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Leadership Effectiveness in International School Contexts: A Synthetic Mapping of Emergent Literature

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Education degree in Education

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Abstract

Further research is necessary in the emerging field of international school leadership. To illuminate how is effective international school leadership conceived in the emergent academic literature, a synthetic mapping was conducted. Six key elements were identified and were used to select and analyze a set of twenty-one key articles from the current literature. Elements were extracted from each article and then compared to produce the synthetic mapping. Despite the wide range of types of international schools and geographical contexts, there are several key challenges and features of leadership effectiveness found in the literature, including the following: the effects of turn-over; perception, power and influences; cultural intelligence; how leadership effectiveness is presented; use of frameworks; a common language around learning; the principal's role; and profit vs. education. These findings provide school leaders and researchers with a current synopsis of leadership effectiveness in international schools.

Keywords

International schools; international school leadership; international school principal; leadership effectiveness; synthetic mapping of literature.

Summary for Lay Audience

Leadership in international schools is an undersubscribed field of research but is increasing in importance with the rapid growth and proliferation of these schools around the world. The purpose of this study was to answer the over-arching question, “How is effective international school leadership conceived in the emergent academic literature?” In order to find a way to answer this question, a synthetic analysis was designed. Six elements were developed that focus on answering the overarching question, and the key information was then extrapolated from the twenty-one texts selected. These six elements are: what is an international school; unique features; how *effective* leadership is framed; theoretical lenses; challenges; and capacity. The synthetic analysis demonstrated that international school leadership is an area of great complexity with no two schools being similar, yet all are called *international*. Despite the wide range of types of international schools and geographical contexts, there are several key features of leadership effectiveness found in the literature, including the effects of turn-over; perception, power and influences; cultural intelligence; how leadership effectiveness is presented; use of frameworks; a common language around learning; the principal’s role; and profit vs. education. These findings provide school leaders and researchers with a current synopsis of leadership effectiveness in international schools, and it is hoped that this synthetic analysis will provide researchers a starting block to their study of leadership effectiveness in international schools.

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1 CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

The concept of leadership effectiveness in the international school context came to my attention when I was teaching French and Spanish in the Persian Gulf at a for-profit international school that offered the International Baccalaureate program. The teaching faculty and members of the school leadership team at this school, including department heads, principals and vice principals of the primary, middle and high schools, and the director, represented a significant variety of nationalities, originating from several countries, including, but not limited to: South Africa; the United Kingdom; Australia; Canada; New Zealand; Egypt; and India. The school board was comprised solely of local nationals and/or their representatives, in the case of the owner. The student body was composed of the nationalities mentioned above, plus several other nationalities from Southeast Asia.

What really drew my attention was the dynamics that played out between the leadership of the school and the teaching faculty, regardless of the faculty member's role. At this point in my career, my exposure to school leadership in any school, be it publicly-funded or private, from the point of view of a teacher was very limited. Even as a student, I had minimal direct interaction with school leaders through elementary and high school and no interaction whatsoever in tertiary education with school leaders, besides department heads who were teaching.

Thus far in my career, I had only worked as a teacher in publicly-funded schools in Australia. Moreover, I had a limited number of years of experience as a teacher, with only five years under my belt working at a high school and at an elementary school. Prior to this, I had experienced similar leadership styles at the two schools I had worked at. These schools were each led by a different principal, and staff members' input was more often than not sought out and included in the decision-making processes at the school level. These two experiences were the closest I had been to school leadership, and for the first few years of my career, I simply assumed that this is how schools were led. However, even with my limited experience, it was immediately evident to me that the leadership team at this international school did not possess a uniform approach to leadership that each of the members employed. My retrospective sense is that the various

leadership styles that were present included: servant leaders (Ekinci, 2015; Flint & Grayce, 2015; Benson, 2011); instructional leaders (Bellibas & Liu, 2018; Benson, 2011; Reitzug, West & Angel, 2008; Fullan, 2008); distributive leaders (Duignan, 2012; Bellibas & Liu, 2018; Harris, 2013); transactional leaders (Ebrahimi et al., 2017) and transformative leaders (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012; Bush, 2018). Skillsets possessed by the school leaders included the following: effective problem-solving; conflict resolution; collaboration; curriculum knowledge; financial management; creating a vision; and team-building, to name several. Members of the leadership team implemented their respective approach or approaches into their various roles within the school.

The existence of this variety of often contrasting leadership approaches at the various levels of leadership led not only to disagreements between leaders who subscribed to differing approaches but also to many interesting conversations between staff members. These conversations often centred on leadership and the particular approaches employed by the leaders in the school and what styles were deemed to be most effective by the members of staff in addressing concerns, situations, or approaches to teaching and or the role of the particular leader. It was interesting to hear how my more experienced peers viewed effective leadership. We had many discussions on how the school leaders were directing the course of the school in terms of the handling and approach to learning, discipline and interpersonal, staff and stakeholder relations.

At times, the variety of leadership approaches also created disagreement amongst staff based on the perceptions, interpretations, expectations, and goals of school leaders, and reactions from staff members. Disagreements arose when staff members did not perceive a particular leadership approach as being effective, or saw the leader as being unreasonable, making a poor decision, or even coming across as uncaring in the way in which he or she carried out his or her leadership duties, in accordance to his or her respective leadership style. This disagreement led to members of staff not supporting one leader or another, and even at times, undermining a leader's direction and directives.

Most interesting though, there were leaders within the school who were perceived as being effective, even when they had to make difficult and or unpopular decisions that affected large number of staff members. It was this phenomenon – leadership effectiveness of a few leaders

under the same complex conditions and demands where others had failed or were failing – that brings me to my study.

1.2 Problem Space and Purpose

During my studies in my graduate education program, I became aware that there is relatively little academic scholarship on what makes an effective leader *in international schools*. This lack of research is the problem space. In some respects, this lack of research in the field of international education reflects the relatively small number of international schools in relation to publicly-funded schools across the world. However, the international school sector is growing rapidly as is the number of international schoolteachers, students, and leaders (Bunnell, 2014; ISC Home, 2018).

The approach of my study was to select and analyze a core set of articles from this emergent literature to create a synthetic mapping of what is currently available. In essence, the purpose is to provide a scholarly snapshot in 2020 of the core understandings of what leadership effectiveness means in the context of the international school sector. This synthesis entails analyzing a set of core elements of each article’s argument, such as how international schools are differentiated from state schools and how effective leadership is understood in a general sense, before synthesizing leadership effectiveness in the international school context (see my methodology section for details).

After the articles were individually analyzed, a synthetic mapping was constructed to provide a current research-based account on effective international school leadership. The significance of this study is in its conceptual approach to representing the current state of how effective international school leadership scholarship is being theorized. This representation can guide empirical research in this emerging field or be used as a referent for future mappings of the expanding literature. Leaders in international schools may also find this study helpful.

1.3 The Importance of Studying Leadership in International Schools

International education appears to be a market that continues to see “staggering growth” (Bunnell, 2018, p. 551). From humble beginnings with only a handful of schools in the middle of the 20th Century, to well over nine thousand five hundred schools across the globe at the beginning of the 21st Century, understanding how international schools function is becoming increasingly important (Bunnell, 2018; ISC Data, 2018). According to the predictions made by the ISC, by 2020, it is estimated that world-wide, there will be over 10, 000 international schools, with over five million students attending (ISC Data, 2018). It is important to understand leadership in the international school context as these schools provide education to such a wide-variety of students, as well as work as a reproductive mechanism of social capital for the elite of the local society. Many international schools also have upwards of more than three dozen nationalities enrolled in their student population (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). It is not only students that represent a large number of nationalities. Teaching faculty and administration often hail from multiple countries, and not only from the host country (Hayden & Thompson, 2008).

Effective leadership, and what makes leadership effective in the international school context, must be studied because of the ever-increasing number of students receiving their education from these institutions. With more and more students receiving their education at international schools, the potential influence of these schools through students they educate is becoming more and more wide-reaching. Therefore, it is vital to illuminate leadership forms and practices in these schools, and how leadership is or might be effective; leadership creates the tone and focus of the culture of schools, thus influencing student outcomes indirectly through teachers (Morrison, 2018).

A search for research dedicated to educational leadership in the publicly-funded realm in Canada and other Anglo-Western countries quickly returns a multitude of articles. However, a search for leadership in the international school context returns relatively few results (Hayden & Thompson, 2008; Lee et al., 2012; Bunnell, 2018). Considering the potential results for an international school in the understanding of what makes leadership effective, it is surprising that more research has not been supported and or called for, especially with the established

understanding that effective leadership supports the performance of a school in terms of student, staff, and organizational achievement (Morrison, 2018).

It is important to develop a coherent snapshot on the literature about effective leadership in international schools through a meta-analysis to inform school leaders as well as school boards on enhancing leadership practices. Without effective leadership, an international school will struggle to meet the needs of its students, as well as the demands and expectations of parents, faculty, and board members. Ultimately, an effective principal will create the conditions necessary within the school for crucial functions that address student achievement to staff retainment and effectiveness of teaching to developing a positive school climate (Gardner-McTaggart, 2018c). Understanding how to create, develop and implement these conditions within the school is necessary for the international school principal. Therefore, it is important to have an understanding of leadership effectiveness in the international school in order to support and improve upon all of these functions.

1.4 Overview of the Thesis

This thesis asks one over-arching research question and two subsequent questions on leadership effectiveness in the international school context. This thesis will utilize textual analysis of the available and most relevant literature on international school leadership as the foundation for the claims made in the thesis. The mapping will in some ways be limited by what is currently available in the literature and by my search process. It may also prove to be difficult to synthesize research studies that use different methodologies or employ different theoretical perspectives. In the second phase, I move from documenting the answers to assessing the most significant or sound ones, my biases as the researcher will also enter. I will be vigilant to be reflexive about making my choices and making my underlying bias evident to the reader wherever necessary.

1.4.1 Overarching Question and Sub Questions One and Two

The over-arching question asks, “How is effective international school leadership conceived in the emergent academic literature?” This discussion is founded on a textual analysis of how effective leadership in international schools is understood by deliberative selection of available research literature.

The first sub question asks, “What are the challenges to leadership effectiveness present in international schools?” These challenges are highlighted by the articles used to support this thesis and include practices that can hinder and reduce the principal’s effectiveness as a leader (Lee et al., 2012; Hill, 2014; Johnson et al., 2008). This discussion will highlight the tensions and limitations that challenge the effectiveness of principals in the leadership role at international schools (Lee et al., 2012). It is to be noted that tensions and limitations can be systematic and or circumstances within a society that are difficult or not possible to address and change at the school level. On the other hand, many tensions and limitations can often be resolved, altered, or at the very least, mitigated within the school-setting itself (Gardner-McTaggart, 2018c).

The second sub question asks, “With an understanding of the tensions and barriers faced by an international school principal, what skillsets are identified in the literature on international school leadership as being necessary to support the effectiveness of the principal?” Throughout much of the research on international school leadership, the notion of having the necessary skillsets arises on a regular occasion (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012). This question will elicit findings that illuminate the important skillsets encountered in research that are identified as beneficial for the overall effectiveness of the international school leader.

1.5 Setting the Stage

This section contains an overview of the historical development of international schools. A discussion will then follow about defining the term *international school* itself, and the difficulties researchers have found in the creation of a widely accepted definition. A specific definition of an international school that is used for this research paper is then stated in order to provide

clarity and a general understanding of the term for the reader when the term is used in this paper.

1.5.1 A Review of the History of International Schools

Since the late middle ages, the occurrence of students of different nationalities receiving education outside of their country of origin has existed (Hayden, 2006). However, these examples are quite rare, and were not instances of students living in foreign countries with their and requiring an education or families wanting education in another language (i.e.: English) to help them

Examples of wealthy, *adult* students travelling to what were considered exotic locations to receive an education can only be found on rare occasion up until the 17th century (Hill, 246). It is at this point in history that John Goormaghtigh asserts is the beginning of a formal attempt to develop international education (246). John Comenius, “Czech pedagogue, philosopher and humanist” (246) lived from 1592 through to 1670 and is considered a “pioneer in international co-operation in education” (246). Comenius set out to completely revolutionize education as a whole across the world when he attempted to make his dream of international education a reality at his college, *Collegium Lucis* (246).

Not only did Comenius develop the opportunity for students to study in an international context, he also desired to create textbooks that would be written in a “common language” (246) so that students would receive the same understanding from their learning no matter their nationality. Further to the goal of a pansophic education, Comenius also wanted to change how learning at that particular point in time occurred, moving away from the teaching methodology of rote memorisation to creative pedagogies to further enhance learning (246). Finally, and most revolutionary, Comenius wished to “oblige the upper classes to ensure the education of a nation’s entire youth” and to ensure that girls received an education (246). Unfortunately for Comenius, his dreams were not supported by enough people of influence to change the mindsets of the day, the *Collegium Lucis* and its objectives were to lay dormant for many decades to come.

For hundreds of years, the speed of travelling from one city or country to the neighbouring city or country remained essentially the same: slow. During the 18th Century, there was an increase of the wealthy travelling to foreign lands, but not for the purpose of receiving an education (248). It was not until the 19th Century, with the advent of steam-powered ships and railway networks, that the speed at which a population could be mobile was dramatically increased.

The notion of building a specific centre of education to attract foreign students was not formally re-developed until the mid-nineteenth century when, arguably, the first example of a modern international school emerged in 1866 in London, England at the London International College, located at Springhill (Hayden, 2006; British History Online [BHO], 2017; and Hayden & Thompson, 2008) hosted secondary students (boys) from a variety of countries from Europe, including England (Hayden, 2006; Spring Grove, 2001).

The students at the London International College specifically travelled to and lived at the school or in the surrounding community for the purpose of obtaining an education with an international perspective. As with the methodology Comenius strived to install at his *Collegium Lucis*, the methodology at the London International College was considered experimental in nature, when compared to the schools of this particular era. This school differentiated itself from the period's educational norms, as corporal punishment was not administered, and there was a focus on learning modern foreign languages, rather than only offering Latin and Greek in an effort to encourage international mindedness (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). As with Comenius' *Collegium Lucis*, the London International College failed to receive the acclamation that was initially hoped for. Even with supporters such as the renowned and respected author, Charles Dickens, the London International College closed its doors in 1889 (Hayden & Thompson, 2008).

Following World War One, the newly developed League of Nations focussed on communication, trade, and diplomacy amongst its member countries. This increase in relations between member countries subsequently led to a rise in the number of people travelling to and from countries where, up until this point in time, had previously limited interaction and experience with foreigners. Some of the early International Schools emerged during this era, such as the

International School of Geneva, and the Yokohama International School (Hayden & Thompson, 2008).

The creation and development of the United Nations in the 1940s, after the ill-fated efforts of the League of Nations, coupled with the devastation of two world wars, greatly encouraged and helped to develop the growth of international relations (Holmes & Page, 2006; United Nations [UN], 2018). Again, as experienced during the 1920s and 1930s, there was a focus on developing and increasing collaboration in the areas of economy, education, and understanding amongst members (UN, 2018).

The growth and appearance of embassies, military bases and the growth of private industry led to an influx of expatriate families living and working abroad (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). It was at this time that schools, such as the Alice Smith School in Kuala Lumpur, founded in 1946, were established to educate expatriate children, as these children were not residents of the countries they lived in and therefore had little to no access to the local education systems (Hayden & Thompson, 2008).

The increasing number of children living abroad with their families warranted the development of the Conference of Internationally Minded Schools in the early 1950s, and subsequently the International Schools Association [ISA], whose schools provided education to expatriate students living abroad (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). During this time, a major concern developed that students' achievements at ISA schools were not recognised by universities and other educational institutes in their home countries (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). This lack of recognition of student achievement was a major challenge, as an entirely new curriculum, pedagogy and methodology would have to be created, developed and, above all, accepted by educational systems, universities, governments, and people.

During the 1960s, syllabi and examinations continued to be developed for secondary students by what was to become known as the International Baccalaureate. In 1968, the IB was registered in Geneva, Switzerland as a non-profit organization (International Baccalaureate Organization [IBO], 2015). This IB organization continued the efforts to accommodate the increasing number of students who were living abroad with their families and were seeking admission to

universities in their home countries but were not able to write the necessary examinations (IBO, 2015). The IB developed curriculum, syllabi, relations, and recognition with twelve schools in ten different countries, including two state schools in France and Germany (IBO, 2015). These syllabi and exams were first piloted in 1969, and due to their success, became the catalyst to the International Baccalaureate creating further relationships with universities and governments, with the objective to have IB examinations recognized as equivalent to the universities' and nations' own entrance expectations (IBO, 2015).

1.5.2 Defining the Term *International School*

Ironically, over a century after the Springhill school closed its doors, international schools are now a world-wide phenomenon that continues to experience rapid growth. Present in nearly every country across the globe there are approximately 9549 international schools located from Afghanistan through to Zimbabwe (ISC Data, 2018). By 2020, it is estimated that world-wide, there will be over 10, 000 international schools, with over five million students attending (ISC Data, 2018).

However, amid this tremendous growth, an important question arises: What exactly is an international school? This question appears to be simple at first glance with a seemingly simple answer - until a definite explanation is required. There are many schools of thought as to the parameters that define what an international school is, thus making this question exceeding difficult to answer (Bunnell et al., 2017; ISC Home, 2018; Keller, 2015; MacDonald, 2006). ISC Research defines an international school as the following:

For the purposes of market intelligence, analysis and data collection, ISC Research includes an international school if the school delivers a curriculum to any combination of pre-school, primary or secondary students, wholly or partly in English outside an English-speaking country (ISC Home, 2018).

or;

If a school is in a country where English is one of the official languages, it offers an English-medium curriculum other than the country's national curriculum and the school is international in its orientation (ISC Home, 2018).

Because the ISC focusses on international schools that are providing students with an education that allows them to access English-speaking universities in Europe, the United States and Canada, it fails to mention in its definition that there are many international schools that do not use English as a medium of instruction. These schools are located in many countries around the world in Asia and South America, for example, and they provide instruction in French, Spanish, German, and Chinese, to name a few languages.

In order to ensure that this examination of what effective leadership in the international context does not become too expansive, it is important to have a clearly defined focus. Thus, it is important to start with a defined understanding of an international school. However, even defining the term *international school* has its own unique body of research, which includes much debate and disagreement as to what makes an international school *international* (Bunnell et al., 2017; Keller, 2015).

Many attempts have been made to define what exactly an international school is, however, due to the seemingly endless and extensive interpretations, no definitive definition exists that can be agreed upon as a whole (Bunnell et al., 2017; Bunnell, 2018; James & Sheppard, 2013; Keller, 2015; MacDonald, 2006). Nearly every article written on international school leadership refers to the conundrum of providing a clear definition of an international school, as can be referenced within the charting provided in the appendix. Bunnell and colleagues (2015) argue that there are now three groupings of international schools: the first group is made up of the traditional international schools, developed for a mobile, expatriate population; the second group is comprised of schools who have a mission (ideological); and the third and most recent group is the international for-profit schools (Bunnell et al., 2015). The first two groups of schools are mostly populated with a diverse mixture of students from several countries and nationalities,

along with some students from the local population. In the third group of schools, the majority of the student population comes from wealthy, local families (Bunnell et al., 2017).

There are some areas that researchers can agree upon. In general, international schools are not, contrary to popular belief, populated solely by students from countries other than the host nation (Bunnell et al., 2017). There are exceptions to this rule, such as the American Embassy School in New Delhi, India, which has an agreement with the government of India that specifically identifies which students can be accepted to study at the school (Nagrath, 2011). Acceptance is restricted to children of families who are employees of the American embassy, and includes expatriate families, whose children do not qualify to attend state schools because they do not satisfy the residency requirements of the public education system in India (Nagrath, 2011).

1.5.3 What Makes an International School *International*?

To date, there are no established standards that are required for a school to successfully pass through in order for the school to be permitted or not permitted to state that it is an international school (Bunnell et al., 2015; MacDonald, 2006). The term *international* can be used by a school simply because the school chooses to include the term and it is stated in the school's registered name (Bunnell et al., 2015).

On the other hand, there are also well-established international schools who do not use the term *international* in their name. An example is The Alice Smith School in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia which was founded over seventy years ago and exemplifies what it is to be an international school (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). These types of schools have developed, created, and maintained a strong, internationally renowned reputation for delivering top-quality programming to their students, who then advance to universities in the United Kingdom and the United States.

There are also international schools have been established with the direct purpose of promoting a particular ideology. Some examples include the United World Colleges, whose goal is to promote and develop world peace through education (United World Colleges [UWC], 2018; Hayden & Thompson, 2008). In order to fulfil this mandate, United World Colleges focus efforts on recruiting and attracting students from different and even opposing ethnic groups in

order to educate these students under one roof in order to promote not only education, but cultural understanding with the goal of achieving peace (Hayden & Thompson, 2008).

Outside of the schools who belong to an organization, there remains a large group of schools – the independent *international* schools. These schools state that they are *international* but may or may not offer programming that incorporates elements of these well-known international school organizations, or may offer a small component, such as having students sit the IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education) at the end of Grade 12 (Bunnell et al., 2015). Some of these schools may even include the word *international* in their name to attract students and or attempt to impose an element of prestige (Bunnell et al., 2015). Therefore, the question must be raised: does simply offering an examination, such as the IGCSE at the end of the students' years at a school truly make that school *international*?

1.6 The Rise of the International School Sector

The rise of the quantity of international school is not the result of one singular factor, but rather the cumulation of many concerns and beliefs, both accurate and inaccurate, held by educators, parents, corporations, and governments. One of the key causes of the increase of international schools in many nations is due to the perception that the national (local) education system, regardless of the nation, is inferior to the curriculum and the programming offered at an international school (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). Thus, the perception is that enrolling one's child(ren) in an international school is seen as an investment by the family, as the child is provided with an academic advantage, especially when applying to tertiary education both within the respective country and externally (Hayden, 2006; Gialamas & Polonis, 2013). An education from an international school, therefore, potentially provides opportunities for students that would otherwise be closed to them, such as access to entry to universities in the United Kingdom and the United States (Hayden & Thompson, 2008).

1.7 Definition of an International School for this Thesis

For the purpose of this thesis, the term *international school* shall refer to a private school that: offers a curriculum in addition to the national curriculum in the school's respective country of location; whose language of instruction is in English (although there are many schools around the world who offer an international schooling in languages other than English); and which charges a tuition (or in the case of the United World Colleges, subsidize or waive the tuition for students of lower socio-economic backgrounds (UWC, 2018). The school may be a for-profit or a not-for-profit entity and may be either independent or a member of a conglomerate of schools. Furthermore, the schools discussed in this paper will be, unless stated, schools catering to the elite and mobile population of a particular locale, including elite and mobile expatriate families. These schools will also be staffed with predominately expatriate teaching staff and school leaders from numerous countries. This is a broad definition of what an international school is, however, the goal is not to define the term, but to be able to discuss leadership in this context. It is evident that the idea of leadership effectiveness across such a range of schools is an ambitious task, but at the very least, the most relevant articles have been analyzed through the synthetic mapping to provide a current outlook on the topic.

