ireland and in particular on the affective aspects of the leadership role. The emotional experience of leaders is rich in its potential to assist us in deepening our understanding of leadership (Beatty, 1999). International research highlights the need for a greater emphasis on the affective dimension of leadership and the need for an increased awareness among school leaders of this aspect of their role (James & Vince, 2001, Beatty, 2002, Goleman, 2002).

The purpose of this research study is to examine Irish post-primary principals' perceptions of, and attitudes to, the emotional dimension of their role as school leaders and to gain insights into how this emotional dimension impacts on their well-being and work. The questions driving the study are:

- How do post-primary principals perceive their role as school leaders?

- What are the inner feelings associated with the role?

- How do post-primary principals recall and understand the emotional impact of influential events they have experienced in the course of their work?

- How do they ensure personal emotional well-being while executing the leadership role?

The study is exploratory in nature, based on a sample of four interviews. It is envisaged that the process and findings of this small-scale research will inform and assist in the design and modification of a future larger study.

Leadership and Emotions

Increasingly the research literature suggests that successful school leadership is dependent upon more than technical skill and academically defined intelligence (Murphy, 1992, Hodgkinson, 1991, Sergiovanni, 1992, McDowell & Bell, 1997). There is today a growing realisation that efficient management in itself will not create effective, successful or improving schools (West-Bumham, 1997) and an agreement that emotions and feelings may be fundamental to the intra and inter-subjective realities of life in schools, in general, and of leadership in particular (Beatty, 1999).

Fullan (1998) asserts that school leaders need to manage emotionally as well as rationally. Life in schools is complex substantially because emotion is integral to the processes of teaching and learning and the management of those processes. (James & Vince, 2001). Traditional educational administration research's consistent exclusion of the emotions therefore is limiting for it distorts our theoretical understanding of human experience. David Loader (1997) writing on his inner journey as principal suggests that little seems to have been written about the person of the leader and the emotions that a person experiences while leading. Beatty (1999) argues that we can no longer afford to treat the emotions as peripheral if we are to explore fully the way leaders are and the way they can be.

Leadership, particularly in a period of rapid change, is about emotions - desire, fear, despair, caring, disillusionment, pain, anger, stress, anxiety and loneliness. Yet these are the aspects of leadership which tend to be neglected, played down, even denigrated in the literature, largely because emotionality has been cast in opposition to, and lesser than, rationality (Blackmore, 1996). School cultures often support the notion that ideal 'professional' behaviour is rational and carefully emotionally controlled (Beatty 2000, in Oplatka, 2002). Duignan (2002) comments that leaders often employ logical and clinical behaviours and processes thereby denying their own and others' feelings and emotions. Similarly Whyte (1994) argues that many managers leave their hearts and souls in the parking lot each morning, presenting a logical, rational and clinically objective demeanour during their workday, thereby creating a make-believe world which they hope to control. They 'cope' by presenting a facade of superficiality, keeping the 'real self well hidden from prying eyes. In the end, it may well be that the real self is also hidden from themselves.

Research indicates that people bring their emotions to work and that a crucial variable in people's workplace performance is their emotional life. The Goleman (2002) study of 4000 executives highlighted that the fundamental task of leaders is to 'prime good feeling' in those they lead and this positivity impacts significantly on an organisation's emotional climate and brings out the best in people. His research indicates that a leader's emotional states and actions do affect how the people they lead will feel and therefore perform. In a similar vein, Beatty (2000) contends that there is an 'emotional economy' in schools and that educational leaders need to be 'emotionally accountable' in order to take responsibility for what they do. The leader is not an emotionally neutral actor. The leader manages meaning for a group and acts as the group's emotional guide (Goleman, 2002). Everyone watches the boss and people take their emotional cues from the top. In essence the leader sets the emotional standard. Whether by omission or commission s/he is adding to or subtracting from the 'affective bottom line' of the school. The spirit of the school is a matter of emotion. Everyday educational leaders make decisions, communicate and act in ways which may carry, safeguard, ignore and even jeopardise this 'spirit' (Beatty, 2000).