1.8 Overview of Chapters Two through Five

Chapter Two sets the stage for the thesis. This chapter focusses on three registers, or foci that discuss leadership in both the international school sectors and in the publicly-funded education system. These registers discuss key approaches to leadership found in the research in the field of educational leadership, the role of school leaders and the effects on the school, and lastly, an answer to the second sub-question focussing on skillsets identified in the literature that are necessary to support leadership effectiveness.

Chapter Three contains the methodology section and will focus on the process taken to address the over-arching and sub-questions asked. The rationale for selecting a *synthetic mapping* of selected peer-reviewed articles on the topic of leadership effectiveness in the international school context is discussed and the process of selecting articles for review and analysis is included. The

focus of the article review is to provide a basis from which to discuss similarities, contrasts, and patterns which will then be used to help answer the questions asked in the thesis on leadership effectiveness in the international school context.

Chapter Four contains a discussion of the elements found in each of the articles selected for the synthetic mapping. In order for an article to be selected, articles are required to contain each of the elements identified as essential to help answer the questions presented by the thesis. The elements from each of the articles are reviewed and include the synthetic mapping of the key texts. The relevant information was then synthesized and separated into commonalities and into uncommon findings.

Chapter Five engages in a discussion about the information found during the process of the synthetic mapping of the elements found in the twenty-one selected articles. The key skill-sets and competencies necessary for a principal to possess in the international school context are then identified and discussed and their importance to the effectiveness of the leader highlighted.

2 CHAPTER TWO

2.1 An Overview of Educational Leadership

This second chapter provides an overview of approaches to educational leadership that are found in the current academic literature in the broader context of state schools. The discussion focusses on national schools; however, I have included some discussion about international schools in order to highlight the unique experiences that are seen within the international sector. There are some similarities in terms of leadership qualities and styles within publicly-funded education versus that of the context of international education. However, the conditions for the principal are much more complex within the context of the international school, and there is a more direct effect on the principal and therefore the school as a whole (Murakami-Ramalho & Benham, 2010). Three core registers or foci are reviewed and focus on leadership in the publicly-funded education sector, with comparisons made between this sector and that of the international schools.

The first register will focus on the prevalent approaches to leadership found in the research in the field of educational leadership. The second register will discuss the role of the school leaders and the effects of this role upon the school itself. Lastly, the third register will discuss an answer to the second sub-question which asks; What are the skillsets identified in the literature on international school leadership as being necessary to support the effectiveness of the principal? And further, how these skillsets relate to the specific qualities and or dispositions of effective leaders according to the general research.

2.2 The Role of Leadership: Review of the Literature on School Leadership

To begin to understand educational leadership in the international school sector, it is important to first have an awareness of the variety of approaches to leadership that are being discussed in the wider literature on the topic. Over the past several decades, at least sixty-five approaches to educational leadership have been identified (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012). My committee member, Dr. Gus Riveros, cautioned me about using leadership approaches as they have been well critiqued in literature (Dr. Gus Riveros, Personal Communication, March 1,

2020). However, my reasoning for including this overview is due to the articles examined for this thesis regularly presenting several approaches to educational leadership.

I have not engaged in a detailed discussion about these approaches because these terms are used in the vernacular in the literature. The following five approaches to leadership are referred to or inferred regularly throughout the articles: transformational leadership; transactional leadership; instructional leadership; servant leadership; heroic leadership; and distributed leadership (Ebrahimi et al., 2017; Bellibas & Liu, 2018; Reitzug, West & Angel, 2008; Ekinci, 2015; Flint & Grayce, 2015; Leithwood, et al., 2008; Duignan, 2012). These approaches are examined in the following three registers within this chapter. It is important that international school principals continuously reflect on their own leadership practices and look to adopting new ideas that can improve upon the work that they do within schools (Courtney, et al., 2017). By only incorporating specific ideas into their work, principals are limiting not only their own potential, but the potential of their staff members and student body.

2.2.1 Register One: Approaches to Leadership

This register will discuss five of the most commonly found approaches to leadership present in the literature surrounding educational leadership. The respective leadership approaches in regard to how they each apply in the context of publicly-funded education and in the context of international schools are also highlighted.

2.2.2 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is an approach to leadership focussed on introducing changes necessary to improve the way in which a school or business operates (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012). This approach to leadership continues to be the most “explored and discussed leadership theory in the new millennium” (Berkovich, 2016). Systems, including procedures and policies that do not adequately serve the tasks for which they were created are identified and targeted for change in order to improve the organization – in this case, the school (Bush, 2018). At times, sacrifice and difficult decisions are required by the leader and the staff to introduce the changes necessary for future success. Transformational leaders tend to lead by example and

gather support by exemplifying confidence, inspiration, and developed relationships to promote change (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012).

Although transformational leadership is a very popular to leadership, Interestingly enough, this approach to leadership has not been challenged within educational circles, even though it is critiqued in studies that focus on management in the private sector (Berkovich, 2016). Some of the key critiques to this approach point out that there is no way to measure outcomes with this approach, and that this approach is part of other approaches (Marks & Printy, 2003). It is even suggested by researchers that this approach should be abandoned by principals, however, other articles suggest reforming the shortcomings of the theory in order to improve it (Berkovich, 2016).

2.2.3 Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is a very structured style of management that is very common to educational organizations in the public sector (Ebrahimi et al., 2017). It relies on having staff members who know and understand their roles and do not require leadership to motivate and encourage them to fulfill these roles (Ebrahimi et al., 2017). According to Fullan, effective principals must “create a fundamental transformation in the learning cultures of schools and of the teaching profession” (Fullan, 2001, p. 17). These leaders focus on directing their staff members through already established expectations to complete prescribed phases or targets of the goals of the organization. Transactional leaders manage by adhering to the organization’s procedures that involve rewards for achieving the outcomes as set out by the organization, and penalties for not complying with the set expectations.

At first glance, a transactional leadership approach would appear to be an appropriate match for an international school as this approach requires staff to follow the rules and guidelines as set by the school. It is the principal who maintains the standards set by the board and he or she evaluates the performance of the teaching staff and implements the directives of the school board. The goal of transactional leadership is to keep the status quo functioning while minimizing change to the structure of the organization. With the high rate of teacher turn-over,

this approach helps to preserve the school, even when it is constantly undergoing substantial change, with each new member of staff who arrives. This approach also allows the perpetuation of the narrative developed by the principal, which allows a specific story to be continued about the school.

However, without actual stability of the school in the form of teachers who remain in their positions for longer than a year or two, without the development of programming, and without the development of a trusting relationship between teachers and the principal, this approach to leadership does not have the conditions necessary to be effective in the international school setting.

2.2.4 Instructional Leadership

Instructional Leadership is an approach to leadership where the principal is more heavily involved with the instructional process in the classroom (Bellibas & Liu, 2018). Teachers are actively guided by the principal, who: sets and develops clear goals for teachers; assists with the process of presenting the curriculum in the classroom; is involved at a classroom level and is familiar with the teaching styles of teachers and the learning styles of the students; regularly holds meetings to check in and monitor goal attainment; and is directly involved in the evaluation process for staff (Reitzug, West & Angel, 2008). The overall quality of the pedagogy and methodology delivered to students, and the academic achievements of the students are a major focus for this style of leadership.

An important factor to instructional leadership is collaboration and the development of positive relationships with staff with the goal of helping each student achieve his or her best possible results. Without having built positive relationships with the staff, it would be difficult for a principal to provide guidance and suggestions to staff. Staff members would always be on edge and may perceive any suggestions provided by the principal as a personal attack on their teaching skills, rather than taking the advice as a constructive measure that will be used to attain the goals set by the school, principal and teachers for student outcomes (Reitzug, West & Angel, 2008). However, with the high levels of staff and principal turnover, instructional leadership is difficult to establish within the international school context (Benson, 2011).

In his article, *The Change Leader*, Fullan (2002) discusses how instructional leadership is not a sustainable model in schools as it is reliant on just one individual – the principal (Fullan, 2002). Fullan discusses how the role of the principal as “instructional leader is too narrow a concept to carry the weight of the kinds of reforms that will create the schools that we need for the future” (Fullan, 2002). Instead, Fullan argues that rather than putting all of their focus into instructional leadership, principals must instead “initiate and develop a fundamental transformation in the learning cultures of schools and of the teaching profession itself” (Fullan, 2002). Effective principals must be focussed on the big picture ideas of the school and building the capacity of their staff, rather than maintaining a focus on one or two the annual results from students.

2.2.5 Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a leadership approach that is focussed on the leader serving the staff rather than the staff serving the leader (Ekinici, 2015). This approach is counter-intuitive to other leadership structures, as the servant leadership model requires that the leader promotes collaboration and builds upon creating relationships that develop trust amongst all members of the staff (Flint & Grayce, 2015). A servant leader strives to meet the highest priority needs of his or her staff members and is committed to growth of his or her staff members in their professional and personal lives as well. Furthermore, servant leaders encourage collaborative approaches to solving problems, and creating and setting goals with the staff. The rationale supporting this approach is that if the highest priority needs of the staff are met, then the staff will be able to focus on the task at hand and be successful (Ekinici, 2015; Flint & Grayce, 2015). Examples of successful companies who have implemented the servant leadership model include Kentucky Fried Chicken; Southwest Airlines; Fedex; and Marriott Hotels (Flint & Grayce, 2015).

Using the servant leader approach to leadership is more difficult in the international context, as the principal is working with a large number of cultures, many of which have not had experience with this style of leadership (Flint & Grayce, 2015). As a result, individuals hailing from these respective cultures may see a principal utilizing servant leadership as a weak leader. Therefore, a principal who practices servant leadership would need time to develop confidence in those coming from cultures where this style would be viewed as ineffective. However, due to the

transient nature of teaching staff in international schools, and the relatively short period of time that principals are in their roles in the average international school, the building of relationships and trust can be a difficult task to undertake as this leadership style requires a period of time for success to begin to show (Flint & Grayce, 2015; Benson, 2011).

2.2.6 Heroic Leadership

Heroic leadership occurs when all aspects of the school rely on the principal to be the proverbial *hero*, including in relationship building, curriculum content knowledge, ability to solve the problems of everyone in the school, etc. Decisions are made unilaterally without discussion, input, and feedback from staff. A very successful example in the world of business of heroic leaders include Lee Iacocca, who essentially rescued Chrysler Motor Company from the brink of bankruptcy in the 1980s.

However, due to the complexity of today's schools, both national and international, it is nearly impossible for the heroic leader or principal to exist, yet alone succeed without other members of staff supporting the principal (Gurr, 2015). Leithwood et al. (2008) state that leaders using the heroic leadership model do “more to discourage potential candidates from applying for leadership jobs than they do to improve the quality of incumbent leadership” (Leithwood et al., 2008).

This discouragement could arise from two places, depending on what kind of leadership role the potential candidates are looking at assuming. The first could be that candidates recognize that the principal is so involved in the roles of others that they do not want to be even further micromanaged. Or, alternatively, if these candidates are looking at becoming a principal, they see from their experience just how immense and complex the role is and may be intimidated by it and not entertain pursuing the role.

2.2.7 Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership has gained traction over the past several years and has become one of the most studied forms of educational leadership (Harris, 2013). Distributed leadership is focussed on engaging in developing the platform for change and improvement within an organization (Harris, 2013). Distributed leadership does not just focus on the principal and the role of the position, but rather involves an acknowledgement and plan to develop and promote leadership skills amongst members of staff (Bellibas & Liu, 2018; Harris, 2013). This distribution of responsibility continues to be led by the principal, who now becomes the “leader of educational leaders” (Duignan, 2012).

The development of positive relationships forms the foundation for collaborative leadership, where more than one staff member, not just the principal, is responsible for outcomes in a particular area of focus within the school because it is simply impossible for a principal to be able to spend a large quantity of time in a classroom due to the demands of the school at large (Duignan, 2012; Bellibas & Liu, 2018; Harris, 2013). By giving teachers more input and control in their teaching and program development, a principal utilizing distributed leadership is developing capacity amongst the staff of the school, resulting in a more empowered and engaged teaching staff. It does not mean that everyone within the school is a leader, and the role of the principal is diminished or erased. Rather it means that the principal recognizes a skillset that a teacher possesses and provides the opportunity and support for the individual to take on this task or challenge (Harris, 2013).

Distributed leadership is not without its critics. One concern brought to light is that distributed leadership is simply another manner by which more work is downloaded onto teachers by principals (Hargreaves & Fink, 2009). This form of leadership is further seen by some researchers as another method of maintaining the status quo of the school or school board in terms of practices carried out by teachers in their roles (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2008; Hargreaves & Fink, 2009). Furthermore, these authors discuss the importance of ensuring that any school leaders who use distributed leadership as a model understand exactly what this model represents and how to execute this style by providing the necessary supports and conditions for distributed

leadership to flourish within the organizational setting, in this case, within a school setting (Harris, 2013).

Using dualities to address the realities of the international school offers an approach that allows the principal to focus on more than one side to any of the arguments or expectations he or she will encounter (Gardner-McTaggart, 2018a). This ability to focus on more than one aspect is essential for the principal as it allows the principal to be able to concentrate on more than one initiative at a time. Gardner-McTaggart (2018a) furthers the use of this framework by describing leadership as a “veneer of distributed discourse cloaking a rigid agenda” (p. 69). This ‘cloaking’ is where the principal has given a teacher, or multiple teachers specific responsibilities to manage, but the shifting of these responsibilities is in truth a delegation of responsibility on the part of the principal, and at the end, the teacher is completing the work, but has no final say in what the outcome is.

2.3 Register Two: The Role of Leadership

There is much current academic research and discussion on the topic of the role played by the principal. Leadership in the educational context is a complex topic as there are numerous definitions as to what leadership should be. My approach to this section is to review core features of the research on what constitutes effective educational leadership in order to answer the second sub-question posed by this paper, which is what skillsets are identified in the literature on international school leadership as being necessary to support the effectiveness of the principal. This second register will discuss the role of the principal within the school and identify the major points of current research.

2.3.1 The Role of the Principal and the Complexities of the Role

To begin, it is necessary to clarify the terminology used for the principal. There are many names for this role that appear in the literature, including: director, headmaster headmistress, head, administrator, leader, etc. (Hayden, 2006). To clarify, the word *principal* has been selected to

represent the head of the school for this thesis. However, it must be noted that there are other *leaders* and leadership roles within in a school besides the principal. These leaders include vice principals, department heads, co-ordinators and those holding formal and informal roles within the organization. However, it is the principal of the school to whom these other leaders report to, and it is the principal who is ultimately responsible.

The role of the principal has changed in numerous ways over the past several decades and this role continues to change and adapt (Duignan, 2012). According to Duignan, there are even “concerns” voiced in a number of countries that “the role of the principal is no longer relevant or effective” as the role of the principal was “designed for the industrial age [and] has not changed enough to deal with the complex challenges schools are facing in the 21st century” (Pont et al. 2008 in Duignan, 2012, p. 121).

Over time, the role of the principal has grown and has simply become too large for one person to effectively have expertise in the multitude of disciplines that exist within a school (Duignan, 2012). These changes in and to the role of principal, including the current requirements for what the principal is to do within a school, mean that the role the principal plays within the school is no longer meeting the needs of the students, staff, and school community (Duignan, 2012). As a result of these changes to the role of the principal, it is important that examples of effective leadership are studied, and the findings implemented in schools in order to achieve the desired outcomes of the school’s respective stakeholders.

Fullan (2002) furthers the discussion about how the current role and expectations of the principal no longer meet the needs of schools. Fullan discusses the changing role of the principal, and the importance that the principal’s role must change to one that provides the platform and opportunity for leading a culture of change within the school organization (Fullan, 2002). Fullan does not advocate change just for the sake of change, but rather calculated change that comes after the principal has built positive relationships, demonstrates an understanding of what change means in the school, created a sense of trust, improved morale, and provides the opportunities to try new ideas (Fullan, 2002). These concepts are applicable to both publicly-funded schools as well as to international schools. However, stability of staff is a key requisite for these concepts discussed by Fullan to take hold and to be effective and successful. In the international school

context, these goals will be difficult to see through simply due to the high rate of staff and leadership turnover.

Not only does the principal have to fulfil his or her role as the lead teacher in the school, but he or she must also have a lengthy list of skills outside of curriculum, discipline, and staffing. As Duignan describes, the principal is expected to:

“... be legal expert, health and social consultant, security, security officer, technological innovator and top-notch resource manager ... confidant, marriage counsellor, architect, engineer, and sanitary contractor” (Duignan, 2012, p. 119).

From my own experience, I can also add to the list: recruiter; website manager; advertisement developer; counsellor; fundraiser; dispute diffuser/mitigator; event planner; project developer; sounding board; verbal ‘punching bag’ for individuals expressing anger and frustration; contract interpreter; contract enforcer; referee; reference; interviewer; initiator of difficult conversations surrounding workplace behaviour; coach; and, mediator. A simple survey of principals would further lengthen this list. As these descriptions demonstrate, the role of the principal is so much more than being the head or lead teacher and has become what some consider to be a position with overwhelming expectations (Duignan, 2012).

2.3.2 Understanding the Role

It is important that principals know and understand their role in the international school. Generally, there is only one individual, the principal, who occupies this “top leadership position” (Keller, 2015, p. 902). By knowing and understanding the role he or she is playing, the principal is aware “how others are positioning them and how the individual principal anticipates the game to be played within practice” (Crow et al. 2017, p. 274). By knowing and understanding that he or she is being manoeuvred by the significant stakeholders within the school, the principal is able to make any necessary adjustments, either personally and or with others who may be counting or relying on a certain level support (Crow et al., 2017). Any principal challenging the expected role that he or she is to play within the school will only lead to a constant state of stress, and

conflict with the school's stakeholders, and could even ultimately end with dismissal (Brown, 2012).

2.3.3 Setting the Tone for the School

Gardner-McTaggart (2018b) writes that the ability of the principal to effectively “set the tone” for the school is an important skillset to possess (p. 778). Bunnell (2018) supports this notion by stating it is important for the principal to be “supportive, respectful, works to satisfy school’s vision, encouraged collaboration among teachers, and worked with staff to meet curriculum standards and to solve school or department problems” (p. 561). According to Bunnell, it is also important for the principal to personally have and to be able to create within his or her members of staff a sense of ownership of the school (p. 561). This sense of ownership creates an environment where the teachers are more than just employees – they have a personal stake in their role and in how the students feel and perform academically and socially.

2.3.4 Creating a Common Language around Learning

According to Bryant, Walker & Lee (2018), successful leadership orchestrates a common language within the school to allow teaching staff to discuss student achievement and program development (p. 27). This language incorporates the school mission and vision, as well as the academic goals that students strive to attain, regardless of which curriculum is offered at the school. It is important that all members of staff support and utilize this common language, as the use of this common language allows for more accurate conversations, as all stakeholders are familiar with the value of the words that are being used in terms of what is taking place at the school.

Without this common language, there are infinite opportunities for misinterpretation which can lead to conflict amongst the stakeholders within the school. The development of this language requires input from all areas of the school, and most importantly, requires time and consistent staffing. Hill (2014) states that “communicating clearly, clarifying language used, and sensing how messages are received are all part of the leader’s tool kit” (p. 185) including being a

“balanced, calm, culturally receptive, fair, principled educator who can create a school learning community and lead by example” (p. 187).

2.3.5 Ability to Meet Student Needs and Expectations

For any school it is imperative that the needs of the students are met. At an international school, this outcome is even more important because the reputation of the school is at stake. Reputation is more important for an international school because parents have the choice whether or not to send their children to this type of school. Without the ability to promote outcomes and student achievements, an international school is limited in its abilities to attract and recruit prospective students. Therefore, an international school must have an effective leader in the position of principal, as success in this position has a direct effect on the performance of the teaching staff, and in turn on the students, thus building and promoting the product and reputation of the school as a whole (Morrison, 2018).

2.4 Register Three – Building Trusting and Understanding Relationships

Commonly found in the literature on educational leadership is the theme of relationships. Building relationships comes in many forms, and it is crucial for the success of students, staff and for the principals themselves that the principal is able to develop and foster positive working relationships. Relationship building is even more important for the principal in the international school sector, as the relationships formed can have a very direct and lasting impact on many facets of the role of the leader in this context. Building a sense of trust and understanding between the key stakeholders within the school is crucial to the success and effectiveness of the principal (Gurr, 2015; Hallinger & Huber, 2012).

2.4.1 Building and Fostering of Positive Relationships

Another role that an effective principal will play is that of developing relationships with the school community. It is important that the principal has a high emotional intelligence and is therefore able to develop and sustain positive relationships with the parents, families, school

board members and other stakeholders within the school (Lee et al., 2012). These relationships allow for the principal to be able to build the confidence of the stakeholders with the principal, staff and the programming being offered at the school. Without positive relationships, the likelihood for conflict and misinformation is greatly increased, thus affecting the ability of the principal to lead effectively.

2.4.2 Interpersonal Relationships - School Politics and Conflict

Important to the survival of a principal at any school is the quality of the interpersonal relationships that he or she is able to build. At an international school, these interpersonal relationships, including relationships between the principal, staff, parents, and the school board are even more crucial due to a variety of reasons. One of these reasons is because of the independent nature of the school, which allows for a school board that is able to hire and fire much more easily than a school that is part of a broader system and required to adhere to stricter labour laws. Secondly, with the high rates of turn-over of both staff and principals, developing positive relationships quickly is important in order to get to know and understand the school community. A principal entering his or her new role at an international school must quickly become aware of the environment and the dynamics that exist between these parties. Furthermore, he or she must be able to tactfully navigate amongst these groups, as his or her success as principal can be influenced by key individuals from these parties (Brown, 2018; Gurr, 2015).

2.4.3 Public Relations

Schools are very public organizations, and so the perceptions held by members of the general public, and of the direct stakeholders have a direct impact on the school itself. This impact can include reputation; morale for staff and students; desire to attend this particular school; attraction and retention of staff; volunteers, etc. (Cohen, 2014). Furthermore, in many jurisdictions, the academic achievements and or ranking of the school is also a very important source for the overall image of the school (Cohen, 2014). Social media also plays a role, with schools

highlighting positive experiences to their students, staff, parents, and any members of the public who are interested in seeing what is going on at the school (Cohen, 2014).

However, there is negative side to social media. Maintaining a presence on social media consumes time, and with the already heavy work-load given to principals, there may or may not be enough time that can be directed to this area (Cohen, 2014). Social media can also create very time-consuming problems that require solving, either through negative student-to-student interaction, or through problems caused by others that are directed at the school (Cohen, 2014).

2.4.4 Staff Recruitment and Retention

Staff recruitment and retention is a tension within any school, but especially within international schools (Gardner & McTaggart, 2018). There are many causes for the high levels of turnover that international schools experience, and it is important that these issues are identified and addressed so that schools can retain principals and teachers in their roles for longer periods of time in order to build stable programming, and build the relationships that are necessary for success (Odland & Ruzicka, 2009). Identifying and addressing these high turnover rates is crucial for the long-term success of any school, and especially for the international school. It is evident that by reducing the amount of turnover of staff, leaders and board members, schools can minimize the disruption that turnover at all of these levels creates and instead focus on developing continuity of programming.

2.4.5 Cultural Intelligence

In the context of both a multi-cultural school and in an international school, cultural intelligence is an important asset for a principal to possess. Cultural intelligence is the capacity of a leader to have an understanding of a wide-variety of cultures rather than only being familiar and responsive to a singular culture (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012). There are four components to cultural intelligence: cultural knowledge, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral cultural intelligence, each of which can be learned and or honed as required (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012). Cultural intelligence is related to the use of transformational

leadership. Principals with high cultural intelligence are more likely to engage in transformational leadership with their staff (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012).

In the international school context, it is not enough for the principal to simply be aware that there is a multi-cultural setting within the school. The principal must be able to work within this setting and be aware of the need to create an inclusive school environment. Creating a culturally inclusive environment is important especially in international school setting, as there is such a diversity of cultures, languages, faiths, experiences, and goals. In business circles, it has been identified that leaders simply do not have an adequate awareness of culture, even though their businesses are more and more multi-cultural (Lakshman, 2013). In order to implement an inclusive school environment, the principal must first be aware that there is a system of privilege. As the majority of teachers are sourced from Western-Anglo countries, such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States, this privilege is even present in who is hired for the positions at the school itself! Therefore, it is important that the principal can recognize and address issues of “individual, organizational, and societal barriers” that are present within the school (Owen et al., 2017, p. 49). The principal must then work with his or her staff members to address these issues within the student body by ensuring that all acts of discrimination, large or small, including micro-aggressions are swiftly dealt with. Dealing with these situations must involve a learning process in order to provide the opportunity for growth with the individuals involved (Barakat, 2017). This process can take time and must be implemented and reinforced, as the concepts are not always evident (Barakat, 2017). In the international school context, schools must be aware of the interactions of their students and staff members, as the conditions are very present that can lead to discriminatory actions.

Leadership effectiveness in the international school context is how the leader, in this case the principal, is able to fulfill his or her role within the international school. Each principal brings his or her own skills and experiences, and it is how these skills and experiences are utilized and implemented during the interactions that take place between staff, students, and school board members that can determine the leadership effectiveness of the principal. Leadership effectiveness is also based on perceptions, and how he or she is perceived by the staff and school

board as being effective in the role. Fortunately for the principal, many of the skillsets that are shown by research to be effective are skills that can be learned and are not just inherent.

3 CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Methodology

This chapter contains a discussion of the methodological approach that was taken to address the questions that are asked in this paper about leadership effectiveness in international schools. Given the emergent character of academic literature specifically focussed on leadership in the international schools sector, in consultation with my supervisor, I decided to use a form of meta-analysis that we are naming “synthetic mapping” (Dr. Paul Tarc, personal communication, July 22, 2019). Synthetic mapping was selected as the method to analyze a set of emergent literature as a form of data. It was crucial to have a carefully defined selection process and a mode of analysis. Each of these will be discussed in the coming sections.

The use of synthetic mapping allows me to access the data present across the current peer-reviewed articles available on leadership effectiveness in international schools and to analyze this information. This analysis includes the identification and discussion of the similarities, contrasts, patterns, and any unique interactions in the literature. These topics are discussed with the goal of identifying what is necessary for improving upon leadership effectiveness in the international school context.

Dolby and Rahman (2008) successfully use a form of meta-analysis in their paper titled, *Research in International Education*. In this article, the authors state that their objective is to “describe and critically analyze the multiple fields that operate under the rubric of research on international education as a way of providing a conceptual framework for future research” (Dolby & Rahman, 2008). This paper follows in their footsteps in synthesizing one particular stream, leadership, within the strand of international education that has emanated from the international school movement.

3.2 General Approach

As stated, this study involves performing a textual analysis and creating a synthesis of the most relevant academic literature that is currently available on the topic of effective leadership in the

international school sector. Currently, there continues to be a very limited number of peer-reviewed research articles that are available that focus directly on this topic (Blandford & Shaw, 2001; Dolby & Rahman, 2008; Lee et al., 2012). While there is a certain amount of research available on this topic, the quantity of articles is not as plentiful as the research that is present in other areas of research within the specified scope of international schooling. Compounding the problem to the small quantity of research articles, there is also a very limited number of researchers who focus on this particular field of study (Lee et al., 2012).

At its core, this synthetic mapping relies on closely analyzing the content of the selected articles and relies on close readings of the overall argument. Synthetic mapping aligns with a number of related approaches that combine information from a number of separate studies. Separating out the distinct elements (discussed below) represents a unique approach to breaking down the article content and then comparing these parts across the articles. With this approach, I attempt to engage the core components of each article, whilst holistically considering the article's relation to my research questions.

3.3 Mode of Analysis: Mapping Distinct 'Elements' of each Selected Article

In consultation with my supervisor, Dr. Paul Tarc, it was decided that a form of meta-analysis was necessary to review and analyze the research available in this field. The idea of synthetically mapping the information was then discussed as a potential method. Upon further discussion, it was decided that it would be useful to decide on the relevant registers or elements and chart out how each element was explicitly or implicitly engaged in each article. Going down the first column of the chart would document how each individual element was taken up in the articles. Then, working down the second column would allow for the comparative analysis synthesized and presented in the findings chapter. And finally, the discussion chapter would return to the research questions in light of the findings.

The first step required an initial review of articles that were relevant to effective leadership in international schools. Articles were searched for using the search process (see section on the initial search process below) and then considered for review. After reviewing the articles, a

number of common elements were identified that were present in the discussions within the articles. Elements were chosen because they were present in the vast majority of the articles that are selected for the article criteria chart and reflect the discourse that is available on the topic of leadership effectiveness in international education. This larger number was condensed to six key elements, all of which have a direct focus on leadership effectiveness in international schools (see below). Using these six key elements, the Article Criteria Chart was created (see Section 3.7). Articles selected for use in the synthetic mapping contained a discussion and or focus on a majority of the six elements of the Article Criteria Chart.

Not every article explicitly included all six key elements. These articles were still permitted for inclusion in the Article Criteria Chart if they maintained a central focus on leadership effectiveness in international education. A second reason to permit articles for the Article Criteria Chart not containing all six of the key elements was due to the small quantity of articles focussed on this area of research.

The Article Criteria Chart was completed by creating a column that contained the article's author(s), year, source and publication or journal and each Element. Relevant content that was related to the elements was entered under each of the elements in point form so as to be able to easily retrieve it when required. For each article, I worked vertically down the column that contains the elements until each of the elements (where present) were completed.

3.4 Initial Search Process

In order to search for articles in peer-reviewed research journals, the university's library search engine was accessed. In order to search for articles on leadership effectiveness in international schools, several different search terms were initially attempted. These initial searches produced results where the vast majority of the results did not have a direct focus on the thesis questions. Therefore, it was necessary to increase the accuracy of the results. Several more unsuccessful attempts were made, with the results continuing to not have a focus on the desired topic.

Eventually, the search term, *international school leadership*, successfully returned results that were relevant to the questions posed. Boolean combinations or quotation marks were not

utilized they were too specific and with the limited number of articles written in this field, it was possible to sort through the returns. This search was then completed within the Western Library search engine, through EBSCO, SAGE, and Google Scholar.

From this search, it was possible to identify articles from the results that were produced from the search that discussed leadership effectiveness in international schools. Articles were then selected and read to verify whether or not there was a focus within the writing on a relevant lens of this thesis. Articles that were relevant were therefore identified and saved for further analysis which led to the development of the Article Criteria Chart. Articles that did not have a direct and relevant focus on the thesis questions but did appear to have some content that could prove to support discussion on the thesis topic were recorded, and any potentially relevant information was highlighted for future use as supporting material.

3.5 Article Selection Process

This section contains five parts that discuss each stage or phase of the article selection process. For the first phase, it was necessary to select a starting point from which to find relevant articles. As there are several potential journals for research articles on the topic of international schools, and leadership within these schools, it was important to select a starting point for finding articles that focussed on the topic. The Journal of Research in International Education (JRIE) was selected as a starting point due to its focus on the strand of international education emanating from the international school movement (Dolby & Rahman, 2008). Articles written on international school leadership and published in the JRIE and retrieved from the search in the databases were selected in this first phase to represent an emergent field of effective leadership in the international school context. Each of the articles chosen for this synthetic analysis has been published since the year 2000 in order to maintain a more contemporary perspective on leadership effectiveness within international schools.

For the second phase, it was necessary to continue to find articles on the topic. As there is a limited number of researchers in this still-emerging field, authors referenced within the already sourced articles found in the JRIE were then selected for further scrutiny. Citations present in

this first phase of these articles focussing on leadership effectiveness in international schools were then accessed for potential inclusion. This process led to articles being sourced for supporting information from the following education journals: Education Management Administration and Leadership (EMAL); the Journal of Educational Administration; School Leadership & Management; the International Journal of Leadership in Education; Interdisciplinary Perspectives on International Leadership; the International Schools Journal; and the Educational Review. The articles selected for their content were then scrutinized following the same process as the articles were for the first phase.

For the third phase, any further citations in the articles from the journals mentioned above that were relevant to the thesis topic were then followed up on in the same ‘snow-balling’ manner. This *snow-balling* involved accessing articles that were cited within potentially relevant articles and then searching for the presence of the six elements within these newly-found articles. Any pertinent supporting data was recorded following the same process as with the articles sourced from the JRIE and the other educational journals.

In the fourth phase, the articles selected from the journals were then reviewed for a second time, and the key points of focus were identified from within the articles. These points of focus were selected as they assist with answering the questions posed by this thesis. These points were then developed to become the six *elements* that are present in the Article Selection Chart as shown in Section 3.7.

The fifth phase involved the development of the elements of the article criteria chart. After reading the articles, all of the key points were listed. These key points were then analyzed and points that were common to the majority of the articles were made into headings. The key points were then rearranged and listed under these headings. There was initially a large number of headings, however, in order to be more specific and focussed, it was necessary to reduce this number. After reviewing the headings, six key headings were that encompassed the information found in the articles that pertained to answering the questions.

These key points were named *elements* as they represent the fundamental information necessary to answer the questions posed in the thesis. The majority of the twenty-one articles discuss the

following six elements within their discussion. There are several articles which do not include each of the six elements, however, these articles were still selected for synthetic because they are directly related to international schools and leadership in the international school context. These six elements are what comprise the Article Criteria Chart (sample found below, and completed charts are found in Appendix One). Each of these six key elements and a description of their importance in understanding leadership effectiveness in the international context are described below.

3.6 Analysis, Synthesis, and Interpretation of the Findings

Analytically, I completed close readings of the selected texts. Once the texts were read, I then documented the specific answers that each text offers (explicitly and then as necessary, implicitly) to the elements explained above. The saturation point was reached when no new answers emerged as I sought out new articles for review. The process for reaching this point is discussed later in this chapter in Section 3.9. In this stage, I was moving vertically through the second column of the chart and filling in the elements for each individual article independently.

The next phase in this process involved synthetic mapping. This phase has allowed me to realize the study's purpose. In this phase, I read vertically down the chart to compare and relate how the different articles discuss each element. I have considered the number of repetitions and the soundness of the explicit arguments in terms of how the elements of the argument cohere to allow for an overall synthesis of what effective leadership means in the international school sector, the focus of the main research question. I have also provided the literature-informed answers to my research sub-questions.

3.7 Article Criteria Chart

This chart has been developed to demonstrate the relevant content and focus on the topic of leadership effectiveness in international schools for each of the articles selected.

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	
Element Six: Capacities of Leadership	

3.7.1 Element One: What is an International School?

Creating a definition of an international school that is accepted by the majority of researchers has proven to be an impossible task due to the complexities of each individual international school and the perceptions of just what constitutes an international school. However, for many articles that discuss the topic of international schools, many authors do create a definition that is used within each respective article based on the set of criteria that is being studied. While many authors do create a working definition for their respective research, there are other authors who

state that a definition is simply not possible due to the complexities of these schools and select specific criteria of these schools to focus on.

3.7.2 Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School

While all schools are unique, international schools exist with a variety of circumstances that make them even more so. While there is no one factor that stands out as being the one key circumstance that makes the international school unique, rather, it is the combination of circumstances and the accompanying complexities that make them so unique. It is within this environment that international schools exist, and it is these unique faced by principals that are discussed within the articles. Identifying the specific and unique factors of international schools provides the basis for each of the research articles selected. While many of these unique features may also be found at schools within the publicly-funded education sector, it is important to highlight that these particular features, when present within an international school, might be amplified due to the unique complexities and circumstances of the international school. Some of the unique features faced by international schools include: high staff and leadership turnover rates; the highly complex role of the principal; the relationship between the principal and the board of directors; the challenge of for-profit education; and a lack of an educational system, such as a department or professional school board, just to name a few of these features.

3.7.3 Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership

The articles selected for the Article Criteria Chart contain a discussion on leadership within the international school context and what makes this leadership effective or ineffective. The wide variety of leadership approaches and styles is one of the factors that makes the study of international, and even publicly-funded schools so complex. Articles will discuss how specified leadership styles and qualities possessed by the leaders affect the outcomes for schools, staff, students, boards and even the principals themselves. Combinations of these leadership styles are also featured in the research.

Two of the predominant approaches to leadership found across the research are transformative leadership and distributive leadership. There is also one form of leadership that is now also emerging, and that is of cross-cultural leadership. This form of leadership is beginning to be discussed in research articles that focus on international school leadership given the intercultural character of many of these schools.

3.7.4 Element Four: Use of a Theoretical Lens of Leadership

A common component that was present in many of the articles selected for review and, for some, later inclusion in the Article Criteria Chart included the use of a theoretical lens of leadership. These lenses help to create an image or picture through which the author explains to the reader the complexities and nuances of leadership effectiveness and the role that principals hold in the international school context. The utilization of a lens allows the author to explain difficult, complex, and sometimes multiple concepts in a much deeper manner through the use of metaphors, similes, and other images. The successful use of a lens demonstrates the author's understanding of the concepts researched and discussed within the article he or she is researching and writing about. The specific lens can shape how effective leadership is conceived and presented.

3.7.5 Element Five: Challenges to Leadership Effectiveness

This element discusses the challenges to leadership effectiveness that are discussed within each of the articles selected for the Article Criteria Chart. These challenges come in many forms and range from internal challenges to external challenges. Internal challenges are challenges that can be directly addressed by the principal such as the necessity for the principal to improve on a skillset. External challenges are challenges that cannot be directly addressed by the principal as these challenges are more global in nature and may or may not be able to be successfully addressed. Such challenges include cultural expectations, the direction in which a school board wants to move the school, the location of the school, etc.

3.7.6 Element Six: Leader Capacities and Practices for Success

Leadership capacities and practices and their importance to the international school are discussed in the articles selected for the Article Criteria Chart. This element focusses on the practices and the capacities that are possessed by the school principal in order to be effective in his or her role. One would suspect that many of these capacities are similar to what a leader requires within publicly-funded education to be successful, but there are skillsets that are unique to international schools and it is important that international school principals are aware of these unique skillsets.

The skill-sets optimal for effective school leadership in an international context are highly specialised, therefore, it is imperative that international school principals are competent for the role by possessing the necessary experience, education and understanding. These competencies are necessary to promote and facilitate the achievement of the educational goals and outcomes demanded by parents and students, as well as to satisfy the mission and financial objectives of the school.

Some of the skillsets discussed in the research include cultural capacity; navigating the complex relationships between the principal, the school board, and fee-paying parents; and creating a common language around learning in the midst of high turnover rates. Articles selected for this thesis discuss the capacities of international school leaders and how these capacities promote leadership effectiveness.

3.8 Process of Synthetic Mapping

Using the Article Criteria Chart as a basis, I reviewed each article one at a time, and searched for discussion within the articles that focussed on the six respective elements identified within the Article Criteria Chart. When information was discovered within the article that met the criteria of one of the six elements, this data was then recorded within the chart. I systematically reviewed each article for content that represented each element. I began with searching for content from Element One (What is an International School?) and progressed through the remaining six elements one at a time. Once the article was reviewed and all relevant data was utilized, the process began again for the second article, and so on and so forth through the

remaining articles. These findings are listed in Chapter Four and then discussed in further detail in Chapter Five, which also includes the conclusion to the findings to the questions asked by the thesis.

3.9 Saturation Point

In order to understand when data saturation was achieved, it was important to consistently review the Article Review Chart and the elements to ensure that additional articles were contributing new information (Brod, Tesler, & Christiansen, 2009). The six key elements are listed in a column in the vertical and the articles selected for the Article Criteria Chart are listed in the inside column. Once each article was reviewed, information pertaining to each of the elements present within the article was entered into the chart. Entering the data created a visual representation of the information that was present within the articles. After twenty-one articles were analyzed, further reviews were not providing new insight or information on any of the elements. It was at this point that the saturation point was reached in terms of finding new information on leadership effectiveness in international schools.

3.10 Reliability and Validity of the Methodology

Throughout this paper, I have attempted to be systematic, balanced, and transparent. To be systematic, I ensured that I developed and followed a process of sourcing articles that could be re-created. When I performed the search process in different database, I followed the same parameters which resulted in similar focus being returned for analysis. Because the elements within the criteria chart were developed, I was able to verify if an additional article I found related to the focus of my paper. The process I used to find articles and to then analyze and chart the information found in the articles is reliable in the sense that it is a process that can be re-created by following the steps that are discussed in the methodology. The results could vary depending on the actual selection of articles and interpretations of the elements, the analysis, and their comparisons, the synthesis. The inclusion of articles written in other languages would also

vary the results, as these articles were not included in this thesis. Another difference to recreating the process would occur when additional research is completed and published in one of the journals accessed for research for this paper. All attempts have been made to ensure the validity of this research. To ensure validity, the systematic approach described above was carried out across each phase of the research. Transparency was achieved by clearly stating in the methodology section about how the elements used to select articles were developed and how articles were then selected according to these elements.

3.11 Why a Synthetic Mapping?

This paper employs a synthetic mapping in order to analyze the information present with the currently available research on leadership effectiveness in international schools. This method provided me with a structure by which I was able to bring together the data present within the selected articles on the topic. With the synthetic mapping, I was able to contextualize the findings of the larger arguments and implicit assumptions of the authors and gather this data with the goal of understanding how this data answered the thesis questions. This data is present in the articles and is represented in my mapping by the six selected elements. As leadership effectiveness is an emerging field, a synthetic mapping provided a much-needed snapshot at 2020 to guide leadership practices and future research studies. Synthetic mapping also offered a way of illuminating the key elements that writers are addressing in their representations of leadership effectiveness in the international school sector.

4 CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Findings of the Synthetic Mapping of the Twenty-one Key Texts

In this chapter, I present the findings from each of the key twenty-one texts as a synthetic mapping. After I reviewed each of the articles individually and placed the information that I collected from them, I was able to compare and synthesize this information. The findings are presented in this chapter and are then unpacked and discussed in greater depth in Chapter Five, where key take-aways from the analysis are also provided.

4.1.1 Element One: Defining an International School

One of the most striking commonalities present amongst the articles on international school leadership surrounds the definition of just what an international school is and finding general consensus amongst researchers in regard to the definition. Half of the charted articles specifically engage with the topic of a definition for international schools. The remaining articles do not define the term, either by not referring to it at all, or by stating they are not going to approach the issue due to its complex nature. Three of the authors who do engage with the term write about how difficult it is to define, and two of the authors create their own working definition of the term for their respective papers.

Three of the articles selected base their respective definitions on how international schools serve an extra-national curriculum to an elite clientele. Gardner-McTaggart (2018b) and Mancuso, Roberts and White (2010) simply state that an international school provides education to the elite families of a society and offers a curriculum other than that of the local national curriculum, such as the IB program. Hill (2014) speaks to a different type of international school: he states that an international school is “is one established to offer education to the children of globally mobile parents” (p. 177). This concept is also discussed in Gardner-McTaggart (2018); Mancuso, Roberts and White (2010). Hill continues his definition for his article and describes how these international schools are private, charge a tuition, witness a high level of student turn-over and “often have a large cultural mix of children (and sometimes staff)” (Hill, 2014, p. 177).

Three of the selected articles lightly touch on defining the term international school, but do not state a clear explanation due to the difficulty in gathering consensus amongst researchers (Dolby & Rahman, 2008; Murakami-Ramalho & Benham, 2010). Dolby and Rahman (2008) state that creating a clear, concise definition of what is an international school is such a complicated concept that it is simply not possible to do so. Keller (2015) states that international schools “elude definition” and that even the definitions that do exist “vary tremendously” (Keller, 2015, p. 900). According to Murakami-Ramalho and Benham (2010), international schools are “highly complex organizational systems with different configurations, missions and values” (p. 626). The authors go on to recognize how difficult it is to define an international school by stating “international education carries different ideological and pragmatic interests and interpretations” (p. 626).

MacDonald, in his 2006 article, *The international school industry: Examining international schools through an economic lens*, joins with the other authors in stating that “international schools and international education are still without any sort of universally accepted definitions” (p. 193). Some authors completely avoid a discussion of the definition altogether in their articles, despite being focussed directly on international school leadership. These researchers include Morrison (2018); Hill (2018); Gardner-McTaggart (2018b); Gardner-McTaggart (2017); and Bunnell (2018). Murakami-Ramalho and Benham (2008), Dolby and Rahman (2010), and Keller (2015), already mentioned earlier in this section, also avoid providing or discussing a definition for the term.

After reviewing the definitions (or lack thereof) and understandings presented by the authors of the selected articles, it is evident that there is a broad understanding of what constitutes an international school. There is also a number of authors who did not even attempt to use a definition within their articles as it appeared they did not want to get bogged down with the discussion around the topic. Within the debate, there are some contradictions between researchers with some focussing on a more ‘traditional’ international school that caters to mobile expatriate families, others focussing on schools who cater to a societal elite and others yet who focus on schools that provide an education in international-mindedness. Because there is so much debate on just what an international school is, and with the high numbers of different types

of these schools, there does not seem to be a singular answer that can satisfy every perception of what an international school is.

4.1.2 Creating a Working Definition of the Term *International School*

Several authors create a working definition of an international school within their paper to serve the needs of their respective research articles. These authors stated that they were not going to delve into the argument of creating a definitive definition of what an international school is but were only choosing selected aspects of what an international school is to serve for the purpose of their respective research articles. Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2012) state that there are many ways to define an international school but do in fact develop their own definition to serve for their article (p. 839). For their definition, the authors describe an international school as having a wide variety of traits, is culturally diverse, with transient populations, set in a host culture and includes a wide variety of stakeholders who are involved each at a different level of involvement (parents, owners, school boards, interest groups, etc.) (p. 839). Finally, according to Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiw, an international school provides multiple curricula to students, not just the local curriculum offered to students in state-schools (p. 839).