Negative emotions powerfully disrupt work, hijacking attention from the task at hand. People who are upset have trouble reading emotions accurately in other people, decreasing the most basic skill needed for empathy and, as a result, impairing their social skills. An upbeat environment fosters mental efficiency, making people better at taking in and understanding information, at using decision rules in complex judgements, and at being flexible in their thinking (Goleman et al., 2001).

Goleman's research on emotional intelligence suggests that we have neglected 'emotional learning' and that it is possible to provide people with a range of tools, techniques and skills, to recognise and express constructively what is happening to them emotionally and to understand the impact of their emotions on their own behaviour and on others. The popularisation of emotional intelligence gives cause to celebrate in that it brings emotions out of the organisational closet. However, there is a concern that it crudely captures and simplifies emotion reducing it to measurement and quantification. Fineman (2000) asserts that emotional intelligence is more about intelligence than emotions. In other words it is processes of thinking and judgement that are targeted and refocused on emotions to enhance control of self and others. The implication here is that handling our emotions and using them to manage others and ourselves has become another in a long list of work competences to be quantified and judged by external standards. As Beatty (2002) contends, emotions can be much more than this. She comments on the limitations of emotional intelligence which she describes as merely the emotional cleverness of maintaining smooth surfaces of contrived projected selves (ibid).

Highly effective school leaders may need more than the smooth operation of emotional intelligence. While improving emotional skills is a useful step, emotional leadership is a profoundly and personally demanding endeavour that demands deep understanding which extends far beyond skill sets and into a commitment to connectedness. Emotional connectedness requires emotional connectedness with oneself. Deeper levels of emotional self-examination and meaning making with others would allow leaders to develop creative, authentically collaborative relationships. The question emerging, therefore, is whether it is sufficient to study emotions and leadership in a technical rational way (quantify, manage and improve) or whether there is a need to connect with inner experience and 'go deep', exploring the impact of emotional experience and its meaning in the lives of school leaders. We know little about how school leaders make sense of their world and need research strategies 'of the soft variety', that enable us to 'get close and go deep' for a more authentic and complete understanding of what leadership means (Greenfield, 1999).

Method

Because of its 'get close and go deep' exploratory nature, this research clearly falls into the interpretive rather than the 'scientific' or positivistic approach (Robson, 1993). The method employed in the study is based on the qualitative research paradigm (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Following Erickson (1986), who claims that the conceptions in qualitative research are revealed during data analysis, no defined hypothesis is tested in the study.

Ethical Issues

Nonpositivist approaches to research particularly raise ethical issues around the engaged role of the researcher. Responding to research questions involves risk to the individuals concerned (Chadwick, 2001). What is at issue then is how those risks can be minimized by researchers, and how respondents can be helped to be fully aware of the risks involved so that they can freely choose whether or not they want to take part. In the context of this research project the issues of consent, privacy and confidentiality were paramount. It was essential that participants were aware of the nature, purposes and future uses of the research and that they were assured anonymity and confidentiality.

The following steps were taken with a view to protecting respondents:

- Confidentiality and the identity of respondents are protected in that individual principals and their current institutions are not named

- Respondents were informed in advance of the purpose and process of the research study and their involvement in it

- Respondents were extended the right to withdraw from the study at any time (Robson, 1993)

- Respondents were aware of the proposed uses of the information

Respondents

The research sample in this study is a judgement sample in which the respondents are purposely selected on the judgement of the researcher (Malhotra & Birks, 2003). The sample consists of four post-primary principals, two newly appointed and two established principals, two male and two female, two from private traditional secondary schools and two from state sector schools representing a range of respondents of different age profiles, leadership experience, school contexts and gender. Respondents were selected on the basis of their willingness to participate. They range between the ages of 45 - 60 and hold the post of principal in post-primary schools for 1 to 16 years. All have completed post-graduate studies in educational leadership/management and have been in an educational career in the Irish educational system for about 21 to 38 years. To ensure confidentiality, the names of respondents and details of the schools have not been included.