Lee, Hallinger and Walker (2012) write for their article focussed on south-east Asia that an international school is a “private, self-funded independent school” operating in a “highly competitive environment” (p. 299). For this article’s definition, an international school must also offer the International Baccalaureate program to students. Because there is no one answer that will satisfy all interpretations of what an international school is, the debate will continue for a definition, and researchers will continue to have to define just what ideas of an international school they are taking for their respective definitions. There will also be writers who simply ignore making a definition and leave the interpretation up to the reader.

4.2.1 Element Two – Unique Factors of the International School

This element is different from the other elements as it is often interconnected and present within the other five elements. The three sections below demonstrate the uniqueness of the

international school by discussing how authors differentiate international schools from publicly-funded schools. Following this section, there is a brief overview of other unique factors of the international school, but these factors are discussed further under Element Five and unpacked in more detail in Chapter Five.

The first point is that in contrast to the literature available on publicly-funded schools, there is little academic literature that focusses directly on leadership in international schools (Blandford & Shaw, 2001; Lee et al., 2012; Dolby & Rahman, 2008). This gap is a significant concern, especially given the increased growth of the number of international schools in the past twenty years (ISC Data, 2018). While international schools may share some similar challenges in terms of leadership effectiveness when compared to publicly-funded facilities, many of these challenges are encountered on a greater scale within international schools due to several reasons as found within the selected articles.

The second point discusses how an international school can utilize the term *international*. In two of the selected articles, it is discussed how schools themselves are able to elect to utilize the term *international* in their name. Due to the complexity of defining just what makes a school international, and because there is no international body that accredits schools as *international*, it is therefore difficult to refute the claim of being international when a school includes this term in its name.

James and Sheppard (2013) and MacDonald (2006) state in their respective articles that many schools simply decide for themselves whether or not the term international will be used to describe the school. Their conclusion is that it is ultimately up to the school itself to decide whether or not to use the word international in its name. These authors do not present a definition of the term international school, but rather state that if the school meets the needs of international-minded families, and its students, that in itself is enough to constitute calling the school international.

Lee, Hallinger and Walker (2012) discuss how schools “offering the IB [International Baccalaureate] have successfully created a brand or identity that is associated with the IB (p. 291). The authors continue and state that this brand is “associated with an international curriculum, multi-cultural student body, global portability of the degree and high-quality

preparation for university entrance” (p. 291). The perception of brand and or identity is important when an international school is attempting to distinguish itself from other international schools.

The third point discusses how capitalist globalization is responsible for the commodification of many services in day-to-day life, including service, provision of emotional supports and education (Gardner-McTaggart, 2018a). This idea of commodification is important to note as the author refers to education as a product that can be bought. With most international schools being private, tuition-charging schools, coupled with the increase world-wide in the number of international schools, education has indeed become a commodity (Gardner-McTaggart, 2018a).

Relatedly, MacDonald (2006) discusses how international schools are schools run as a business with a business-oriented school board (p. 201). Therefore, the principal must have experience with business in order to understand the unique situation of an international school. Within these schools, education is a driving factor, but these schools are first and foremost market-driven (financially and commercially). To further increase the complexity of this challenge, many international school boards are focussed on the “business side” of the school, with staff and leadership focussed on the “education side” of the school (p. 201).

The following features are discussed in element five as challenges, however, they are topics that are most definitely shared with this element. These points include: the high rate of staff and principal turn-over; international school governance and the relationship between the school’s independent board and the principal; the multi-national composition of the staff and students; whether or not the school is a for-profit entity; belonging to a centralized system or educational department; and implementing a regularized curriculum.

4.3.1 Element Three: How Leadership Effectiveness is Presented

This element identifies how each of the articles conceives of leadership effectiveness in the international school context. Leadership effectiveness in this context is described in many ways in the articles selected for this research and is mentioned directly in the articles through the discussion of positive attributes, making comparisons, and or creating metaphors and analogies.

Ten of the articles that directly discuss this element and are discussed in the sections below. It is important to note that overall, the study of leadership effectiveness in international schools is, in general, sparse, or “undertheorized” (Bunnell, 2018, p. 522).

4.3.2 Leadership as a Highly Interactive Process

Four articles discuss the how leadership within the international school context is a highly interactive process. Hill (2018) discusses how leadership is a highly interactive process rather than a passive process. In order for the principal to be able to provide the school with a “meaningful direction” he or she must “understand the social realities that surround the school” (Hill, 2018). Hayden and Thompson, (2008) also discuss how principals are “expected to provide leadership” within the school by setting the direction for the school through planning and generation of ideas (p. 65). Keller (2015) states that principals must use problem-solving techniques to address the challenges that arise to leadership within the international school context. Bryant, Walker and Lee (2018) discuss how it is important for the principal to be aware of the needs of his or her staff and develop a strategic allocation of resources.

4.3.3 Creating the School Environment

Two of the selected articles discuss the importance of the workplace environment created by the principal within the school setting. Mancuso, Roberts and White (2010) write about the importance of the principal developing a supportive, respectful workplace that is collaborative, fair, and equitable. Furthermore, when the principal is able to promote the school vision through his or her actions, the principal is able to generate buy-in from the staff. Gardner-McTaggart (2018b) adds to this last point by stating how when the principal’s personal values are shared with the vision of the school, a “shared capital” can be created between the staff and the principal (p. 779).

4.3.4 Adaptability

Four articles, Hill (2018); Morrison (2018); Murakami-Ramalho and Benham (2010); refer to the importance of adaptability to leadership effectiveness in the international school context. Being adaptable is important to leadership effectiveness as the principal is able to recognize needs present within the school community and respond to them. Gardner-McTaggart (2017) writes about how key it is for international schools to have leaders who understand and are able to effectively respond to the fluidity of the market. This adaptability is necessary for the international school to continue to build on its reputation and in turn, generate more interest from families to send their children to this particular school (James & Sheppard, 2013). Being aware and keeping up with the demands of the local market where the international school is located will help ensure the overall success of the school, as without a strong understanding of these demands, the school will not meet the desires of the community and will not be able to attract new students, which are necessary for the continuation of the school.

4.3.5 Perceptions of the Leader and Power

Mancuso, Roberts and White (2010) discuss the importance of how the school principal is perceived by his or her staff to leadership effectiveness. The authors write, “Perceptions of poor school leadership, dissatisfaction with salary and personal circumstances” can all have negative effects on the effectiveness of the principal, and on the school overall (p. 307). These authors also identify that transformational and distributed leadership are the leadership styles that are most important to leadership effectiveness in the international setting.

Bunnell (2018) writes about how the perceptions held by the staff of the leadership have a great effect on the effectiveness of the leader. Bunnell continues by writing about the impact of social media on the school, including how the school’s social media image can affect staffing efforts, and enrollment (Bunnell, 2018). The effect of social media is one area of focus that is becoming more and more influential on schools as its effects and potential effects continue to grow in importance for businesses, and in this case, schools.

Bunnell also discusses the effect of power within the international school. In the international school, power is in favour of the school leadership and a negative climate is easily created when this position of power is abused or perceived to be abused through actions, words, or lack of either (Bunnell, 2018). There are several causes for this power imbalance, one of them being how the high levels of teaching staff turn-over create the need for these teachers to require a reference from a principal in order to secure a position at another international school. As a result, teachers who are not going to remain in their positions and require a reference may not challenge decisions made by the principal even when they do not agree (Bunnell, 2018).

On the other hand, teachers who have remained at one school for several years are also in a vulnerable position as they heavily rely on the international school for employment (Bunnell, 2018). This section of teachers will also not challenge decisions that come from leadership as they require continued employment. With a lack of employment laws to protect workers in many countries, it is key that a teacher keeps his or her supervisors 'happy'.

4.3.6 Use of Common Language to Create a Reality and or a Narrative

Three of the selected articles emphasize how important it is for principals to create and develop a common language focussed on learning within the school. Gardner-McTaggart (2017) discusses how it is the narrative created by the school leadership is what defines the leader and therefore the school (p. 59). Gardner-McTaggart continues his discussion on the importance of language to create a reality by stating, "Narrative trumps fact – leaders often base themselves on their narrative rather than qualifications and experience" (p. 59).

Bryant, Walker and Lee (2018), discuss how successful leadership develops and orchestrates a common language within the school to allow teaching staff to discuss student achievement and program development (Bryant, Walker & Lee, 2018). Developing this common language is key to overall student success as it provides a constant focus for both teachers and principals.

Gardner-McTaggart (2018b) further supports the creation of a narrative and states that, "Principals create a "power narrative" where they must use a connection to establish their role as leader" (p. 779). Gardner-McTaggart then states that "This narrative helps to fill the void of the constant rate of turn-over" (p. 779).

Hill (2018) also supports the notion of using language to create and support a shared vision within the school community. The purpose of this reality is to ensure that the school community understands the focus of the school, and that the community uses similar language when discussing these goals, therefore having a united approach. It is through this language that the leader creates a reality that his or her staff is able to see as their own (Hill, 2018). Language, Hill writes, “is power. It literally makes reality appear and disappear” (p. 527). Principals must “listen attentively and then make their own words count and know when to make them count” (p. 528). This consistent narrative helps to build the reality that the principal wants to exist within his or her school.

Lee, Hallinger and Walker (2012) also discuss the importance of creating a common language within the international school. The authors state that principals will face difficulty in maintaining a common language across the curricula even when the curricula originates from the same organization, for example, from the Middle Years Program to the IB Diploma Program (Lee, Hallinger & Walker, 2012). With teachers coming from a wide-variety of educational systems from around the world to teach at a respective international school, the creation of this common language around learning is even more important. Creating this common language will reduce confusion, create coherence, and begin to develop a sense of continuity within the international school itself.

4.3.7 Experience of the Principal

Only one author, MacDonald (2006), discussed the importance of the principal having experience with leadership in business, not just in education. This focus aligns with his look at the rising ‘for-profit’ sector of international schooling. Although this topic currently has very limited research, it is an important concept, as most international schools are independent entities. These schools must, at the very least, generate enough revenue to remain viable (pay salaries, maintain the building, etc.), and in the case of for-profit schools, as the fastest growing segment of new international schools, generate a profit.

4.4 Element Four: Theoretical Lens or Frameworks of Leadership

In order to provide an image that readers can visualize, and to assist with the description of the complex topics that exist within the international school, many authors utilize a specific framework to set the stage for their research. Others use a metaphor, an analogy and or a narrative to create a picture of what leadership effectiveness looks like in the international school context. Ten of the articles selected utilize a framework to discuss leadership in the international school context.

4.4.1 Frameworks used to discuss Leadership

A number of unique frameworks are found within the articles. Hill (2014) discusses how international schools are cultural artefacts not inanimate objects. Therefore, international schools “reflect the values of their membership” (p. 176). Because each member of the school has his or her own social reality which determines how he or she approaches the role he or she possesses within school, it is important that the principal is able to include these realities in his or her decision-making process, so as to not have staff members who believe they are excluded from this process.

Gardner-McTaggart (2017) supports the discussion about the importance of the narrative that is created about the school and its leadership by its leaders. Gardner-McTaggart discusses how the “narrative created by the school leadership is what defines the leader and therefore the school” (Gardner-McTaggart, 2017). It is the manner by which the principal generates and spreads this narrative to his or her staff and by extension school community that determines leadership effectiveness.

Morrison (2018) uses a specific image to discuss leadership and frames the principal as an agent of change. It is this agent who must successfully utilize and implement specific skillsets in order to navigate the many intricacies of an international school (Morrison, 2018). Having the ability to learn and utilize these skillsets allows the principal to be effective in his or her role within the international school.

Murakami-Ramalho and Benham (2010) incorporate an analogy of using a fishing net to describe international schools as living systems. The analogy shows the interconnectedness of a school staff at all levels. The authors demonstrate this interconnectedness by discussing how when one member of the school community pulls on the net, all members are affected as all members are intertwined with one another. This analogy further demonstrates the role of leadership in the school, as any time the principal makes a decision, or ‘pulls on the net’, all members of the school community are affected.

Lee, Hallinger and Walker (2012) use another image from sea as their framework to describe international schools. Their example makes reference to the tides and their respective actions of ebb and flow. The authors create the image of the principal as being affected by the ebb and flow of internal and external pressures placed on the school by a variety of stakeholders. These pressures, or ebbs and flows, create the necessity for decisions to be made, which in turn create causes and effects on the school as a whole.

Gardner-McTaggart (2018c) utilizes the concept of the pragmatic versus the idealist as a framework to describe the role of the international school. The pragmatic is framed as supporting the elite by providing this sector of society with a higher-level quality of education. The idealist is framed by Gardner-McTaggart as providing equal access to quality education for all members of society, regardless of their social status. This conundrum directly affects principals, as their main prerogative is to provide education, however, they are also required to satisfy the demands of the social elite in the respective locale and or country.

4.4.2 Navigating ‘Dualities’ given Opposing Forces and Multiple Agendas

Another approach that is employed by several writers is that of using ‘dualities’. Navigating dualities is a specific theoretical framework that was utilized in five of the selected articles to describe how an international school principal exists within opposing forces in the international school. Further details to the importance of the topics on leadership effectiveness are discussed in Chapter Five.

The concept of dualities is discussed by Keller (2015), who in his article, writes about how the use of dualities assists with providing comparisons and discussions about the challenges faced by principals. The use of dualities allows leaders to analyze situations from both sides of the agenda and look for a way forward even though there are opposing forces, all with valid ideas and opinions, that are being faced for example the impetus to look globally, but also to be internationalist (Keller, 2015). In order to understand international school leadership, the principal must be able to recognize and utilize dualities to navigate the role (Keller, 2015). The principal exists within a number of dualities at any given time by virtue of his or her position. Some of these dualities include profit versus providing education (McDonald, 2006), market-oriented focus versus international-mindedness and being an agent of change versus trying to create stability (Gardner-McTaggart, 2018b). The principal must be able to see these dualities as they unfold and come into existence and understand what to do in order to satisfy both competing perceptions.

Bunnell (2018) also employs 'dualities' in describing how the international school principal functions within the international school itself. Bunnell discusses how there are many dualities present that pull the principal in opposing different directions. Some examples include the leadership effectiveness when faced with the expectations of the staff versus the expectations of the school board and a focus on turning a profit versus the needs of the school. In these scenarios, it is required that the principal has an understanding of how to recognize and how to exist in multiple and often opposing realms.

MacDonald (2006) furthers the discussion of using dualities in considering how the principal must function within the international school by using the dual lens of profit versus education (MacDonald, 2006). This change in direction can be difficult for principals who come to international education from publicly-funded education systems where there is no focus on generating a profit from the school. In the case of the for-profit international school, this can be one of if not the most important priorities, which requires the principal to change how he or she approaches education. This is not to say that principals would be arriving to the international school with no prior experience with financial restraints. Many schools and school boards work with very tight, restricted and or reduced budgets. Furthermore, in order to create an additional

source of revenue, many schools will turn to recruiting overseas for students, who pay international school rates to the school. I had first-hand experience with this in my role as principal in Winnipeg, where we actively recruited students from South Korea who wanted an education in English. These students paid international school fees, which were nearly triple what was received in grant money from the government for students who were residents in the province. This additional funding brought in by the international students' tuition assisted with the purchase of items such as programming and or resources for the school that would have normally not been able to be purchased through the regular government funding.

4.4.3 Approaches to Leadership

Another commonality amongst the supporting articles focusses on the approach to leadership presented by the school principal and how this leadership affects the school, staff and relationships with the school board and others. There are several styles identified with effective leadership that are a part of the discourse on leadership. James and Sheppard (2013) focus on distributed leadership, where the principal allocates selected responsibilities to teachers who in turn assume the lead role in a particular aspect of the school.

Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2012) focus on a combination of leadership approaches and capacities. The leadership focus is placed on transformational leadership, discussing that leaders must be transformational leaders in order to be the most successful leaders (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012). Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiw discuss how international school principals who incorporate transformational leadership within their school can have a positive effect on their teachers' level of commitment to the school, as well as to the teachers' overall job satisfaction, which results in increased student outcomes and increased continuity of programming (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012). The principal must be able to combine cultural intelligence with transformational leadership in order to be effective as a leader (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012).

This combination of leadership approaches allows the principal the capacity to be aware of the needs and concerns presented by his or her staff and to effectively address these needs and

concerns. Possessing and demonstrating a high level of cultural intelligence is an important component to being a transformational leader in the international school context. Possessing a high cultural intelligence may also be an indication of the level of transformational leadership that will be employed by the principal (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012). This concept is supported by Mancuso, Roberts and White (2010) who also state that transformational and distributed leadership are the leadership styles that are important to leadership effectiveness in the international setting in combination with how staff perceive their principal.

Morrison (2018) discusses that international school principals must possess flexible and or adaptable leadership styles. The principal is then able to incorporate a leadership style according to the appropriate situation and needs of the school, staff, and students. Macdonald (2006) furthers the notion of principals being adaptable in his discussion of how international school principals must have experience with business in order to understand the unique situation of an international school (MacDonald, 2006). Macdonald also states that there is no one style of leadership that is preferred over another for international schools.

On the other hand, Cravens (2018) raises the question of whether or not any of the current leadership models are even applicable for the international context given the complexity of international schools are. This question provides a dilemma for international schools and for principals in terms of leadership effectiveness and how to navigate adopting and implementing a particular approach when what they have worked with in the past is no longer applicable.

4.5 Element Five: Challenges to Leadership

This section contains a review of the significant challenges that are faced by international school principals that were retrieved from the selected articles. These challenges are discussed in further detail in Chapter Five.

4.5.1 Staff Turn-over Rates

A significant commonality, if not the most significant, that is discussed in many articles selected for the analysis was the great challenge faced by international schools - the high levels of staff

turnover. As demonstrated in the articles, in general, the turn-over rates have a negative impact on these schools for a variety of reasons that are explained in more detail below. To further this difficulty, high turn-over rates are not only limited to teachers, but also extends to principals, who themselves remain in their positions for a relatively short period of time, on average 3.7 years (Gardner & McTaggart, 2018b; Benson, 2011). This challenge is made explicit in nine of the articles, (Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012; Murakami-Ramalho and Benham, 2010; Lee, Hallinger and Walker, 2012; MacDonald, 2006; Gardner-McTaggart, 2017, 2018; Mancuso, Roberts & White, 2010; Gardner-McTaggart, 2018b; Bunnell, 2018). Principals of international schools face a variety of challenges in their day-to-day work. These challenges come in a wide range and affect schools to varying degrees.

Hill (2014) discusses how international schools often have “ambiguous goals, unclear technologies, and a constantly fluid membership whereby each new wave imports a confusing array of conflicting value systems which may hamper collaborative decision-making and diversify individual action” (p. 176). It is this ever-changing composition of staff and principals that creates on-going challenges that develop each time a member of staff leaves the school.

Turn-over rates for principals and teachers are caused by different circumstances that are in fact directly linked. Teacher turn-over is related to several conditions present at the international school, some of which can be mitigated by the principal, who can in fact lower the rates of this turn-over by implementing simple behaviours within the school. By getting to know his or her staff members, and by being perceived by the staff to veritably believe in the vision of the school, and by creating a positive working environment, the principal can have a positive effect on staff, thus potentially reducing the rate of turn-over (Morrison, 2018). The dynamics of power can also have a negative affect on turn-over rates when the principal does not treat staff members fairly or equally and is perceived to be ineffective in his or her role.

Principal turn-over is caused by other factors, with the key factor being the relationship between the principal and the school’s board members (Fisher, 2011; Lee, et. al., 2012). Often, principals are brought into an international school to act as an *agent of change* and initiate some level of change that the board members desire. However, with many international school boards comprised of parents and their own personal agendas, the principal may face obstacles even

before he or she begins in the role at the school.

4.5.2 Culturally Diverse Staff and Student Bodies

The nature of international schools means that there will often be a very culturally diverse student body and faculty. While cultural and linguistic diversity can be of great benefit to the school in terms of teaching, modelling, and promoting international-mindedness to students and to the community, having a multitude of cultures can also present many challenges to leadership within the school itself that must be effectively navigated.

Four of the selected articles discuss cultural diversity, including Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2012), who discuss how “culture is also a factor that needs to be considered when studying the effectiveness of international school leaders and their highly diverse multicultural contexts” (p. 837). Morrison (2018) discusses how leaders must “negotiate the minefield of competing values and understand the social reality of its members in order to arrive at a cohesion which enables the school to function efficiently” (Morrison, 2018). Morrison furthers the discussion by stating that the “tensions due to cultural differences between school leaders and board members/owners” that exist within international schools (p. 521). These tensions are not only caused by cultural and linguistic differences between the school’s stakeholders, but also through the expectations of how day-to-day operations are conducted (Morrison, 2018).

Murakami-Ramvalho and Benham (2010) and Hill (2014) discuss the wide cultural diversity of staff and students present at many international schools. This is an important topic for international schools because this is the reality of the composition of the staff and student body. Understanding that this diversity brings its benefits as well as its challenges to the school setting. Hill (2014) furthers this conversation by discussing how “the internal ethnicities and the culture of the host nation will be major factors in determining the organisational culture shaped by the leadership from the competing myths, rituals and social reality of its members” (p. 179).

4.5.3 The Complex Role of the International School Principal

Four of the selected authors emphasize the highly complex role of the principal. Like principals in the public sector, international school principals are responsible for a vast array of duties. However, in the international context, these duties become the responsibility of the principal at an enhanced level and often with fewer supports to access, such as those offered by an education department at a governmental level and or a school board in terms of the development and implementation of policies and procedures.

These duties include, but are not limited to: recruiting and retaining staff; attracting prospective families; managing large-scale budgets and financial accountability; public relations and social media presence (Cohen, 2014); and promoting and preserving the community's perception of the school such as through social media, and via the ranking of the results of student achievement from the International General Certificate of Education (IGCSE) and the International Baccalaureate (IB) to name just a handful of the responsibilities (Cohen, 2014; Duignan, 2012).

4.5.4 International School Governance

The vast majority of international schools are independent and therefore have their own school board. Since these boards are charged with making decisions that affect the principal, staff, and students of the school, it is necessary that school governance is studied and better understood. The following seven articles discuss the relationship between the school board and the school, including the challenges these relationships present.

Fisher (2011) discusses how interference from the board can have a negative effect on the school in a variety of levels from leadership to classroom to students and to the board itself. Fisher further discusses the importance of the board on the school's outcome by highlighting issues and challenges faced by international school boards and the effects that these challenges directly have on schools (Fisher, 2011). Fisher also discusses personal agendas that parent members of the school boards bring to the table to voice or promote (Fisher, 2011).