Design

The topics covered by the interview schedule were informed by the literature review. The questions cover a range of topics from the general to the specific. Initially in order to put respondents at their ease, the schedule examines their opinions on broad leadership issues, before focussing on respondents' personal emotional responses to aspects of the leadership role. The topics addressed include: respondents' perception of their role as leader, the impact of gender (if any) on that role, their positive and negative personal emotional responses to significant events, emotional support in the role and managing their personal well-being.

Procedure

Respondents were given a 45-60 minute semi-structured interview. The interviews were conducted over a one-week period. Respondents were invited to comment on their perception of school leadership and what it means to them, to recall both positive and negative emotions related to fulfilling their role as school leader by focussing on influential events and to comment on how their individual emotional response to these events impacted on their behaviour. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in locations convenient for the respondents. The interviews were recorded on audio tape and transcribed and respondents were afforded the opportunity to review the transcript to enable them to comment and provide further clarification. Only one respondent availed him/herself of this. The data was then categorised into emergent themes, representing unifying or contrary ideas or topics that had been touched on at various times and under different headings during the interview. These themes were then summarised and interpreted.

Limitations

It has to be acknowledged that this piece of empirical work has only barely 'scratched the surface' of the issue under scrutiny. The exploratory nature of this study militates against making any generalisations from the findings. However, while the sample is small, it involves a range of leadership backgrounds and experiences. All participants are focussed on educational leadership and development in their present work. Findings from this study do warrant further exploration as they may be found to pertain to a larger more homogeneous sample.

Findings

These findings and their discussion need to be considered in the context of what has been a modest, though hopefully valuable, exploratory study. The analysis of the interview data was categorised under specific themes dictated by the key interview questions outlined above. The most significant of these are summarised here and are grouped under the headings: positive emotions, negative emotions, professional demeanour and emotional support and personal well-being. To illustrate the ideas emerging from the discussions, extracts from the semi-structured interviews with the principals are presented to support each point.

Opening general questions to respondents, on their perception of the leadership role and the issue of gender, were included specifically to help focus thinking on leadership issues and to contextualise the emotional aspects of the leadership role. All of the respondents commented very positively about their role as school leader '...the positives far outweigh the negatives..'. They knew what they valued and spoke of the importance of having a clear vision of what they wanted for their schools, 'letting staff see that they are not just teachers they are educators as well...'. Respondents were acutely aware of the 'people factor' aspect of their role and emphasised the importance of team building, staff empowerment and relationship building:

> *the principal as leader has to be able to lead a whole team of people to become leaders themselves, to empower people'.*

This is significant and extremely challenging in that the culture of some schools is one of dependency with what one respondent described as a parent-adolescent relationship between staff pnd principal

> '..they never had any power (under religious management) ...an adolescent wants to be taken care of but is fighting for power...'.

Respondents also found themselves leading and supporting change, 'a catalyst for change', involved in significant re-culturing and restructuring in their schools.

None of the respondents considered gender as hugely significant in determining one's response to the leadership role. One commented 'you are drawn on whether male or female'. However a male respondent who is principal of a 'male-dominated, all-boys school in a harsh environment' expressed the view that principalship in that scenario would be very difficult for a female ... 'she would have to be very tough...'.

It emerged that both of the women principals interviewed found it harder to switch off and therefore found their job more emotionally draining than their male counterparts. Both of the female respondents commented that they had put on weight. The fact that both are single and are not required to have a structured home life after school emerged as a significant factor in terms of personal well-being. They regularly did not have the energy to cook fresh food and relied on 'bought in' more than was healthy for them.

1. Positive emotions

Human interaction

In the case of all respondents, it emerged that positive emotions were closely related to both successful relationships within the school community and the principal's sense of 'making a positive difference' in the lives of staff and students. All respondents expressed in different ways a sense of 'pride', 'satisfaction in a quiet way', 'achievement', 'affirmation' and 'a lot of happiness' in working with staff and students. This 'positive' human interaction aspect of the leadership role impacted significantly on the emotional well being of the respondents. While it is accepted that a lot of time is spent in the office 'because it's the nature of the job', one of the respondents described a love of 'the whole relationship thing', the 'buzz' involved in ...

> 'going around the school a few times a day, because it is a like a fix, you are having half fun and half non-fun and with kids and teachers and the whole lot'.