James and Sheppard (2013) also discuss the presence of parents as school board members. This discussion focusses on the regularity within international schools of the following three types of

school boards. The first type is parent-only school boards, where it is only parents of students attending the school who are able to be members of the school board. The second is self-perpetuating school boards, where current members vote in future members to be on the board. The third type is made up of “agenda wielding parents and their involvement in school governance when they are members of the school’s board” (p. 14). Often decisions made by the board will often not be educationally focussed, but rather based on a reaction to a situation. Decisions are made based the composition of the school’s board, and what their agenda, be it personal or collective, may be at that particular time. James and Sheppard (2013) further their discussion about school governance by stating the importance of “secure governance”, where the school board must follow a code of conduct and other regulations, versus the situations listed above (p. 5). International schools that have boards composed of all parents or self-perpetuating or agenda-wielding parents can have their school’s accreditation negatively affected if there is too much involvement of individuals who do not have an educational background (Fisher, 2011; James & Sheppard, 2013).

Morrison (2018) discusses tensions that are created within the international school that arise “due to cultural differences between school leaders and board members/owners” and the “political crises and bureaucratic challenges that arise” from these differences (p. 521). As many international school principals and the members of the school’s board and or the owners all hail from different locations around the world, cultural differences rise to the forefront in terms of how education is approached and how leadership is approached. Therefore, the importance of cultural awareness and competence is highlighted, as this skillset can be implemented by all of the parties to mitigate differences and the challenges that may arise from these differences.

Bunnell (2018) states that the “relationship between principal and board is crucial” (p. 553). This relationship should be a positive interaction that models the vision and mission of the school. However, there is often a “big discrepancy between the types of school leaders the board/owner wants and those that the teachers want” (p. 560). This situation creates a significant challenge to overcome for both the board/owners and the principal, as each party is striving to demonstrate that its respective needs and expectations are a priority. In this instance, conflict

can develop, leaving the principal in a difficult situation. Incorporating the use of dualities, as discussed earlier in this chapter is an option for principals working under these conditions.

Gardner-McTaggart (2017) discusses how it is the school board members' lack of knowledge in regard to education" as creating yet another challenge to leadership effectiveness faced by the international school principal. This *lack of knowledge* in terms of understanding the process of education within a school stems from the members of the school board not having experience and or background in an educational setting, other than having been a student, and (perhaps) having their child(ren) attend school. Without possessing an understanding of educational systems, it is more likely that decisions made by these school board members will not support the goals of both teachers and principals, as the school board members have other goals, thus creating significant tension within the school (Gardner-McTaggart, 2017).

Murakami-Ramalho and Benham (2010) also discuss the "parental over-involvement through school boards that create micropolitics within the school setting" (p. 628). As it is parents who often make up the majority of members of the school board at international schools, there is a tendency for these parents/school board members to become overly involved with the day-to-day processes going on at the school. It is this over-involvement, such as interference with decisions made by the principal, staff or other board members that can create tension and stress within the school community.

Lee, Hallinger and Walker (2012) further explain this over-involvement of parents on the school boards through their discussion the unclear roles of members of the school board. Because of the independent nature of many international schools, the expectations placed on school board members may not be clear as the expectations may not have been developed by individuals familiar with the operations of a school. Furthermore, due to the parents not having a background in education, the direction that the school board takes is much different than that of a school board that has a set purpose, established parameters and a system to support, such as an education department or a ministry/governmental department.

4.5.5 Isolation and Lack of an Educational State System

When discussing isolation, it is important to note that the authors are not referring to the school as being physically isolated due to its location in a remote area. Rather, isolation refers to the connections the school has with the educational community within the country and beyond. A sense of isolation is also created and or felt by the staff and students, who make up the expatriate community as they are living away from home in a foreign country.

Bunnell (2018) talks about the isolation “due to the independence of the school” and how the majority of international schools are not part of a collective of schools (p. 559). This discussion is based on international schools not being part of a government ministry or department and without the supports that these systems provide.

Murakami-Ramalho and Benham (2010) discuss the role isolation plays in the micro and macro politics of any given international school. This discussion describes how international schools can be very politicized internally. Internal politics and their effects are not uncommon for schools in the publicly-funded education sector, however, due to a variety of conditions unique to international schools, such as the independence of the school and school board, the isolation and the cultural differences that are found within, the internal politics are much more pronounced.

Due to the independence of most international schools, principals face another form of isolation in the form of professional isolation. Principals of these schools must learn to be self-sufficient as there is no educational system to support them with their role, as principals of schools have within public educational systems. This independence is further coupled with isolation.

Gardener-McTaggart (2018a) discusses how there is little to no interaction with other international schools or international school leaders (p. 68). Gardener-McTaggart furthers this discussion by highlighting the lack of support systems, including lack of professional development (p. 69).

4.5.6 Principals as Agents of Change

Change is a constant in international schools, from staffing, to curriculum to teaching methodology and pedagogy. Morrison (2018) discusses that without this change, the school will not be able to adapt and compete as an organization. As the vast majority of international schools are private and independent, it is crucial that these schools adapt and change in order to offer an attractive product to students. Morrison also discusses how the principal acts as the agent of “change management” within the school organization and culture (p. 523).

Murakami-Ramalho and Benham (2010) also discuss the necessity of the international school principal to be able to adapt to change. The authors go on to state that the principal must be able to recognize and respond to the micro-politics present within the school (Murakami-Ramalho & Benham, 2010).

4.6 ELEMENT SIX: Leadership Capacities/Qualities of Leaders

Each of the articles selected for this analysis contain a discussion of the leadership capacities the authors of these articles recognize as being key to leadership effectiveness in the international school context. Many of these capacities are shared with leadership in publicly-funded schools. However, according to many of the authors of the article selected, it is necessary for the international school principal to possess and incorporate these capacities is greater due to the context and conditions faced by the international school.

4.6.1 Working with Interference

James and Sheppard (2013) discuss how international school principals must have the “ability to work under situations with potential for interference from board members” and to have the capacity for negotiation and response to situations that arise with these circumstances.

Interference from board members can take many forms and can include board members not having an understanding of the role and becoming directly involved in the day-to-day operations

of the school and members pursuing their own personal agenda to name two of the most prominent forms of interference created by school boards.

The ability to be autonomous and remain autonomous is also an important skillset for the international school principal. Remaining autonomous has significant impacts on the school as a whole for a variety of reasons. One of the impacts that the perception staff members have of the principal is part of the decision-making process when teachers decide to leave for another school (James & Sheppard, 2013). A key factor to the perception that staff members possess of the principal is formed when decisions made by the principal are overturned by school board members making the principal appear to be ineffective. Another factor occurs when the principal is perceived to not support the staff in their roles and sides with the school board even when it is evident that there has been interference from board members (James & Sheppard, 2013).

4.6.2 Necessity for Cultural Capacity/Intelligence

One of the most important skillsets to be possessed by principals is that of cultural intelligence. This is an emerging focus of research within the study of leadership in international schools. Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2012) state that cultural intelligence is the key to being a transformational leader in the international school context. International school principals must possess cultural intelligence in order to succeed and be effective in their leadership role (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012).

Hill (2014) also supports the necessity for a principal to have a high level of cultural competence. Hill states that in order to provide the school “with a meaningful direction, the leader must understand the social realities that surround the school” (p. 181). This cultural competence is necessary in order for the principal to be able to lead effectively as the members of the staff and student body in the international school will often include a those who come from a wide variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, along with all of the expectations and experiences that they bring with them to the school.

Hill (2018) discusses that “Cultural competencies are twofold for the international school leader: developing an effective organizational culture and demonstrating a high level of (societal) intercultural understanding” (p. 177). This level of intercultural understanding is crucial to possess when in the role of principal in an international school, due to the composition of the staff, which will include people from a wide variety of Hill also emphasizes the importance of clear communication, “Words, actions and body language play a role in leadership effectiveness prepare and shape messages to the school community with great care and sensitivity, using vocabulary that is as unambiguous as possible across ethnic lines” (Hill, 2018).

Morrison (2018) does not overtly name cultural competency in his writing, but he does allude to its necessity for international school leaders to possess in order to be effective leaders as the principal’s staff and student body will be comprised of multiple nationalities. When beginning in their role at a school, international school principals must learn how to function within their new school environment. Principals naturally become very reliant on local staff who understand the context of the locality where the school is located and can navigate the relationships that must occur within the school in order for the school to function. Furthermore, principals must be able to cope when they encounter various challenges with which they may have no previous context (Morrison, 2018). Many of these challenges arise with an international school staff which has members from a multitude of countries who come together with their “different cultures, languages and/or methods of doing business than those of their home countries” (p. 521). Therefore, having a high level of cultural competence is an important asset for the international school principal to possess in order to be effective in his or her leadership role.

Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2012) state that the international school principal must “exhibit five factors: idealized influence (attributed), idealized influence (behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration” (p. 838). Furthermore, Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiw support other authors’ findings that cultural intelligence is also an important leadership capacity to be possessed by principals of schools in the international sector.

4.6.3 Key Skillsets

Morrison (2018) states that the international school principal must be able to “adapt and be resilient to the conditions and situations for which the leader has had no experience dealing with” (Morrison, 2018). Morrison identifies three traits that will help the principal adapt to the conditions at the school. These traits are: “the importance of being able to create a vision; a commitment to school and staff; and an ability to create an environment that is collegial and supportive” (p. 522). Along with aforementioned traits, Morrison also discusses the importance for principals to have, above all other traits, “a strong ethical disposition” in his or her approach to decision-making (p. 522). By implementing these traits as a leader, the principal will be able to actively demonstrate effectiveness as a leader to his or her staff.

Murakami-Ramalho and Benham (2010) discuss how it is important that the international school principal be flexible and be able to adapt quickly to change directed by school board members (Murakami-Ramalho & Benham, 2010). Further to this idea of flexibility and adaptability, it is important that the principal has a strong understanding of the school’s history, direction, and recognition of the “needs, dreams and feelings of the staff members” (p. 637). Also, Murakami-Ramalho and Benham allude to the necessity for cultural intelligence and awareness by discussing how important it is for the principal to have the capability to address the individual needs of the members of the school community in order to develop the school and create a feeling of collaboration (Murakami-Ramalho & Benham, 2010).

Lee, Hallinger and Walker (2012) write that it is important for the principal to have the ability to overcome differences in parental expectations and curricular focusses. The principal needs to be able to provide and justify an alternative focus to what parents have been used to from their own experiences with school, such as a focus on examinations and marks versus an exam-oriented vs inquiry-based learning (Lee, Hallinger & Walker, 2012). Cultural intelligence focussed on this particular region is an expectation for an international school principal to possess. An understanding of the lingo or language that surrounds the respective curriculum presented at the international school is also important, for instance an understanding of the IB system and lingo (Lee, Hallinger & Walker, 2012).

Macdonald (2006) discusses how collaboration and working with all parties involved in the international school is important, along with the ability of the principal to work within lenses or dualities. The principal also requires the skillsets of being able to listen and respond to both lenses and maintain integrity when making decisions (Macdonald, 2006). Moreover, principals must be able to “align the lenses and create a clear picture and proper depth of vision for all parties” (p. 211). It is important that the principal is aware that he or she will be working with these lenses or dualities and may have to apply working with cultural dualities in order to meet the needs of the staff.

Gardner-McTaggart (2018a) states that “service oriented (duality of service – intellectual and emotional)” is important for the principal in this context (p. 75). The principal must be able to develop meaningful relationships with his or her staff in order to be able to develop their capacity in their respective roles within the school. The author furthers the discussion by stating that it is important that the principal develop a positive working environment for all school members utilizing, in this case, the principles from the International Baccalaureate program and incorporating these values into the everyday operation of the school (Gardner-McTaggart, 2018a). These values include developing a positive working environment for all members of the school faculty, creating a positive school identity that is experienced throughout the school, and forming a service-oriented approach within the school. In order to encourage buy-in from the staff, the principal should use his or her “personal character as tool” to have success with the buy-in process (p. 75).

Mancuso, Roberts and White (2010) write that the international school leader is responsible to act in a manner that is supportive, respectful, promotes school vision, collaborative, fair and equitable (Mancuso et al., 2010). Developing the relationship with staff to be able to provide a support system for staff (emotional, professional, etc.) is also recognized by the authors as an important skillset (Mancuso et al., 2010).

Gardner-McTaggart (2018b) writes that the ability of the principal to effectively ‘set the tone’ for the school is an important skillset to possess (p. 778). Actively getting to know and understand and the development of positive working relationships with the staff will allow the principal to successfully set the tone within the school, as it will be seen / perceived that the principal is

demonstrating these expectations him/herself. Bunnell (2018) supports the notion of setting the tone by stating that it is important for the principal to be “supportive, respectful, works to satisfy school’s vision, encouraged collaboration among teachers, and worked with staff to meet curriculum standards and to solve school or department problems” (p. 561). According to Bunnell, it is also important for the principal to have and to create in his or her members of staff a sense of ownership of the school (Bunnell, 2018).

4.6.4 The For-Profit Sector

Shifting from an education for all focus to an education for profit focus is a significant change in approach for any principal who has spent his or her career, up until the point of joining an international school, in publicly-funded education. Principals shifting from the non-profit nature of public education should have a strong grasp of the context they are entering as they begin their position at an international school.

James and Sheppard (2013) discuss the effects of international schools on the local market for international education, coupled with larger, even world-wide economic forces. This discussion brings up topics of how international schools can have a negative affect on local schools, as the presence of the international school in the region changes the composition of the local school. In this situation, the international school draws talent in the form of students and teachers to it from local schools, reducing the capacity in the local school in terms of outcomes, but increasing the outcomes in the international school.

Gardner-McTaggart (2017) discusses that the ability of the principal to be adaptable and to understand and read the market is a necessary asset (Gardner-McTaggart, 2017). Due to the nature of the international school as a private organization that must attract enough students (clients) to it in order to remain solvent, and in many cases turn a profit, the ability to read the market is essential for the international school principal. An understanding of the market in which the international school is located is necessary as this understanding will allow the principal to introduce products, curriculum and or approaches to education that will satisfy the demands of the families within the school’s catchment area.

5 CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Discussion

Based on my findings from the articles, it is evident that there are many ways to understand international schools and the multiple demands that are placed on leadership within these schools. This chapter discusses the findings of the synthetic mapping and aims to provide a more holistic answer as well as key take-aways that will help to answer the research questions:

- “How is effective international school leadership conceived in the emergent academic literature?”
- “What are the challenges to leadership effectiveness present in international schools?”
- “With an understanding of the tensions and barriers faced by an international school principal, what skillsets are identified in the literature on international school leadership as being necessary to support the effectiveness of the principal?”

I will discuss in more depth nine key take-aways found in the research, as follows:

- difficulty of defining the international school and followed by the effects of regular turn-over of staff and principals.
- the effects on leadership of perception, power, and influences.
- the necessity of cultural intelligence.
- how leadership effectiveness is presented with a focus on distributed leadership.
- use of frameworks to describe the complexities of international school leadership.
- developing and using a common language for student learning.
- the complex role of the principal.
- and finally, profit vs. education.

5.2 The Difficulty of Defining the International School

The first key take-away discusses the difficulties encountered by researchers to define the international school. As demonstrated by the majority of the authors of the selected articles in Chapter Four, there is no widely-accepted definition amongst researchers as to a definition of what is an international school (Dolby & Rahman, 2008; Keller, 2015; Murakami-Ramalho & Benham, 2010). Many researchers in this field present their own understanding and interpretation of the concept in their respective articles. Because each international school is unique in many ways, such as its focus, location, staff composition, student population, the topic of defining just what is an international school is made difficult, if not impossible.

However, eight of the selected articles do not even attempt a discussion of the term. By not defining the concept, the authors allow readers to manifest their own understanding of what an international school is into the context of the article. This lack of definition may also have an influence on how the readers receive and view the information discussed in the research itself. Therefore, it is important for researchers who focus on the topic of international school leadership to either create their own definition that they will use for their respective article, or that the researchers adopt a definition from which to base their research from so as to avoid the reader from placing their own bias into the article, and avoiding the effects this bias may contain. Two of the selected articles provide their own definition, which assists in clarifying exactly what the authors are striving to discuss in their papers and removes any speculation about what exactly the authors are discussing when they refer to the term international school.

After a review of the articles, I believe the most accurate description of just what comprises an international school is provided by Hayden, who briefly discusses the realm of the many possible definitions that are available to define an international school. She ends her discussion on the topic of developing a definition by stating, “In truth there is no simple answer; because for each of these the answer is – yes – in some cases” (Hayden, 2006, p. 2). This statement aptly describes the lack of consensus on the definition of just what an international school is amongst researchers in the field of international education. Furthermore, this statement provides a prelude to the answers to the questions asked by this thesis, which are also directly affected by the lack of definite, agreed-upon definitions within this field.

One of the difficulties to creating a commonly accepted definition of an international school is the wide variety of distinctive attributes that each of these schools possess. Because each school has its own unique conditions, it is difficult to create general statements about the schools. However, there are certain typologies that researchers can apply in general to these schools, such as whether or not a school is for-profit; its location; the curriculum it offers; the percentage of expatriate students. There are also leadership capacities that are identified as having the potential to increase and support leadership effectiveness when implemented by the principal. However, leadership effectiveness in one international school may not be effective in another international school, even with what may appear to be similar conditions existing at both schools. Therefore, principals must be aware of their staff and understand the variety of backgrounds and strengths that are present within the school (Cravens, 2018; Gurr, 2015).

As discussed in the articles by MacDonald (2006) and James and Sheppard (2013) many schools simply choose to call themselves *international* (Macdonald, 2006; James & Sheppard, 2013). Currently, there is no official standard to satisfy in order to be able to utilize the term *international* the name of a school because there is no body that oversees all schools that call themselves *international*. Macdonald (2006) aptly sums up the situation by stating the following: “In fact, a school does not have to meet any criteria to call themselves an international school” (MacDonald, 2006).

This situation poses challenges to staff, students (families) and principals. In order to make an informed decision, it is important that all three of these parties research the school in order to determine what makes this school *international*. Research before accepting a position at an international school is even more imperative for principals, as they are responsible to uphold the expectations that staff, and students/families have when they choose to work or attend (pay tuition at) the school. There is an implicit ranking system amongst international schools, and principals should be aware this system exists so that they can take advantage of it and learn about the school they are about to become part of (Gardner-McTaggart, 2017).

Principals will encounter additional challenges to their leadership if staff and students are not experiencing what they believe they should be at the school in terms of conditions and resources, and in terms of academic outcomes. Teachers who are not satisfied with their position will move

to other schools, causing a constant rate of staff turn-over, and all of the challenges that increased turn-over brings to a school (Gardener-McTaggart, 2017). Researching the school before accepting a position will provide the principal with an accurate picture of the situation of the school and allow him or her the ability to make a properly-informed decision about whether or not to take on the role.

Ideally, there would be standards set out that a school has to meet in order to utilize the term in the school's name. The implementation of standards would require the development of an international body that would oversee a process that, upon successful achievement, would allow a school to utilize the term *international*. However, like defining the term *international school*, gaining consensus on just who or what would oversee the development of this criteria, determining what curriculum to follow, staff credentials and training, etc. would prove to be too difficult a task to come to terms with in the current situation of international schools not having a standardized body to which they belong.

Having developed standards for international schools to meet would also allow a principal more of an understanding when taking on a role at a new school. The principal would be able direct focus on particular areas within the school knowing that the resources and or access to these resources would be present or at least accessible. Having an accurate picture of the school would provide the principal with the tools necessary to lead effectively and mitigate many of the challenges faced by principals, such as staff turn-over. In some cases, these parameters do exist in terms of schools that belong to a conglomerate, such as the Council of International Schools, but this situation is not the norm.

The uniqueness of each individual international school can prove to be a benefit; however, this uniqueness can also create difficulties. The greatest difficulty I encountered as a result of the uniqueness of these schools is this lack of an agreed upon definition for the term *international school*. The lack of a definition from the current literature has made it difficult to clearly define leadership effectiveness in the international school sector. Because each school is so different, and because there are no defined standards of what constitutes an international school, it is very difficult to get a consistent picture from one school to the next of leadership and its effects on the

school. Unless this situation changes, it will continue to be difficult to study leadership effectiveness in the international school context.

5.3 The Effects of Consistent Turn-Over of Staff and Principals

The second key take-away focusses on the effects of the high staff and principal turn-over that is present in international schools. It is evident from the current literature on leadership in the international educational context that these high rates have detrimental effects on international schools. This topic is one of the most concerning issues facing international schools because frequency of staff and principal turn-over places stress on the potential effectiveness of the principal in several ways. Researchers who highlighted this phenomenon also discussed the effects on the school as a whole. The very high turn-over rate of teachers is one of the key difficulties faced by international schools. This turn-over rate leads to the inability of a school to develop consistent programming and delivery of curriculum (Gardner-McTaggart, 2018b). This topic is one of the most commonly discussed topics in the literature on international school leadership and is mentioned in nearly all articles, and discussed in detail in nine of the twenty-one articles (Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012; Murakami-Ramalho and Benham, 2010; Lee, Hallinger and Walker, 2012; MacDonald, 2006; Gardner-McTaggart, 2017, 2018b; Mancuso, Roberts & White, 2010; Gardner-McTaggart, 2018b; and Bunnell, 2018).

Coupled with high teacher turn-over, the development of programming continuity is greatly compromised. It is difficult to keep a program running consistently and to develop and hone the program when there is a consistently regular rate of turn-over. When staff members leave, there is naturally a migration of corporate knowledge, which leaves these programs either not being continued, or started over again and again by new teachers.

Naturally, the forging of positive relationships with students and the parent community is another important aspect of the school that is negatively affected by constant regular turn-over. When teachers do not remain at the school long enough to develop these relationships with the parents and families, there is a lack of connection between the school and home. Relatedly, creating a school-wide culture is also very difficult when the longevity of staff members within the school

community is far too short-term to encourage and support these key elements to a successful school (Hayden, 2006).

Many international schools not only face a high rate of teacher turn-over, but also experience a relatively high rate of turn-over for their principals, when compared to other leadership positions either in publicly-funded education systems, or in the private sector (Gardner & McTaggart, 2018b; Benson, 2011). This turn-over creates many challenges for the international school. One of these significant challenges is how the high rate of staff turn-over does not allow for the staff to build a sense of trust with the principal (Gurr, 2015). This lack of trust is re-established each time the principal is changed, as the staff, if they themselves are not new to the school, do not know the new principal's approach to leadership, do not have an awareness of the goals/agenda of the new principal and do not yet know his or her personality.

Mancuso et al. (2010) provide some insight into the turn-over rates. In their discussion, they highlight how there is a combination of circumstances that coincides within a school and it is this combination that can determine how long a teacher will remain in his or her position. Some of the key circumstances include the quality of the interpersonal relationships the principal builds with his or her staff, and remuneration packages. Feedback from staff shows that if the principal can get to know the staff members and make them feel valued, this relationship will increase the time that the staff will remain in their position at the international school (Mancuso et al., 2010). This is a key piece of information for principals to be cognizant of and follow through with in their roles. If by simply building a positive rapport with staff members, they will remain longer in their positions, then it is imperative that principals follow through with this simple step as this can address one of the key concerns within international schools, that of staff turn-over rates.

Hill (2014) supports the findings of Mancuso et al. through the discussion that focusses on how each staff member brings his or her own "social reality" to their respective roles within the school. This social reality plays a deciding factor in how that particular member of staff teaches, interacts with others at the school, is dedicated to his or her role, and how long he or she will remain in his or her position at that school (Hill, 2014). Knowing this, a principal can build positive relationships with his or her staff members, which, according to Hill, will in turn increase the length of time a teacher remains at the school. Staff remaining for a longer period of

time at an international school will naturally build continuity of programming, leading to an increase of student and staff achievement.

After reviewing the selected articles, it is clearly evident just how essential it is that the high levels of turn-over of both staff and principals are addressed by international schools. This current situation has negative effects on every aspect of the school from programming continuity, to recruitment, to relationships with staff and the community, making the current model of high turn-over rates of teaching staff and principals simply unsustainable. Leadership effectiveness is also directly affected, as teachers and principals are not in the schools for a long enough period of time for continuity and relationships to form. Therefore, schools must take steps to address this situation. In order to implement this necessary change, a combined effort must take place with both school boards and principals. School boards must address their own prerogatives and focus on creating positive working environments and developing positive working relationships amongst all staff members and school board members.

There are several skillsets identified in the literature that have been deemed important for the principal to possess and implement to address and perhaps even reduce staff turn-over rates. Fortunately for principals, if these skillsets are not already inherent, can be learned and practiced. One of these skillsets that is important for the principal to possess is that of the principal needing to be flexible and resilient with and to the conditions he or she will face on a daily basis (Morrison, 2018). Being adaptable will assist the principal with many of the situations that he or she may encounter that he or she has never encountered before, for instance the personal demands of a school board member needing to be addressed.

A second important skillset is that of having a strong ethical disposition when making decisions (Morrison, 2018). This trait is necessary for a principal to demonstrate to his or her staff, as the principal will be pulled in many directions when making decisions. If the principal is seen to only take the so-called 'easy road' when it comes to this process, for instance, if the principal always sides with a particular member of staff, or member of the school board, it will be very difficult for the rest of the staff to view the principal as an effective leader.

Being able to create a vision that satisfies both staff and the school board is necessary for the principal at an international school. In order create and implement this vision, the principal must first understand the history of the school, and recognize the “needs, dreams, and feelings of the staff members (Murakami-Ramalho & Benham, 2010 p. 637). By successfully developing the school’s vision, the principal is setting the groundwork for building the necessary relationships which in turn will begin to improve the overall school environment in terms of relations between the principal, staff and the school board.

The development of a positive environment within the school for staff and students is also highlighted as being a key skillset. This skillset goes hand-in-hand with building and implementing a school vision that generates buy-in from the staff members. By learning to understand the school environment and developing a positive workplace environment, the principal will be able to build relationships with his or her staff (Murakami-Ramalho & Benham, 2010).

Despite possessing all of the skillsets, and successfully implementing them within the international school, it is possible that turn-over of teaching staff would continue to be a challenge for international schools. One aspect of being independent is that each international school provides its own remuneration package (Mancuso, et. al., 2010). These packages vary in terms of salary, working conditions, professional development, and benefits. As a result, teachers will naturally gravitate, when possible, to schools which have a superior compensation package. From my experience working in the Persian Gulf, I can attest that this is indeed the case, as I began working there completely unaware that there would be such a difference between salaries from one school to the next. In some cases, the difference in salary was double, along with much more luxurious accommodation – for the same role! Unless this situation of so many different compensation packages being offered for the same role is addressed, high staff turn-over rates will continue. Overall, this task appears to be next to impossible to successfully implement because of the independent nature of each international school.

5.4 Effects on Leadership: Perception, Power, and Influences

The third key point focusses on the effects of power, influences, and perceptions on a principal in his or her role in the international school. The perception a staff has of their principal is an important factor when discussing leadership effectiveness. There are many ways in which perception is created and can include external factors that the principal may or may not have any control over, such as remuneration, personal issues faced by staff members, and even the principal's ability to lead. Mancuso, Roberts and White (2010) discuss how an entire school can be negatively affected if staff perceives their principal as being a poor leader (Mancuso et al., 2010). The effects of this perception are far-reaching and can have effects on staff and student recruitment as well as retention (Mancuso et al., 2010).

On the other hand, interference can also arise from an abundance of power. Bunnell (2018) describes how "Power is in favour of the school leadership – can create negative climate when position of power is abused / perceived to be abused" (Bunnell, 2018). In this situation, the principal has too much influence over the school and creates a negative perception when there is no perceived balance of power between staff and the principal (and or school board).

Furthermore, the sense of trust necessary to develop the positive working relationships that improve on student success is not present. As the authors selected for this research demonstrate, it is expected that the principal will provide leadership, and develop a sense of trust with each his or her staff members in order to improve student outcomes, reduce staff turn-over and develop leadership effectiveness (Hayden & Thompson, 2008; Gurr, 2015; Bunnell, 2018) .

One external force that creates a perception of an international school is its presence on social media (Bunnell, 2018) A school's poor social media image can have negative results on leadership effectiveness in terms of being able to recruit the best possible candidates as well as when promoting the school for potential new students. A poor social media presence can be the result of former staff members or students who are describing their negative experiences at the school and who publish these experiences on a platform that is accessible by individuals discerning whether to apply to or attend the particular school (Bunnell, 2018). With the current state of social media platforms, it is very difficult for school officials to monitor and sanction commentary about the school. Individuals can quickly set-up commentary that is easily

accessible by prospective teaching staff, principals, and students/families and can influence a decision by any of the aforementioned parties.

In order to combat a situation where there are negative images of the school being presented, it is important that the school is able to counter-act these negative images by being able to prove that these negative experiences were singular experiences, rather than the norm. To address negative images it is important to have an active, regular presence on social media, show-casing the school in a positive light and ensuring that this positive message is found first when prospective staff, students and parents search for the school on the internet or through social media networks.

An international school's board is another strong influence faced by the principal. Due to the independent nature of international schools, navigating the complexities of an independent school board is an added challenge to the leadership position not faced by principals in the public sector (Hill, 2006; Hayden, 2006). While public-sector principals must also work with the directives of a school board as well as a governmental body, such as a ministry or department, it is the independence of the private school board that is unique and creates a challenge for international school leaders, who have little to no guidance when implementing and or enforcing policies and procedures. Furthermore, international school board members are generally composed of parents, who are elected into the role (James & Sheppard, 2013). These members often do not have any training for the roles they hold within the board structure and can often focus on promoting a personal agenda within the school (Hodgson, 2005; Fisher, 2011). There is also a high rate of turn-over amongst these members of the school community as well, due to their or their spouses' transnational careers (Hayden, 2006).

The influence the school board exerts on the effectiveness of the principal is significant. Even though it can be argued that the principal is supposed to technically be the school leader, he or she may not always or often be directly involved in school decisions due to the actions of the board. In the case of international schools, as in the publicly-funded sector, the school board is the final decision maker (James and Sheppard, 2013). Thus, the quality of the relationship developed between the principal and the school board members has great impact on the school. It is crucial that the principal is able to develop and maintain a positive relationship with the board members, and that the board allows the principal a certain level of autonomy and afford

him or her a level of professional respect to lead the school (Stout, 2005; Tangye, 2015). Having decisions challenged and or even overturned by the school board or individual members of the board severely undermines any authority the principal has within the school, and greatly diminishes his or her overall effectiveness as a leader, especially if decisions are over-turned on a regular basis.

What was not discussed in the articles is how negative perceptions are formed about an international school in the first place. It would be interesting to know whether or not the principal at a school that has a negative perception or where a negative opinion has been expressed publicly through an on-line platform by a staff member or former staff member about he or she has experienced significant amounts of interference from the school board. Due to the composition of some international schools' boards, it could be that the principal was simply unable to lead as his or her decisions were regularly overturned or that there was another agenda that was taking precedence and influencing the principal's decisions (James & Sheppard, 2013).

In situations where the principal is not able to lead without interference from the school board members, evidence from the articles show that it simply not possible for the principal to demonstrate leadership effectiveness. When decisions are over-turned by the school board, there is really nothing that the principal can do effectively lead, as when decisions are over-turned, relationships and trust suffer, and any progress that has been made by the principal with his or her staff will erode quickly because the principal is not able to effectuate any of the skillsets discussed in the prior section. Until international schools recognize that they must ensure that their own school boards are not comprised of parents with personal agendas to press forward, and develop protocols and adhere to them, leadership effectiveness is not possible.

5.5 The Necessity of Cultural Intelligence

The fourth key take away from the analysis of the selected articles is the importance of the international school principal to have a high level of cultural intelligence (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012; MacDonald, 2006; Morrison, 2018; Hill, 2014; Murakami-Ramalho & Benham, 2010). The first challenge is that of the expectations staff members from different cultures have

for their leaders, and what is deemed to be effective (MacDonald, 2006). Some cultures expect leaders to be strong and deliberate, and others expect collaboration and support (MacDonald, 2006). These opposing points of view can determine how a principal is viewed, and can therefore determine whether he or she is 'effective' in the role or not, as some staff members will be expecting a certain type of leadership and others will challenge that same style of leadership.

Tensions within the international schools can also arise due to cultural differences between school leaders and board members/owners. These differences can include a wide variety of cultures and backgrounds, a multitude of languages, and methods of approaching education (Morrison, 2018). Therefore, it is important that the principal is aware of the cultural component of his or her staff, and also that the principal is equipped with the capacity to acknowledge, understand, and respond to the needs presented by the members of staff (Murakami-Ramalho & Benham, 2010). Without this capacity, it will be difficult for the principal to be an effective leader within the school context.

Possessing or developing a strong cultural capacity is a necessity for any principal entering the role in an international school. Any given international school will have a significant number of different cultures present, all of whom provide a unique perspective into what education and successful leadership looks like. Therefore, the principal must be able to navigate this labyrinth of beliefs and expectations about education and effective leadership and take an approach to leadership that demonstrates competency, understanding and inclusion of the differing approaches to education. By not demonstrating and utilizing these leadership skills, the principal is inadvertently creating a situation where staff members will believe they are not valuable members of the school, or that they do not have a voice or the ability to perform their job the way that they have been doing so successfully for years prior in their country of origin.

Therefore, it is important that the international school principal is able and willing to develop his or her staff in this important area. Having experience living and working with in and with other cultures is a definite asset, as the principal would have an awareness of the tensions that exist between those of differing cultures and would have an understanding of how to approach these tensions and ensure that they are addressed competently. Without this skillset, a principal is vulnerable to significant tensions building, and a potentially explosive situation resulting if

concerns are not addressed in an effective manner, thus negatively affecting the success of the leader with his or her staff.

5.6 Leadership Effectiveness via Distributed Leadership?

The fifth key discussion point discusses how leadership effectiveness is presented in the current literature and whether or not there is an approach that better supports leadership effectiveness. After performing the synthetic mapping of the articles selected for this thesis, it would be presumed that a specific approach to leadership would be identifiable. However, this presumption is not the case. Like agreeing upon a definition for the term international school, researchers of international school leadership do not agree upon a specific approach to leadership effectiveness. Evidence found from reviewing the selected articles for this thesis demonstrates that researchers fall into three categories that are discussed below. The first category of authors discusses how there is no one specific approach to leadership that is significantly better than the other approaches. The second category of authors discusses a blending of various approaches to leadership to be the most effective for leadership. And the third category of researchers support either distributed leadership as the preferred approach to leadership in the international school context or support a blend of approaches using distributed leadership as the basis to the approach taken by the principal.

The first group of researchers either does not discuss a specific style of leadership within international schools, or it does not specify a particular approach to leadership as being more effective than any other approach. (Hayden & Thompson, 2008; Keller, 2015; Gurr, 2015). Cravens (2018) asks the question whether or not the commonly accepted forms of leadership are even applicable in the international school context due to the complexities faced in these uniquely different schools (Cravens, 2018).

The second group of researchers discusses a hybrid approach to leadership. Every principal will develop a unique hybrid of leadership styles, with one style being the most prevalent, but often utilizing traits from one or more of the other methods (Crow et al., 2017). The leadership style adopted by a principal is based on a variety of skillsets and attributes that the principal brings to

the role. These personal attributes, such as experience, expectations, mentorship, personality, personal and professional goals, external and internal pressures are all influences that affect the person in the role (Crow et al., 2017). Some of these attributes can be learned by the principal either through training and professional development or through a desire to acquire these skills. On the other hand, there are many other traits which are unique to the principal's own personal skillsets and can be used in combination with the aforementioned attributes in order to meet the needs of a particular international school community. By being adaptable and therefore able to meet the needs of the community, the principal is able to demonstrate effective leadership (McTaggart, 2017).

Gurr (2015) falls into both of the first two categories by supporting that there is no preferred leadership model and that effective principals demonstrate the utilization of a mixed approach (Gurr, 2015). Gurr states that there is “no single model of leadership [that] satisfactorily captures what successful principals do. To take what possibly remain the two dominant views of educational leadership, for example, these principals are neither transformational nor instructional leaders, but show elements of both, with the use of both styles especially important for schools in challenging contexts” (Gurr, 2015).

Bryant et al. (2018) demonstrate how this hybrid approach can work within an international school by incorporating instructional leadership and *de-privatisation*, a form of distributed leadership, to allow teachers to lead their learning and teaching methodology, rather than having it mandated by the principal. This de-privatisation encourages the use of peer-to-peer engagement for teachers rather than accountability measures that are established and enforced by the principal (Bryant et al., 2018). Furthermore, the authors state that it is important for the principal to be able to implement a strategic allocation of resources within the school (Bryant et al., 2018). Principals must, therefore, know and understand their staff, and have built a high level of trust and respect in order for this approach to be effective within the classroom. Furthermore, it is important that the principal is able to demonstrate the effectiveness of this leadership approach to the school board and parents, as this approach gives teaching staff a high level of autonomy within the school, and decisions made that affect the classroom would

therefore have to pass through many levels within the school, rather than just given to the principal to implement.

The third group of researchers asserts the importance of distributed leadership and present the case that there is enough evidence to demonstrate that distributed leadership is the favoured model or at least provides the foundation of leadership for principals in the international school context (Duignan, 2012; Leithwood et al. 2008; Morrison, 2018; Mancuso, Roberts & White, 2010; Fisher, 2011). Given the strong cases made within these five articles, the possibilities, and limits to distributed leadership are specifically discussed in the next sections. The authors of these four articles argue that it is through distributed leadership that teachers become more empowered and engaged in the teaching process, resulting in an increase of student outcomes (Duignan, 2012; Leithwood et al. 2008; Morrison, 2018). These outcomes are crucial for an international school as regularly high student outcomes help the international school prove that it is *better* and or more effective than either other international schools in markets where there is competition, than the publicly-funded schools and therefore worth the investment required (Duignan, 2012; Leithwood et al. 2008). It is these results and outcomes which develop and create a reputation of academic results, which in turn encourages more families to register their children. Duignan and Leithwood et al. state that if an international school is truly focussed on improving and or maximizing student achievement, then the best form of leadership to adopt is distributed leadership (Duignan, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2008).

One of the concerns about adopting a distributed leadership model is that the role and power of the principal is diminished due to the distribution of roles, where teachers now gain control over aspects, such as programming within the school. By reducing the role of the principal through distributed leadership, the role and power of the school board would also be affected, as it would be more difficult to implement decisions made by the school board with more individuals involved in the process. However, this perception is not accurate as distributed leadership does not mean that there is no role for the principal; that the role is diminished in any manner or that every staff member is a leader within the school (Harris, 2013). As mentioned in the prior section, the principal now not only becomes the leader of the school, but the leader of the leaders (Duignan, 2012). Utilizing this form of leadership requires positive relationships between staff

and principal, requiring adequate time to develop a level of trust, longevity in the position, and support from school board.

To successfully adopt distributed leadership as a leadership model, it must be initiated under a controlled situation within a school (Duignan, 2012; Harris, 2013). Clear and attainable goals must be established, along with progressive steps that demonstrate the progression (or even the lack of progression, thus causing reassessment of the goals or the methods being taken) towards the achievement of the goals. The process of introducing and or shifting to a distributed leadership style must be deliberate so as to ensure success in its delivery (Harris, 2013). It is important that necessary information is provided to staff members to allow them to be aware of their roles and responsibilities and how to be successful in their roles under a distributed leadership model.

At any given school, there are many staff members with talents and strengths in a variety of facets (Duignan, 2012). It is the role of the principal utilizing distributed leadership to develop and provide the possibilities and opportunities for other members of staff to take the lead on a particular facet of the school. However, Duignan reiterates the argument that leadership must only be meted out to staff members who have the ability and the experience to successfully handle the assignment given to them (Duignan, 2012).

Adopting distributed leadership is a necessary shift in practice as the expectations of school leadership have changed and now require a more effective model in order to achieve the goals desired and required for education (Duignan, 2012). As stated, distributed leadership does not just rely on the principal (Duignan, 2012). Because it is not possible for the principal to be an expert in every aspect of the modern school, the skills, and attributes of the staff within the school should be developed to provide the maximum support to the students at the school.

Morrison (2018) also supports the use of distributed leadership in his article. He states that the most effective international school leaders have a vision and work towards that vision with the input of the staff (Morrison, 2018). This determination coincides with the use of distributed leadership as the principal works with his or her staff members to work towards the vision

created as by group. This approach requires that the principal and his or her staff have built very positive relationships within the workplace and that there is a strong element of trust.

Distributed leadership also has support from areas outside of the realm of education. There are claims by some in the business world that an approach that builds the organization, in this case the school, up slowly and prepares it to be self-sufficient is superior to the other styles of leadership that could be introduced (Morrison, 2016). This support for distributed leadership could be advantageous for principals looking to adopt this form of leadership in the international school context because international schools exist in both the world of education and in the business world. Principals would be able to introduce this leadership into their school knowing that there are proven success records to refer to and support their decision. However, the foundation to successfully implementing distributed leadership is time, which allows for the building of a sense of trust between the staff and the leader in order for this approach to be successful.

While many authors do support the distributed leadership model and or a hybrid model that has distributed leadership as a basis for international schools, there are several significant barriers that impede its implementation. As this model of leadership requires developing positive relationships, which in turn require time to develop, the high rates of turn-over present amongst teaching staff at international schools negatively affects the possibility of these necessary working relationships ever being formed.

Another barrier to implementing a distributed leadership model within the international school comes from the multi-cultural composition of the school staff itself who come from cultures where the principal is seen as the leader, not other staff members (Johnson et al., 2008). It is the perceptions and expectations brought by the staff that will create challenges that must be overcome should a principal begin in a school with a staff coming together with a wide-variety of cultural backgrounds and who are not accustomed to this particular approach. In this situation, a high degree of cultural intelligence is necessary which will allow the principal to utilize his or her cultural intelligence to understand and effectively interact with his or her staff (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012). Using his or her cultural intelligence allows the principal to develop

relationships with staff members and is thus able to demonstrate to them that the leadership approach chosen by the principal is a successful and valid approach.

Distributed leadership in international schools faces another hurdle which comes in the form of increased level of autonomy that is required to allow this form of leadership to come to fruition (Duignan, 2012). To overcome this challenge, trust must be developed between the principal and his or her staff members. This is only possible at an international school that has built up a staff who stays for longer periods of time, where the staff and the administration have a positive working relationship, and where there is trust between the principal and the school board members. Without this trust, distributed leadership cannot be effectively implemented.

Harris (2013) identifies several challenges to the utilization of distributed leadership within schools and comes across as suspicious about any leader implementing this approach has having ulterior motives. Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008), Hargreaves and Fink (2009), Hartley (2009 & 2010) all challenge the implementation of distributed leadership within the school context, by discussing how this approach to leadership is “little more than a palatable way of encouraging gullible teachers to do more work, a way of reinforcing standardisation practices, a way of reinforcing the ‘status quo’ ” (Harris, 2013). Hargreaves and Fink (2009) further this discussion on how distributed leadership is simply another method that maintains a top-down approach but in a way that actually encourages buy-in from unsuspecting staff (Hargreaves & Fink, 2009).

In order for a principal to be able adopt distributed leadership or a hybrid that uses this approach as a basis, it is evident that there is the requirement that the principal and his or her staff must have the opportunity to develop positive working relationships and build trust with each other professionally. However, the building of positive working relationships can only be done if the principal and the staff members are able to work with each other for a period of time.

Unfortunately, the rates of turn-over experienced by international schools demonstrate that these relationships will have difficulty forming. It is also evident that more research is required in this field. However, before this research takes place, it is important that international schools address the issue of high turn-over rates. If these rates of turn-over continue, any research completed could be invalid because the conditions necessary to see whether or not one approach leads to increased leadership effectiveness when compared to another not be able to be witnessed.

While distributed leadership demonstrates a number of positive attributes to leadership in the international school context, it is important that principals are aware of the challenges to this approach. By reflecting regularly, asking questions and challenging norms, or the ‘way things have been done here’ and re-examining the role (s) of power within the international school the principal can improve his or her chances of being able to lead effectively.

5.7 Using Frameworks to Describe Complexities of International School Leadership

The sixth key point discusses the multiple frameworks to attempt to describe leadership in international schools. These frameworks vary in construction, from images of the principal as an agent of change; schools as cultural artefacts; images from the sea; the pragmatic versus the idealist; the creation of a common language within the school around learning; and finally the use of dualities to examine the role of the principal in handling more than one prominent point of view. Many of these frameworks do incorporate concepts that are found within other key take-aways, as these frameworks correspond to principals’ roles.

In Morrison (2018) and Gardner-McTaggart (2018a), the authors discuss how the principal acts as an agent of change within the international school. Principals are brought into the role for a variety of purposes, one of which is to act as an agent of change within the school. This change can be initiated by a school’s board to bring changes to the school to satisfy their current vision of what the school should be. Principals can also be brought into the school to initiate needed change that will determine the future success of the school. In this situation, the principal is an agent of “change management” within the school organization and culture (Morrison, 2018). In this situation, principals are responsible for unravelling consistency within the school. This unravelling process potentially creates other tensions that did not have the conditions necessary to be evident or prevalent. Therefore, the principal must be able to address these new tensions by being flexible and adaptable to the new situations that will become present (Gardner-McTaggart, 2018a). Morrison (2018) states, that the “Principal must lead rather than manage” (Morrison, 2018). It is therefore imperative that the principal is able to develop positive working

relationships with his or her staff so that he or she is able to garner the support necessary for introducing and implementing changes.

However, building these positive relationships to where the principal can be an agent of change is not feasible when the principal and the teaching staff does not remain at the school long enough to develop these relationships (Gardner -McTaggart, 2018b; Benson, 2011). However, this turn-over does not produce the conditions necessary for principals to build the relationships necessary to build staff support for changes. A result is push-back from staff, or a lack of implementation as the teachers know they will either not be remaining in their position at the school for a long period of time, or they be willing to wait the situation out as the odds are on their side that the principal will soon move. Staff will simply then wait for the next leader to come in and see what he or she will want to implement within the school.

Furthermore, the role that the school board plays within the international school also has a direct effect on the way in which the principal can be effective in his or her role as an agent of change. If the board members are promoting their own personal agenda within the school, and challenging decisions made by the principal, then the principal cannot lead effectively as there is no stability and continuity.