Another respondent commented on the 'joy, delight and happiness' in seeing the whole school community celebrating success in the particular case where the school raised funds to support an entrant for the Special Olympics.

Initiating Cultural & Curricular changes

When asked to comment on a significant influential event which for them associated with 'positive' feelings, all of the respondents expressed immense satisfaction in bringing about a successful curriculum innovation and of influencing staff to buy into a 'new reality' and embrace a significant 'sea change'. For the newly appointed principals these initiatives were seen as an early 'test' of their leadership ... 'because it was a public issue'... in the staffroom. All believed very deeply in the initiatives and felt affirmed and a sense of satisfaction in that 'even the people (staff) who were originally very negative actually

realised they had something to contribute' and 'we began to get a sense of well, we're all in this together' and 'as a school we can move forward now to a new reality'.

In the case of a school where celebration was not part of the culture and where the staff had not had' a day out' together in 20 years, 'it hasn't been part of their culture', there was satisfaction for the principal in making small moves in the 'right' direction that by the end of the first year.

> *they were talking to me and at least we were all sitting down in the staffroom, having lunch together.... which was an alien concept to them'.*

Student success

A female principal recounted initially that...

> *I don't think I would ever be.... as emotionally involved with my work as I was in my last school.... I think I have a healthy distance now.... I wouldn't feel that about (current school)... but I would still feel huge loyalty.'*

However in relating a positive influential experience she demonstrates that a very new sense of involvement in school sporting events brought her satisfaction both at a personal and professional level. She felt the effect of the positivity on herself and saw the impact of it on the whole school community.

> *I got very, very involved with competition...with sports... I was taken aback at how much I enjoyed the entire thing.... I was very taken aback at the level of reaction from kids and parents and how important it was for them, that I was there... by the end of the year there was a different spirit there...and it is better and it's more effective for me and for the school'.*

Professional affirmation

One respondent commented that ' it is not enough to serve a school, you have to get something out of it for yourself She saw the importance of personal affirmation ... 'You do things better when you are getting something out of it. The more fulfilled you feel the better you do the job'. Principals were affirmed in being thanked in small ways by members of the school community either by cards, notes, comments or just a 'well done' when something which was perceived as a problem was resolved. One respondent commented that it has taken this job to really prove it to her that she has professional standards...'! think that's very important and I now know that I am a professional person'.

2. Negative emotions

It is a lonely job

The school leaders in this study all commented on a sense of loneliness and isolation, in the role in that in the final analysis 'the buck stops' with them. As one of the respondents commented; 'when things go wrong, you feel very alone'. One of the more experienced principals acknowledged that:

> *'...to do the job, part of it is a gradual acceptance that the role is a lonely one... '*

Lack of affirmation

One of the principals felt a deep sense of disappointment at the lack of affirmation and what was described as a sense of ingratitude from staff...

> *'.. one would say you shouldn't be in the job to be thanked ...and it can mean so much and we are all human. I thought that at the end of the year, when we had our staff day, that somebody would say thank you ... and I was hurt and I wanted to cry.'*

Decision making

All respondents referred to making difficult decisions as a time when they felt alone, torn and tested. The most difficult instances related to decisions regarding members of the school community, the expulsion of a student in the face of staff division or the suspension of a staff member. The principals referred to the importance of 'gut reaction', 'what feels right', and 'values' in assisting them in making and defending a decision both to themselves and others:

> *'...over the years I've learned to trust my gut reactions and a lot of the times it turns out to be the right thing to do... if you trust your gut reactions you can defend your decision..'.*

Dealing with a divisive decision further aggravated the isolation of one newly appointed principal....