Another framework that is present within some selected articles is that of dualities. For leadership to be effective, the principal must be able to first recognize the opposing forces present within the school, and then be able to successfully navigate this multitude of agendas. These forces can take on many forms and can originate from a variety of sources, including parents, school board members, teachers, staff, and the community in which the school is located (Keller, 2015; Gardner-McTaggart, 2018a). It is imperative that international school principals are able to recognize that dualities do exist within their schools and are able to recognize these dualities, as this is the reality that principals face in their roles in these schools. Further, the principal must understand that both sides of the duality are valid and pertinent to the objectives of those involved. The principal may or may not agree with both sides of the duality, but he or she must be able to address the dualities and discover and implement a method or a solution by which to keep both parties satisfied, or at the very least understanding of why decisions were made.

Dualities exist within the publicly-funded schools as well, however, in the international schools, these dualities are much more prevalent due to the independent nature of these schools. Failure on the part of the principal to effectively recognize, address and navigate these dualities within the school by finding a way to exist within both places the principal at risk of being seen as ineffective, which will lead to further challenges and barriers within the school. An example of a duality that many principals will regularly face in international schools is that of the pragmatic vs. idealist. Many authors of the selected articles directly or indirectly describe the pragmatic when they discuss how international schools support the elite of society. As many principals come to international education from publicly-funded schools in their home countries where their main prerogative is to provide education for all, they represent the idealist as their former schools – public – provide equal access to education for all, regardless of an individual’s social status. Existing within this duality is a situation that international school principals must be able to address and come to terms with existing within.

The utilization of these different frameworks to describe the functioning of international schools helps to create a visual concept that can be more easily understood, given the contextual complexities of these schools. Each of the frameworks that are present within the selected articles has been developed by the respective author to provide an explanation of how international schools function, without having to go into great detail for each and every school discussed. These frameworks allow for a description of international schools in general terms which allows for easier identification of what is effective in terms of leadership in amongst a very complex group of organizations. For the principal, the use of a framework allows him or her to have a guideline or approach that allows for a decision to be made after placing the needs into the particular framework. Placing the needs into a framework allows for the analysis of both sides (or more) of the discussion, rather than a decision being made on a ‘gut feeling’. Using the framework to make decisions also allows for all sides to have their voices heard, and even though not all opinions can be supported, at least all parties will understand that they were heard and that their ideas were not simply dismissed.

5.8 Developing and using a Common Language for Student Learning

The seventh key point is the importance of the creation of a common language around learning as it is identified as being key to leadership effectiveness in the international school (Bryant, Walker & Lee, 2018). This language incorporates the school mission and vision, as well as the academic goals that students strive to attain, regardless of which curriculum is offered at the school. It is important that all members of staff support and utilize this common language, as the use of this common language allows for more accurate conversations, as all stakeholders are familiar with the value of the words that are being used in terms of what is taking place at the school (Bryant, Walker & Lee, 2018). Furthermore, having a common language promotes cohesion, as each area within the school can discuss their learning, teaching and assessment without having to constantly define and describe the processes.

Without this common language present within the school, there are infinite opportunities for misinterpretation which can lead to conflict amongst the stakeholders within the school, as each stakeholder is focussing on a feature that is deemed important by one stakeholder, but not necessarily by the others. Having a defined common language removes these barriers and improves communication. The development of this language requires input from all areas of the school, and most importantly, requires time and consistent staffing. However, in order to establish a common language within the school, the high staff turn-over rates must be addressed to allow for this language to be able to be developed, take root and to become part of the school's ethos and culture.

Gardner-McTaggart (2017) supports the concept of creating a reality by describing how it is the “narrative created by the school leadership is what defines the leader and therefore the school” (Gardner-McTaggart, 2017). Gardner-McTaggart further explains how important language is and how language can create a reality by describing how the narrative created and effectively preached by the principal to the point where “leaders often base themselves on their narrative rather than qualifications and experience” (Gardner-McTaggart, 2017). As long as the principal is perceived to believe this narrative and as long as the narrative is supported by influences on the school, such as the school board, teaching staff will support the principal. Hill (2018) describes the importance for a principal to create his or her own reality through the use of a

narrative that is constantly reinforced within the school (Hill, 2018). The continuity and reinforcement of this narrative is important because having this narrative can even help to compensate for the high rates of staff turn-over as the narrative can make reality appear and disappear within the school (Gardner-McTaggart, 2018b; Hill, 2018). This returns an element of control to the principal, as he or she is able to discern what information newly-arrived staff will be able to obtain. Furthermore, by retaining control of the narrative, the principal can garner support amongst staff members, thus increasing his or her effectiveness as a leader.

Belonging to an organization, such as the IB or the CIS that accredits international schools is of benefit to leadership effectiveness. This is because in order to maintain accreditation, the school, including the school board, must adhere to specific rules and a direction. In order to do so, consistency and continuity both help to support the development of a common language around learning in the school. The development of this common language requires an investment by school boards, principals, and staff. This investment comes in the form of time and continuity, both of which must occur in order for the common language to have a chance to develop. Again, the barrier of staff turn-over appears, as it has a detrimental effect on the development of this language due to new staff arriving on a regular basis who must learn and adapt to this new language, if there is even anyone left on staff who can continue to promote the language.

5.9 The Complex Role of the Principal

The eighth take-away from this analysis is an understanding of the highly complex role of the international school principal. Like principals in the public sector, international school principals are responsible for a vast array of duties (Pont et al. 2008; Duignan, 2012). However, in the international context, these duties become the responsibility of the principal at an enhanced level and often with fewer supports to access, such as those offered by an education department at a governmental level and or a school board in terms of the development and implementation of policies and procedures.

The role of the principal has changed in numerous ways over the past several decades and continues to change and adapt (Duignan, 2012). These duties include, but are not limited to:

recruiting and retaining staff; attracting prospective families; managing large-scale budgets and financial accountability; public relations and social media presence (Cohen, 2014); and promoting and preserving the community's perception of the school such as through social media, and via the ranking of the results of student achievement from the International General Certificate of Education (IGCSE) and the International Baccalaureate (IB) to name just a handful of the responsibilities (Cohen, 2014; Duignan, 2012).

Another tension that has an effect on the leadership effectiveness of the principal of an international school is the lack of a system. This *system* can exist in the form of a department belonging to a government ministry, or a team that can provide assistance to a principal requiring more expertise on a topic, or support in a difficult situation. Without such a system, decisions made by the principal may be perceived by staff or school board members unfamiliar with schools to be reactive or arbitrary, rather than seen as the principal following a systematic process that is visible to all stakeholders. Furthermore, the lack of a system, either governmental or private can leave the school without standards, policies and procedures that are followed and referred to as a foundation for decisions that are made within schools (Slater et al. 2018). This barrier is caused by the lack of direction in the development of policies and procedures, as well as limited direction when making key decisions that affect staff and the school as a whole (Slater et al., 2018; James & Sheppard, 2013). Having an independent school board making final decisions when its members are generally not experienced in the field of education further exacerbates the situation, as seen in the section above on the influences of the school board (Keller, 2015; James & Sheppard, 2013). On the other hand, this independence may be viewed by some as an advantage, as the school is not bound by a system and has flexibility to adapt and change much more quickly than when part of a larger system.

Teaching staff and the principal can have a feeling of isolation not only from not having a system of support, but also a physical isolation as they are working outside of their home country (Murakami-Ramalho & Benham, 2010). As discussed in the section above on staff turn-over, this is an element that can be addressed by the principal by forming and maintaining relationships with his or her staff members and generating opportunities for staff members to support one another.

This complex role, coupled with a lack of an educational system, board members inexperienced with how schools operate but holding decision-making power and a sense of professional isolation creates a significant challenge for international school principals to overcome in order to demonstrate leadership effectiveness. Therefore, it is crucial for the principal's survival at the international school that he or she creates a plan to address these challenges. The first step to take would be to immediately begin to develop positive relationships with the school board members. Gaining board members' confidence is important so that hopefully conversations can take place about decisions, rather than decisions being made unilaterally. If the principal can make himself or herself part of this conversation rather than only be on the receiving end of the decisions, the principal can mitigate having his or her decisions over-turned, which will improve the principal's ability to lead effectively and not be viewed by staff members as ineffectual. By being able to have conversations with school board members, the principal can try to ensure that he or she is part of the decision-making process, which in turn will increase his or her leadership effectiveness.

The second step for the principal to take is to build positive working relationships with his or her staff members. Although these positive relationships cannot counter-act the effects of poor salaries and other conditions deemed negative or stressful within the international school, they are a positive first step, and can lead to other improvements. These improvements can include creating the conditions necessary to build the sense of trust that has been identified as one of the steps that can be taken to reduce teacher turn-over. However, in order for these improvements to take place, the issue of the amount of time staff and principals remain in their respective positions must be addressed. School boards must take the first steps to initiating these improvements and invest in their principals by ensuring that there are protocols and procedures that are followed by board members, rather than letting personal objectives control the decisions made by the school board. By increasing the currently short tenure of international school principals, international schools would be creating the potential for programming continuity, the building of positive relationships, and later trust having adequate time to build and increase.

Thirdly, the international school principal should attempt to build a network of other international school principals. The goal would be to create a network of fellow principals who

can provide support and guidance with each other. This network would also address the isolation that international school principals face in their respective roles. A network of support from other international school principals would mimic what principals enjoy in the public education sector where principals partake in regular meetings and have a network of support amongst their colleagues, as well as through the system that they work for. For the international school principal, the process of building this network is much more difficult and complex due to the uniqueness, independence, and isolation of each school, however, it would not be impossible through the use of technology and a group of motivated principals.

The steps discussed above are demonstrated in the selected articles to be necessary to provide the setting for leadership effectiveness in the international school context by allowing the necessary relationships to be built. On the other hand, there are other conditions that must be addressed by schools to address staff turn-over. The most important of these conditions is that of salaries. Regardless if a school has made all of the changes mentioned above, the issue of low salaries would continue to hinder progress, as teachers will continue to leave to go to other international schools. Without the above-mentioned steps being taken by international schools, including addressing remuneration, the conditions necessary for leadership effectiveness are simply not present, perpetuating the current situation found in these schools.

With the concerns being raised that the role of the principal is not even relevant anymore, it would be fitting that a modified or even new approach to the role of the principal is sought. Finding a new approach or at least modifying how the approach is currently in effect in international schools would help to improve leadership effectiveness by creating a manageable role for the principal and allowing him or her to focus on this role, rather than be pulled in far too many directions as is the current situation for any principal in the role.

5.10 Profit vs. Education

The final key take-away is that of the required shift international school principals must take from focussing only education to education and profit (Keller, 2015; James & Sheppard, 2013). This has expanded significance, given that the for-profit sector is the fastest-growing sector of

international schools (ISC, 2019). Most principals coming from publicly-funded schools do not have managerial and administrative experience in the private sector (MacDonald, 2006). However, principals from publicly-funded school systems do have experience working under conditions where budgets have been reduced, and expectations in the workplace have increased. Beginning at an international school in this role is a major change of direction for most these principals and requires successful progress through a steep learning curve. This learning curve is the result of the multitude of changes a principal new to the international school scene will have to learn and adapt. Many of the priorities he or she developed during his or her time as principal in the public system are simply not a focus in the private education system (MacDonald, 2006). It will definitely take time for a new principal to discover these differences, and to adapt them into his or her way of thinking and problem-solving. These principals will bring some level of experience with them in terms of working under strict budgetary conditions, as in many educational sectors, budgets have been tightened for many years. These skills will be of great asset in the international school context.

International school principals are responsible to promote and operate the school as a business, focussing on providing educational products, such as a particular curriculum, that are desired by parents of a specific clientele in a particular locale, rather than education *and* focus on generating profit (or at the very least enough students in the school to make it viable) (MacDonald, 2006). This new focus is a huge shift from the public education system, for instance in Canada, where most students attend a publicly-funded school based on the geographical location of their home rather than by their personal (or familial) preference. In larger geographical centres, there are private, independent schools, however, these schools can be expensive and often require much more parental involvement than their publicly-funded equivalents. Principals must be aware of the situation they will most likely find themselves in when they first begin their role at an international school after leaving publicly-funded education. Not being aware will create tensions between the principal and the school board members and the teaching staff.

This shift to a focus on profit first and education second has the potential to leave a principal struggling to come to terms with his or her desires and natural tendencies. This struggle is a result of the experiences the principal had prior to his or her arrival to the international school,

where the focus on education was the priority. For the principal to shift focus from the education of students to the focus of turning a profit is a significant change. Because of this focus on profit, leadership effectiveness can be negatively affected as the principal will have to acquire new skillsets that will allow him or her to work within these new parameters and successfully implement these new skillsets quickly in this new environment. Interestingly enough, it is the *academic* outcomes that ultimately affect the financial success of an international school (MacDonald, 2006). With this knowledge, international schools should understand that the school is a long-term investment that will take several years to develop and it is worth the investment in the principal and staff to help build the reputation of the school.

5.11 Potential Implications for Educational Leadership

This thesis demonstrates that leadership effectiveness in the international school context is a complex phenomenon. This synthetic mapping on leadership effectiveness in international schools offers principals of international schools enhanced understandings of the tensions and barriers to, as well as the useful mindsets and skillsets for effective leadership of international schools. Research demonstrates that effective school leadership benefits the entire school, including the teaching staff and students. Therefore, with the rapid growth of international schools around the world in recent years, coupled with limited studies of the role of the principal in these international schools, it is important for principals of international schools to become aware of the literature that is available on leadership effectiveness in this capacity. By understanding what makes leadership effective in the international school context, principals can become more effective in their leadership role.

This synthetic mapping represents a current synopsis of the emerging research field surrounding leadership effectiveness in the international school context. Although I selected not to engage in primary data collection, such as interviews with international school leaders, I chose to focus in on the emergent literature in the field and to conduct a systematic and thoughtful analysis. The complexity and diversity of international schools means that there are no simple answers to my

research questions. However, my hope is that I have qualified a set of partial answers, critical insights, and key tensions that surface in the seeking out of these answers.

5.12 Limitations to the Research

One challenge to my aim is that international schools themselves are far from being homogenous. International schools are represented by more than just non-profit and for-profit schools, and there continues to be many more types of international schools being created, especially in the for-profit sector. In this area, it is the socio-economic elite portions of a society: those who have the financial capacity to invest substantial amounts of money for the education of their children, or those who hold positions within businesses that provide this education as part of a remuneration package.

Another limitation is that this thesis utilizes textual analysis of the available and most relevant literature on international school leadership as the foundation for the claims made in the thesis. The mapping will in some ways be limited by what is currently available in the literature and my search process. It may also prove to be difficult to synthesize research studies that use different methodologies or employ different theoretical perspectives. In the second phase, I move from documenting answers to assessing the most significant or sound answers, my biases as the researcher may also enter into this phase. I will be vigilant to be reflexive about making my choices and making my underlying bias transparent to the reader wherever necessary.

Since international schools are wide-spread around the world, the research articles and other supporting evidence discussed in this thesis originate from the Persian Gulf and other parts of Asia, to Africa and from Europe and North and South America. This research also often includes the expatriate community in the respective country, who make up a portion of the student population, but only rarely comprise the majority of a school population (Keller, 2014). Articles selected for analysis were all written in English. In this sense, the study, like the larger scholarship on international schooling, is Anglo-Western-centric and may not correspond with leadership effectiveness beyond the Anglo-Western international school sector. While articles written in languages other than English were not accessed, it would be assumed that there would

be research that has taken place in international schools in other languages, including in schools that do not offer English as the medium of instruction. This research would be interesting to compare to the findings of this paper.

Lastly, the process for this research may not be exactly replicable as when using the search parameters, more articles will have been added. To search and access articles, I initially searched specific journals and then as the articles referenced additional articles, I searched for those articles in the journals that were referenced. By employing this methodology, I may have limited my sample base. However, this thesis is a good starting point for others who are looking to learn about how leadership effectiveness is shaped within international schools around the world.

5.13 Conclusion

By separating out the elements of each of the articles on leadership effectiveness in international schools, I was able to make more sense of the current research that is available on this topic. Though the research in this field continues to remain limited, this synthesis allowed for the identification of key points that have a direct and lasting impact on effective leadership in this context. From this research and the key take-aways, I learned is that there is no singular or simple answer to the overarching and sub-questions that I posed. Each international school is unique for a multiple variety of reasons, such as cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Because the conditions are so diverse and specific to each school, it is very difficult to compare what occurs at one school and take it to another school and expect the same results to occur. An approach can be highly effective at one school, and a failure at another, even with what would appear to be similar conditions present at both schools. There is also the challenge of identifying and developing a common consensus to key terms, for instance the term *international school*. Furthermore, there is also the concern of the current lack of research in this field. This lack of research is compounded by the relatively recent rapid growth of international schools around the world, and research has not been able to catch up. It is also difficult for researchers to accurately investigate leadership effectiveness within international schools when the conditions to study this

concept are not ideal due to the negative effects of staff and principal turn-over. Only when this issue is effectively addressed can leadership be accurately analyzed in the international school.

Leadership effectiveness is understood differently throughout the articles, and as found when trying to determine a common definition for the term *international school*, there is no one common approach that is agreed upon by a majority of researchers in the field. However, there are some similarities that have come forth have become visible through this synthesis. Some of the ideas found in the literature on international schools is similar to that of what is found for publicly-funded school leadership. However, it is evident from the articles that there are unique challenges to leadership in the international school context, which then affect consideration of what is or what will be effective.

There is a strong body of evidence that supports two types of leadership approaches. The first body supports a distributed leadership model, which has been identified as being ideal for the international school setting, as it is a model that has been successful in business settings. With international schools acting as both an education provider and as a business, this model makes sense. Even though in this case, the business is a school, it still shares many of the same objectives as a business such as aiming to turn a profit, attract new clients (students) and create a brand for itself. However, the leadership must understand that the school must still provide a strong focus on education, rather than simply turning a profit. The second group also incorporates the distributed leadership model, but in the form of a hybrid, where distributed leadership is combined with another approach to leadership and implemented within the international school setting. For an international school principal, this is important information to understand, and should play a role in how leadership is approached when beginning in a new role.

One of the largest challenges to international schools is that of the high rates of staff and of principal turn-over. It is crucial that schools are able to address this issue and implement steps to reduce these high rates, as these rates have detrimental effects on staff, students and on leadership effectiveness of the principal. The charting of the articles shows that there are several ways in which the principal can directly have a positive effect on the rates of retention of teaching staff. The first is that it is imperative that the principal has an understanding on a

personal level of his or her staff in order to be able to build a direct connection with them. When staff feel that they are valued members of the school, staff retention rates increase

Another component to increasing staff retention is that of creating a common language around learning within the school. The creation and utilization of this language is important as it demonstrates commitment to the vision of the school on the part of the principal, who is often the driving force for its creation and use within the school setting. It was evident from the articles that staff will respond positively to witnessing the principal promoting and using a common language to learning within the school. Unfortunately, even if all of the steps are implemented successfully, it is still likely that a better salary, and or benefits will draw teachers away to other schools. From personal experience, a teacher can make significantly more at a neighbouring school. Even though there were no other significant concerns at the first school, being able to earn over 50% more for the same role plays a large factor in the decision-making process of whether or not a teacher remains at an international school.

Another finding that is present in the articles and linked to having a personal connection with the staff is that of the importance of the principal possessing a high level of cultural intelligence. Cultural intelligence is an up-coming focus of research, and I believe that this focus will prove to be one of the most important aspects an international school principal can bring to his or her role. Furthermore, this skillset, if it is not already present, is one that can be learned and or honed. With the cultural make-up of the international school's staff and students, as well as the community in which the school is located, possessing a high level of cultural capacity is vital for the leader to be effective in his or her role. As getting to know the staff on a personal level can increase staff retention, possessing a high degree of cultural capacity can also play a role in this retention for similar reasons.

In addition to building a personal relationship with staff and having a high degree of cultural competence, it is important that the international school principal enters his or her new position with a full understanding of the role. The role of the international school principal is highly complex, and the principal will face challenges that he or she has not encountered prior. Furthermore, some of the challenges he or she will already have experience handling will be intensified in the international school setting. The relationship between the school board and the

principal and the ability of the principal to navigate the complexities of the demands of the school board and the desires of the teaching staff and students is a topic that is found in the articles to be a determining factor for the effectiveness and longevity of the principal. With each international school being independent, each school board has its own prerogatives and priorities.

By choosing to perform a synthetic mapping of the articles, I was able to complete a slower, more careful reading of the information. Because of the complexities of the international school, it is not possible to find a short, simple, straight-forward answer. It was necessary to break down the articles to find the information that was pertinent to leadership effectiveness. Through the process of breaking down the selected articles, the story of just how effective leadership is represented. Once this information was found, I could then put the parts back together in order to make an analysis, through the elements, to describe the purposes, and processes of school and leading.

Leadership effectiveness in the international school context remains a complex issue and has many challenges to overcome. As the charted articles demonstrate, leadership effectiveness is not a one-method or one-size-fits-all approach, but will vary from school to school depending on a variety of conditions, such as cultural diversity of staff and students; the cultural capacity of the principal; rates of staff turn-over; location and governance to name a few. Addressing the issues and concerns that surround staff retention, increasing cultural intelligence, adopting a suitable approach to leadership within the school and having an understanding of the role, leadership effectiveness can be exercised by the international school principal. While challenges will remain, taking these steps will allow for the conditions to occur to accurately study leadership effectiveness in international schools.

Appendix One

Article Criteria Chart

The following chart documents the elements for each article. It was ‘one-dimensionalized’ in order to fit into the format of this document.