> *'... I know I became quieter. I was almost afraid ... I felt if I was seen talking to one or the other (staff faction) it looked as if I was allowing people to influence my decision...'*

Disempowerment

A negative emotional response was associated with the strain of trying to deal with the pressure of work, of high performance and of accountability placed on principals both by the Department of Education and Science and the school community. Respondents felt 'tired', 'under pressure', 'hugely drained', 'fearful', 'insecure', 'lacking control' and 'overwhelmed' with a sense of responsibility. As one respondent commented:

> *'A teacher can walk out, but if there is any letter not written, if there are deadlines not met, I have to meet them'.*

The emotional stress accruing from pressure from staff is expressed by one of the respondents:

> *'its always what you haven't done, its never what you have done. ... and if you don't do it for one person, they will start talking to the rest of the staff and everybody believes you have never done anything at all'*

All respondents felt disempowered in their role as educational leaders due to the amount of time which had to be devoted to 'non-educational' issues, lack of funding, building problems and in the case of the administration of a school of over one thousand students, no central organizational or administrative support, with no facility for a personal secretary to work to the principal. Commenting on time spent on structural issues, one respondent commented:

> *'I don't see it as educational...this is not the way a principal should be working. Because it is taking serious time away from education'.*

A sense of being overwhelmed is encapsulated in the comment by one of the respondents:

> *'... There are days when it's all too much, and you just want to say give me some space ...just allow me to be me ....and you can't'.*

Dealing with conflict

A major stressor for principals is dealing with difficult adults and conflict within the school community.

> *the most difficult personality type I find to deal with is those who ... whose only way of surviving is in conflict. They get their kicks from conflict'*

Due to an ongoing national industrial situation, which created major inter-staff difficulties in some schools, one principal commented 'every day, my stress levels were very high'. In one extreme example one respondent spoke of the 'shock 'of having to stand between two male members of staff where they were literally going to fight each other.

> *'...that was really negative... on reflection, even later that day, I was kind of semi-shocked about it, that I had to do that'...*

Another expressed frustration at being unable to resolve what she perceived as inter-staff bullying:

> *'... and there are a few... definite bullies... it is going to take a long time for certain people to get the courage to slowly stand up against them... '*

3. Professional demeanour

Respondents stressed the importance of having a presence, being in 'professional mode', being a 'role model', 'leading by example', 'being out there' and setting standards 'by doing'. As one respondent commented:

> *'You can't talk people into leadership; you've got to show them.'*

Particularly in a time of crises, it is important to show confidence, outward control and to remain calm otherwise as one respondent put it 'the judgement of the school is lost'. Respondents held the view that regardless of how one felt one had to 'give out the confidence to make them (the staff) feel confident'. Except for the longest serving principal, who wondered why one 'would be saying one thing and feeling another', the three other respondents emphasized that for them being in 'professional mode' involved 'suppressing feelings' and 'being in control'. As one respondent commented

> *'/ think it's very important to be in control because if you are not in control you are in trouble'.*

And another acknowledged the importance of linking how one feels personally with the feelings of those working alongside the principal:

> *'emotion would play a huge role, but it's how you deal with your own emotions in dealing with others people's emotion'.*

In describing dealing with a difficult situation one principal commented:

> *'At some stage you have to actually close down. If you meet parents who are violent or abused ... you can't sit and cry in front of them. You have to be strong all the time'*

Respondents were very aware of the importance of body language and had different ways of managing and demonstrating their emotional control. Some of the physical strategies used by principals to induce calm in themselves and to inspire confidence ranged from drinking a cup of coffee against a radiator,

> *'...I find light and heat incredibly important. Heat and the physical action of drinking...,*

to changing walking pace,

> *...'In a crisis situation I walk slow. Because, if they (the staff) see me doing something I don't normally do, they automatically assume that I am in total control of the situation',*

to practicing for a difficult encounter in front of a mirror.

> *'one thing I would practice is if I am going to have a difficult meeting, I would stand in front of the mirror and would watch my face. See how I am going to do it'.*

The importance in achieving a balance between professional distance and allowing staff to see one's humanity was also highlighted. This was achieved by sharing areas of interest i.e. sport, pets:

> *'...they know about my cat...and it has connected me with members of staff.. .which is good...'*

4. Emotional support and personal well-being

Support from 'trusting' and 'trusted' deputies was cited by respondents as being crucial in terms of support in the school leadership role. One commented:

> *'...I have two great Deputy Principals... I would never doubt their support at this stage...'.*

However, one principal did not have this experience and commented that the deputy had a very different value system and that they did not work as a team and 'were unable to sit down together to thrash things out'. What emerged in discussion on personal emotional support was the importance of a healthy internal emotional well-being, being a positive person and believing in oneself. One respondent referred to the importance of self-evaluation and critical reflection:

> *'...it's incredibly important, getting more and more important to me anyway. That's when you learn about yourself...*

She comments that you have to have the strength to face the reality of your situation:

> *'You have to name it to yourself, even if in your private moments you mightn't like what you hear, what you are telling yourself.*

All respondents admitted that the job cost them in terms of their personal lives and were aware that it is 'easy to crash and go into a blinkered world'. One respondent described how she felt she had nothing more to give at the end of a first year:

> *'...the well is dry ... There is nothing more. I can still do the paperwork, but I couldn't take another week of the school running full-time... '.*

The impact on personal lives was described in terms of' becoming reclusive in the evenings', 'losing touch with friends' and 'impatience with young family'. All respondents were aware of this and determined to take positive steps to address it.

> *'...I'm very conscious now of organising things with them (children) like a game of golf or whatever, Giving them quality time, making the effort because it is so easy not to...'*

Discussion

What is evident from the above findings is that emotions matter in the school leadership role. All of the respondents acknowledged the importance of positivity, emotional awareness, emotional connectedness and emotional control in relation to and in the management both of themselves and others (Goleman, 2002). While the respondents in this study worked in different school cultures and had different emotional experiences, it is clear that the key to a positive affective dimension of their role was the existence of a vision and a firmly held personal belief system. Aspiring to a model of leadership that is fundamentally concerned with building positive relationships and empowering others (Harris, 2002) was also shared by all four. There is a need for further research on the emotional impact of this style of 'relational' leadership on the school leader.

The findings highlight what the respondents found emotionally significant and compelling in their work. In all cases both personal and school achievement and success brought satisfaction and pleasure. The concepts of professional involvement with staff and students and also the advances made both in school re-culturing and restructuring were key to a positive emotional response from these principals.

Professional role modelling and self-control were central to three of the principals' stories. They spoke clearly of the need to demonstrate a positive confident professional demeanour which required hiding the authentic emotional self. This seemed to contradict the expressed need to be known, feel included and be seen to be human. It is as if principals want more openness and connectedness with staff and the broader school community but need the protection of a distancing professional demeanour in order to avoid being vulnerable and open to hurt. This is an issue for further research.

According to the findings of this study, the job of school leader exacts a high emotional price on principals. Loneliness, isolation, poor affirmation, poor control over non-educational issues and a lack of authority to deal with difficult staff situations were among the key triggers of negative feelings about the role. However all respondents were aware of the importance of keeping in touch with their emotional selves and of keeping a check, albeit unsuccessfully at times, on their emotional well-being. This poses questions as to whether the emotional price that school leaders have to pay is too high and how can this be addressed both by leaders themselves and the system.

Other emerging issues which are outside the scope of this brief analysis include:

- does experience in the job influence the principal's emotional response to the demands of the leadership role?

- are experienced principals more likely to exhibit a deeper emotional wisdom and confidence than beginning principals?

- do male and female principals respond differently to the emotional demands of the role?

While only a beginning, these findings offer a snapshot of what are largely unchartered waters in Irish education research. They indicate a need for further investigation into the emotional dimension of school leadership and the emotional understanding on which successful leadership of schools depends.

A Learning Experience

I found conducting this small scale study to be a very useful learning experience. At a practical level I learned the importance of checking the equipment thoroughly and of picking a suitable venue when planning to tape interviews. At the start of the first interview, on discovering that the batteries in the tape recorder were fading, I was relieved to have had an extra set to hand! In the case of one of the interviews there was a lot human traffic in the background which made me anxious about the quality of the tape. Another venue, a principal's office, proved problematic towards the end of the interview in that a phone rang twice in quick succession.

On reflection I think that a more detailed 'respondent profile' would have been useful. While not significant for this study, I do think that more factual data on each respondent, i.e. qualifications and previous management experience prior to appointment to principalship, might be significant in a larger study and is best collected at the beginning, as having to check back with individuals for personal details is time consuming.