Article One

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	Alexander Gardner-McTaggart. 2018c. <i>International schools: leadership reviewed</i> . Journal of Research in International Education (JRIE).
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “offer social and cultural reproduction for the globalising and cosmopolitan privileged” • “almost entirely private and autonomous, offering significant symbolic capital in terms of high value curricula such as the IB, IGCSE, AP, International Primary Curriculum, and more”
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of stability and how transience affects stability of the school at all levels • Consistency but this is difficult due to the challenges of the international school • Organizational amnesia that is the result of the high rate of turnover • Market-driven – not just for the purpose of globalization • Competing against other international schools • Schooling for the elite • Autonomous • What exactly is an international school?
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading as a transformational or distributive leader provides the most benefit to the school and staff
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pragmatic (supporting the elite) vs. idealist (equal access to quality educational for all) • Use of CELLS as a framework to describe how IS function C- Complex E – Evolving L – Loosely L – Linked S - Systems
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transience of staff and constant recruitment • Tensions: staff turnover • relationship with school board • mixed cultures and expectations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• constant necessity for recruitment
Element Six: Capacities of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transformational• Distributive• Consistent

Article Two

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	Dan Keller. (2015). <i>Leadership of international schools: Understanding and managing dualities</i> . Education Management Administration and Leadership (EMAL).
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International schools “elude definition” • Definitions “vary tremendously” • Difficult to define what an international school is - does not provide a definition •
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • States that international schools are not, for the most part, made up of international students
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal exists within dualities and must successfully navigate these dualities on a regular basis • Use of the four frames of leadership • Use of a two-stage process as an approach that would provide principals with an understanding of the school • Use of problem-solving techniques to address challenges and barriers to the school
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of dualities to explain complexities • uses dualities to make sense of the role of principal in an international school • • Recognizing and utilizing dualities to navigate the role • Use of dualities allows leaders to analyze situations from both sides of the agenda and look for a way forward even though compelling and opposing forces are being faced such as the push to look globally, but also to be internationalist
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “dualities” create chaos. While all schools have dualities to a certain degree, they are exemplified within International Schools • Profit vs. non-profit; Pragmatic vs. idealist; spatial vs. temporal • Complex and multiple competing agendas from all groups involved within the school structure (board, staff, students, families, community...) • Ambiguities to the role • Competing visions of what the school is supposed to be

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomous nature of the school board • Maintaining integrity when making decisions • Contradictions within the school structure itself and the necessity to make decisions based on these contradictions
<p>Element Six: Capacities of Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Necessity to use multiple lenses in day-to-day decision-making • It is important for international school leaders have a clear understanding of globalization and what this means for education • Categorizing problem-solving into four frames to be able to figure out the barrier, analyze the barrier and then develop an approach • Necessity to work in a duality that changes and emerges with each issue or scenario • Making sense of the tensions, competing visions, dualities and maintaining integrity as a leader • Transformational and distributive leadership skills

Article Three

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	Chris James and Paul Sheppard. (2013). <i>The governing of international schools: the implications of ownership and profit motive</i> . School Leadership & Management.
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to define – many definitions and is ultimately left up to the school itself to decide • Does the school meet the needs of international-minded families, and therefore students? If so, this is enough to constitute calling a school <i>international</i>
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned by someone • Focus on profit – school as a business
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed leadership – principal gives responsibility to head teachers • Principal must be able to collaborate with school board and understand the board’s direction
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing how to distribute leadership within the school framework
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent –own governance • Decisions by board will often not be educationally focussed, but rather a reaction to a situation • Style of governance (Principal-agent model; stewardship model; stakeholder model – Pg. 4) • Parent-only boards • Parental involvement in school governance (“agenda wielding parents” pg. 14) • Self-perpetuating school boards • Market /economic forces • Secure governance (which can affect accreditation of the school) • Principals not always involved in school decisions
Element Six: Capacities of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work under situations with potential for interference from board members – negotiation and response to situations • Principals can have a high degree of autonomy – unless there is interference from board

Article Four

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiw. (2012). The relationship between transformational leadership and cultural intelligence. <i>Journal of Educational Administration</i> .
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined in many ways – not just one definition • IS have a variety of traits (culturally diverse transient populations) • Set in a host culture; wide variety of stakeholders involved (parents, interest groups, etc.) • multiple curricula
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal research into transformational leadership in International Schools • Transient school body, including staff and students • External influences (board, parents, market)
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International School leaders must be transformational leaders in order to be the most successful leaders • Cultural intelligence is the key to being a transformational leader in the International School context
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International School leaders should take a transformational approach to leadership • International School leaders must possess cultural intelligence and employ this intelligence in their interactions with staff and students
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transient staffing • Culturally diverse school body (staff and students)
Element Six: Capacities of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exhibit five factors: idealized influence (attributed), idealized influence (behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (pg. 838) • Cultural intelligence indicates level of transformational leadership

Article Five

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	Ian Hill. (2014). <i>Internationally minded schools as cultural artefacts: Implications for school leadership</i> . Journal of Research in International Education.
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An international school is one established to offer education to the children of globally mobile Parents (177) • Private, fee-paying • High turn-over of students • often have a large cultural mix of children (and sometimes staff) (pg. 177)
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership is a highly interactive process • In order to provide the school “with a meaningful direction, the leader must understand the social realities that surround the school” (pg. 181) • Can use metaphors from art, religion etc. to describe international schools as the diversity and scope of these schools is often large and spans many cultures
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International schools are cultural artefacts not inanimate objects • “schools are cultural artefacts which reflect the values of their membership” (pg. 176) • Each member of the school has his or her own social reality which determines how he or she approaches the role he or she possesses within school • Schools are culturally bound systems which take on human qualities – they are not natural but artificial (pg. 178) • Reference to organizational theory and cultural dimensions
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the internal ethnicities and the culture of the host nation will be major factors in determining the organisational culture shaped by the leadership from the competing myths, rituals, and social reality of its members • Leaders must “negotiate the minefield of competing values and understand the social reality of its members in order to arrive at a cohesion which enables the school to function efficiently” (pg. 176) • International schools often have “ambiguous goals, unclear technologies, and a constantly fluid membership whereby each new wave imports a confusing array of conflicting value

	<p>systems which may hamper collaborative decision-making and diversify individual action (pg. 176)</p>
<p>Element Six: Capacities of Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership in the plural, as each member of staff is a leader in his or her own classroom, or role • leaders are more facilitators and less supervisors, distributing responsibilities • to provide opportunities for staff to blossom and flourish professionally and personally (pg. 185) communicating clearly, clarifying language used, and sensing how messages are received are all part of the leader’s tool kit. (pg. 185) • balanced, calm, culturally receptive, fair, principled educator who can create a school learning community and lead by example (pg. 187) • Utilize concepts present in the IB Learner Profile (2013) pg. 187

Article Six

<p>Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication</p>	<p>Allan R. Morrison. (2018). Beyond the status quo – setting the agenda for effective change: The role of leader within an international school environment. <i>Education Management and Leadership</i> (EMAL) 2018</p>
<p>Element One: What is an <i>International School</i>?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operated by for or not-for profit independent board • No attempt to define international schools is discussed or provided
<p>Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • socio-political nature of working in foreign countries under foreign laws (pg. 521) • Very short tenure for principals • Principal is highly reliant on local staff
<p>Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to be flexible, understanding, and resilient to external forces that can attempt to influence direction and decision-making processes • Have flexible / adaptable leadership styles, using them when appropriate to the situation and needs of the school, staff, and students
<p>Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal as agent of “change management” (pg. 523) within the school organization and culture • Without this change, the school will not be able to adapt and compete as an organization • Principal must lead rather than manage (pg. 523)
<p>Element Five: Challenges to Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tensions due to cultural differences between school leaders and board members/owners • different cultures, languages, and/or methods of doing business (pg. 521) • political crises and bureaucratic challenges that arise (pg. 522)
<p>Element Six: Capacities of Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt and be resilient to the conditions and situations for which the leader has had no experience dealing with • The top three traits identified were: the importance of being able to create a vision; a commitment to school and staff; and an ability to create an environment that is collegial and supportive. (pg. 523) • Maintaining an ethical approach to decision-making

Article Seven

<p>Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication</p>	<p>Elizabeth Murakami-Ramalho and Maenette Benham. (2010). Around the Fishing Net: Leadership Dynamics for Change in an American International School Educational Management Administration & Leadership.</p>
<p>Element One: What is an <i>International School</i>?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Highly complex organizational systems with different configurations, missions and values” • Cater to expatriates as well as host-country families • International education carries different ideological and pragmatic interests and interpretations
<p>Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally diverse staff and students • Independent school board • Multiple curricula taught at the school
<p>Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to recognize and respond to the micro-politics present within the school
<p>Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of fishing net analogy to describe international schools as living systems. The analogy shows how when one member of the school community pulls on the net, all members are affected as all members are intertwined with one another • Recognize limitations when using metaphors
<p>Element Five: Challenges to Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must be able to meet the needs of the stakeholders within the school environment (parents, students, staff, et. al) (pg. 628) • Isolation, parental over-involvement through school board that create micropolitics within the school setting (pg. 628) • Wide cultural diversity of staff and students • High staff, student, and leadership turnover • No support system, such as an education system or governmental department • Limited opportunity for professional development • Ability to identify and navigate the micro political issues that can determine the course of the school environment from classroom to office
<p>Element Six: Capacities of Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to adapt quickly to change directed by school board members • Flexible • Understanding of the school’s history, direction and recognition of the needs, dreams, and feelings of the staff members (pg. 637)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to address the individual needs of the members of the school community in order to develop the school as an entity (pg. 638)
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Article Eight

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	Moosung Lee, Philip Hallinger and Allan Walker. Leadership challenges in international schools in the Asia Pacific region: evidence from programme implementation of the International Baccalaureate
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For this paper, an International School is a school offering the IB Diploma in the Asia-Pacific Region • Private, self-funded independent school operating in the Asia-Pacific region in a highly competitive environment
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools offering the IB have successfully created a “brand or identity” that is associated with the IB • This brand is associated with an international curriculum, multi-cultural student body, global portability of the degree and high-quality preparation for university entrance (pg. 291) • Challenges are intertwined with one another – not just one particular challenge
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little research into International School leadership and little research in this area of the world in terms of International School
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders subject to external and internal pressures
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning curriculum (i.e.: IB) with the host country’s local and or national standards (pg. 293) • Multiple curricula offered with in a school • Finding the required time to meet with staff as a department, etc. • Difficulty in maintaining a common language across the curricula even when the curricula originates from the same organization (i.e.: MYP to IBDP) • Schools are multi-cultural and multi-ethnic (pg. 293) • Transient staff and leaders; unclear roles; board interference; student pressures (competition for university entrance); politics; parent expectations • Western vs Eastern expectations as to what education is
Element Six: Capacities of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to overcome differences in parental expectations and curricular focusses (i.e.: exam-oriented vs inquiry-based learning) • Cultural intelligence of this particular region and expectations for an International School • Understanding of the IB system and lingo

Article 9

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	James MacDonald. (2006). The international school industry: Examining international schools through an economic lens. <i>Journal of Research in International Education</i> .
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “International schools and international education are still without any sort of universally accepted definitions” (pg. 193) • “In fact, a school does not have to meet any criteria to call themselves an international school” (193)
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some serve lower socio-economic groups, but most serve the elite from a society
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders must have experience with business in order to understand the unique situation of an International School
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders must have experience with business in order to understand the unique situation of an International School • Dual lens of profit vs. education
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International schools as an industry of its own • Dual lens of profit vs. education • Education is a driving factor, but are first and foremost market-driven (financially and commercially) • Board focussed on business side of the school, and staff/leadership focussed on educational function of the school • High turnover rate coupled with short tenure
Element Six: Capacities of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work with both lenses (profit and education) • Principals must be able to “align the lenses and create a clear picture and proper depth of vision for all parties” (pg. 211) • Collaboration with all parties involved • Ability to listen and respond to both lenses – maintain integrity

Article Ten

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	Alexander Gardner-McTaggart (A). Birds of a Feather: Senior International Baccalaureate International Schools Leadership in Service. <i>Journal of Research in International Education</i> , 2018 (a).
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides education to elite of a society • This article focusses on IB school leaders • Little to no interaction with other International School and International School leaders
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering an international curriculum within a host country • Little research in this area of International School leadership
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Successful leadership in this context responds to market demands with a commodification of Anglo identity”
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of dualities to allow focus in more than one area • leadership as a veneer of distributed discourse cloaking a rigid agenda (pg. 69) •
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaps in leadership knowledge in the IB schools • Transience (staff and students) • Lack of support systems for leaders and teaching faculty • Lack of professional development opportunities • Lack of coherence in educational language • Globalization commodifying everything, including service, emotional support, and education • academic pressure and students focusing on maximising their scores at high-school level (pg. 69) • “leading an international school requires an all-encompassing approach and the development of a particular ethos, which must infuse the whole school and its stakeholders” (pg. 68) • Market-oriented / profit-focussed vs the internationally-minded IB curricula and the limited discussion regarding this duality • Leaders responsible for being an agent of change, which in turn makes them responsible for unravelling consistency within the school potentially creating other tensions (pg. 69)
Element Six: Capacities of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate IB values to develop positive working environment for all school members • Ability to create a school identity based on the IB Learner Profile (IBLP)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service oriented (duality of service – intellectual and emotional) (pg. 75)• Promote IB values within school• Personal character as tool to have other staff members buy in (pg. 75)
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Article Eleven

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	Steven V. Mancuso, Laura Roberts, George P. White. (2010). <i>Teacher retention in international schools: The key role of school leadership</i> . Journal of Research in International Education.
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on International School in Near East South Asia (NESA) • Private, independent, tuition-based, focus on elite of society
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little research on international schools in the NESA region
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How staff view the principal • Supportive, respectful, promote school vision, collaborative, fair and equitable
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No theoretical lens of leadership utilized in the article
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of supportive leadership • High teacher turnover rates • Perceptions of poor school leadership, dissatisfaction with salary and personal circumstances (307) • Teachers receive a two-year contract at best – promotes turnover • Age of teachers in the international school can determine amount of time teachers will stay (pg. 308) • Organizational conditions
Element Six: Capacities of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transformational and distributed leadership • Collaboration with staff when making decisions • Provides support system for staff (emotional, professional, etc.) • Supportive, respectful, promote school vision, collaborative, fair and equitable

Article Twelve

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	Ian Hill. (2018). A Subjectivist Model of School Leadership for International Schools: Greenfield Revisited. <i>Peabody Journal of Education</i> , 93:5.
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not discussed
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High number of cultures represented amongst staff and student body
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader creates a reality that his or her staff is able to see as their own • Leader uses language to create or erase realities • Individual understanding of school life is made manifest in speech, words are at least as important as behavior in shaping and exposing one’s social reality (pg. 527) • “Principals must listen attentively and then make their own words count and know when to make them count” (pg. 528) • communicative competency, the development of a positive organizational culture, and societal cultural competence (pg. 529)
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a shared reality based on interpretation of experience • “Language is power. It literally makes reality appear and disappear” (pg. 527)
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to accurately interpret experiences of the staff to create a shared reality • Conflicting realities of the staff
Element Six: Capacities of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair interpretation of <i>facts</i> (realities) • Words, actions, and body language play a role in leadership effectiveness • prepare and shape messages to the school community with great care and sensitivity, using vocabulary that is as unambiguous as possible across ethnic lines (pg. 528) • “Cultural competencies are twofold for the international school leader: developing an effective organizational culture and demonstrating a high level of (societal) intercultural understanding” (pg. 529) • two of the most important tools needed for leadership are communicative and cultural (ethnic and organizational) competencies” (pg. 531)

Article Thirteen

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	Alexander Gardner-McTaggart (2018b). Leadership of international schools and the International Baccalaureate learner profile. <i>Educational Management Administration & Leadership</i> 2019, Vol. 47(5) 766–784
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not attempt to define due to the complexities
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent • Stresses between principal and teachers
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal values with the vision of the school generates “shared capital” between the leaders and staff (pg. 779)
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals create a “power narrative” (pg. 778) where they must use a connection to establish their role as leader • Narrative helps to fill the void of the constant rate of turn-over
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High rates of turn-over of staff and of leadership • Not personally sharing the values of the school vision diminishes effectiveness of the leader (pg. 779)
Element Six: Capacities of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to effectively “set the tone” for the school (pg. 778)

Article Fourteen

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	Xiu Cravens. (2018). School Leadership in International Schools: Perspectives and Practices. Peabody Journal of Education, 93:5, 584-588, DOI:10.1080/0161956X.2018.1515818
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No definition provided
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • heightened political sensibility • high personnel mobility • multicultural complexity
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks the question whether or not the commonly accepted forms of leadership are even applicable in the international school context due to the complexities faced in these uniquely different schools
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idea of using <i>deviant cases</i> to further understanding of the unique cultural and structural contexts of international schools
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diverse but high expectations • competing priorities • conflicting value propositions • multicultural complexity • teacher comments on international schools posted to social media sites
Element Six: Capacities of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principals must be able to combine leadership practices and adapt them according to their own particular situation within the international school

Article Fifteen

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	David Gurr. (2015). A Model of Successful School Leadership from the International Successful School Principalship Project. <i>Societies</i> 2015, 5, 136–150; doi:10.3390/soc5010136
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	This article does not specifically discuss international schools; however, its focus is on effective leadership practices in multiple countries around the world, making it a relevant article for this thesis.
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	Not defined
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is “no single model of leadership satisfactorily captures what successful principals do. To take what possibly remain the two dominant views of educational leadership, for example, these principals are neither transformational nor instructional leaders, but show elements of both, with the use of both styles especially important for schools in challenging contexts” (Gurr, 138) •
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal must develop a leadership approach that is built on the strengths of his or her staff
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal must be able to learn the skillsets and needs of his or her staff in order to develop an approach to leadership that meets these requirements • Principal must be able to be flexible and open to distributed leadership within his or her role in order to develop and or encourage his or her staff
Element Six: Capacities of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal must have the ability to employ the “use of strategic problem solving, articulating a set of core ethical values, building trust and being visible in the school, building a safe and secure environment, introducing productive forms of instruction to staff, coalition building, and the promotion of equity, care and achievement” (Gurr, 138). • Build trust, respect • Engage in continuous learning • Exercise strategic problem-solving • Ability to engage in the following: “optimism, persistence, trust (behaving in a way that promotes the attribution of trust in the leader by others, and also displaying trust in others), tolerance, empathy, alertness (shown through high levels of physical and mental energy), curiosity, resilience,

	<p>benevolence, honesty, openness, respectful, and humbleness were some of the traits on display. They have a strong ethic of care, empathy for others, value individuality and display the transformational leadership quality of individual consideration, believe in freedom and democracy, are good at balancing individual versus collective care, and so forth. Above all they are driven by the desire to provide the best educational environment they can for all students. Even in the most challenging contexts, they view challenges as obstacles to overcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop capacity in others
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Article Sixteen

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	Nadine Dolby and Aliya Rahman. Research in International Education. Review of Educational Research. September 2008, Vol. 78, No. 3, pp. 676–726. DOI: 10.3102/0034654308320291
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No agreed upon definition among researchers • The term <i>international school</i> has become undefinable as there are so many definitions present
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even with the growing number of international schools there is still very little research in the field of international education
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of research to support leadership in international schools
Element Six: Capacities of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Article Seventeen

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	Tristan Bunnell (2018) Social Media Comment on Leaders in International Schools: The Causes of Negative Comments and the Implications for Leadership Practices, <i>Peabody Journal of Education</i> , 93:5, 551-564, DOI: 10.1080/0161956X.2018.1515815
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not attempt a definition – definition poses a conceptual hurdle (551) • Some schools claiming to be international are questionable (551) • “staggering growth” in this field (551)
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transient staff, leadership • Leadership is more complex in international schools (pg. 553) • Power is in favour of the school leadership – can create negative climate when position of power is abused / perceived to be abused (554) • “loose” relationships between stakeholders (554) • Relationship between principal and board is crucial (pg. 553) • Environment of insecurity (554)
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study in this field is lacking “It is well established that leadership in international schools is undertheorized (pg. 552)
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discusses dualities (based on Keller’s article) (pg. 553)
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions held by the staff of the leadership • Social media image can affect staffing efforts, enrollment • Vulnerability of staff – need principal to provide references, (length of time at a school, family, students enrolled at the school) (554) • Constant state of conflict • Relationships built with staff, students, board • Complex • Substantial tension” between leadership and staff (553) • Isolation – due to the independence of the school (not part of a collective) (pg. 559) • “a largely deregulated, unmonitored, and decentralized field of educational activity” (pg. 560) • a big discrepancy between the types of school leaders the board/owner wants and those that the teachers want (pg. 560)
Element Six:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supportive, respectful, works to satisfy school’s vision, encouraged collaboration among teachers, and worked with

Capacities of Leadership	staff to meet curriculum standards and to solve school or department problems (561) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distributed leadership• Transformational leadership• Sense of ownership of the school (pg. 561)
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Article Eighteen

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	McTaggart 2017 International schools' leadership – Trump this!
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not attempt to define
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Points out that there is an implicit ranking system amongst international schools (pg. 58) • Narrative trumps fact – leaders often base themselves on their narrative rather than qualifications and experience (pg. 59)
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders who “understand and are able to effectively respond to the fluidity of the market”
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The narrative created by the school leadership is what defines the leader and therefore the school
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School reputation, location, remuneration packages • Transient staff – lack of consistency • Constant change (pg. 59) • Little research on this area • School board members’ lack of knowledge in regard to education
Element Six: Capacities of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptable • Ability to understand and read the market

Article Nineteen

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	Hayden and Thompson. (2008). International schools: Growth and Influence. UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO Paris
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to define • Grouped into several categories • Caters to the elite of a society, expatriate families • Compete against other international schools if other schools are present in the market
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	Differ from national schools based on these four attributes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Curriculum 2. Students 3. Teachers and administrators 4. Management, leadership, and governance
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals are “expected to provide leadership” (pg. 65) • Set the course for the school • Plan and generate ideas
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not utilize a theoretical lens for leadership
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management and Leadership • Influence and independence of the School board • Quality Assurance • Cultural and linguistic differences • High rate of teacher turn-over • Short length of time principals remain in the position
Element Six: Capacities of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals are “expected to provide leadership” (Pg. 65) • Set the course for the school • Plan and generate ideas • Stimulate and inspire

Article Twenty

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	Bryant, D. A; Walker, A; and Lee, M. (2018). Successful leadership in International schools: Lessons from the Asia-Pacific. <i>Australian Educational Leader</i> , 40(1), 26-30.
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For this study, an international school utilizes the IB curriculum
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-ethnic populations • Using a curriculum outside that of the local region
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of peer-to-peer engagement for teachers rather than accountability measures • “de-privatisation” – a form of distributed leadership to allow the teachers to lead their learning and teaching methodology • Strategic allocation of resources
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the utilization of instructional leadership •
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse student body • Necessity to increase / maintain examination results (IB or others)
Element Six: Capacities of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Necessary to define a common language around learning within the school • Must be able to apply this language within the school • Promote cohesion around learning within the school • Collaborative • Engage in dialogue

Article Twenty-one

Author, Article, Source & Year of Publication	Fisher, A. G. 2011. The Influence of Governance Structure on International School Leadership
Element One: What is an <i>International School</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not specifically defined
Element Two: Unique Factors of the International School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent • Each school supports its own independent school board • international schools share much in common with businesses in the corporate world
Element Three: How the Article Frames “Effective” Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting distributed leadership as the leadership style of choice for international schools • leadership has a direct impact on student outcomes • it is not clear how leadership affects this topic •
Element Four: Theoretical Lens of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a <i>one size fits all</i> for international school boards
Element Five: Challenges to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interference from the board can have a negative effect on the school in a variety of levels (leadership, classroom, students, the board itself) • important to differentiate the roles of the principal and the roles of the school board members • Developing a positive working relationship with the school board
Element Six: Capacities of Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection between the relationship between good governance and school leadership and the importance of developing a positive relationship between the principal and school board • important to have corporate world (the school board) work hand-in-hand with education, even though the two are often opposed • Important to understand the effects of leadership so that they can be studied and implemented by principals • Promoting a sense of academic optimism at all levels within the school

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