Some of the respondents had difficulty finding the words to express personal feelings. Listening to the interviews, I heard myself on occasion prompting respondents with a relevant word when they were searching for a way to express a concept or a particular behaviour. In future I will endeavour to address this by further probing or by using other prompting techniques (Robson, 2002).

References

Blackmore, J. (1996). Doing 'Emotional Labour' in the Education Market place: stories from the field of women in management. *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education,*17, 3, 1996.

Beatty, B. (1999). *Feeling Like a Leader: The Emotions of Leadership*. Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Educational Research Association, Montreal, April, 1999.

Beatty, B. (2000). *The Paradox of Emotion and Educational Leadership.* Paper presented to the British Educational Administration Society Annual Conference, Bristol, UK, September, 2000.

Beatty, B. (2002). *Emotion matters in educational leadership: Examining the unexamined.* Doctoral Thesis, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Canada.

Chadwick, R. (2001). 'Ethical assessment and the human genome issues' in Shipley, P. and Moir, D. (eds.) *'Ethics in practice in the 21st century'*, Proceedings of the Interdisciplinary Conference of the Society of the Furtherance of Critical Philosophy, Eynsham Hall, Oxfordshire, October 1999.

Duignan, P. (2002). *Authenticity in Leadership in the Real World: Discover the Spirit; Encourage the Heart.* Paper presented to the Association of Catholic School Principals (NSW & ACT) Biennial Conference, Manly, May, 2002.

Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods of inquiry in Wittrock, MC (ed.), *Third Handbook of Research on Teaching.* New York: Macmillan.

Fineman, S. (2000). Emotional Arenas Revisited, in Fineman, S. (ed) *Emotions in Organisations.* London: Sage.

Fullan, M. (1998). Leadership for the 21st Century: Breaking the Bonds of Dependency, Educational Leadership, 55, 7.

Goleman, D. (1996). *Emotional Intelligence , Why it can matter more than IQ.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Goleman, D, Boyatzis, R. & McKee, A. (2001). Primal Leadership, The Hidden Driver of Performance. *Harvard Business Review December*, 42-51.

Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R. & McKee, A. (2002). *The New Leaders , transforming the art of leadership into the science of results.* London: Little Brown.

Greenfield, W, (1999). *Moral Leadership in Schools: Fact or Fancy?* Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Hargreaves, A. (2001). Emotional Geographies of Teaching. *Teachers College Record,* 103, 6, 1056-1080.

Harris, A. (2002). Effective Leadership in Schools Facing Challenging contexts. *School Leadership & Management,* 22, 1, 15-26.

Hochschild, A.R. (1983). *The Managed Heart, Commercialization of Human Feeling.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hodgkinson, C, (1991). *Educational Leadership: The moral art.* New York: Suny Press.

James, C. & Vince, R. (2001). Developing the Leadership Capability of Headteachers. *Educational Management & Administration,*29, 3, 307-317.

Leader, D. and Boldt, S. (1994): *Principals and Principalship, A Study of Principals in Voluntary Secondary Schools.* Marino Institute of Education, Dublin.

Loader, D. (1997). *The Inner Principal.* London: Falmer Press.

McDowell, J. O. & Bell, E. D. (1997). *Emotional Intelligence and Educational Leadership at East Carolina University*. Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the National Council for Professors of Educational Administration, East Carolina University, August, 1997

Malhotra, N. K. & Birks, D. F. (2003). *Marketing Research, An Applied Approach*. London: Pearson Education Company.

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. (1995). *Designing Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Maurer, R. (1996). *Beyond the Wall of Resistance*. Austin: Bard Books.

Murphy, J. (1992). *The Landscape of Leadership Preparation: Reframing the Education of School Administrators*. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.

Oplatka, I. (2002). Women principals and the concept of bumout: an alternative voice?, InternationalJournal of Leadership in Education, 5, 3, 211-226.

Robson, C. (1993). *Real World Research*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1992) *Moral leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

West-Burnham, J. (1997). Reflections on leadership in self-managing schools, in Davies, B. and Ellison, L, (eds.) *School Leadership for the 21st century*. London: Routledge.

Whyte, D. (1994). *The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the Soul in Corporate America*. New York: Doubleday.