Re-thinking ‘staff management’ in independent schools: An exploration of a human resource management approach

Susan Ann Roberts

(BA, GradDipSecStudies, DipEd, MHRM)

This dissertation is presented for the degree of Doctor of Education

Murdoch University

School of Education

August 2007
DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own work except where stated to the contrary and that it is not substantially the same as any other dissertation that has previously been submitted for a degree at any other university.

____________________________________

Susan Ann Roberts
Abstract

While the mission and ‘core business’ of schools has always been directed towards the education and pastoral support of the children, the staff who work to fulfil the mission and business have received less attention. With recent media reporting on anticipated teacher shortages, pedagogical issues and the quality of teaching the focus has shifted to the staff in schools. With evidence linking student achievements and academic outcomes to teacher impact, recruitment and retention have become significant issues, particularly in independent schools where parental expectations are high. Expertise in relation to human resource (HR) activities such as recruitment and retention, staff management and staff development, however, is not well developed in schools. This study therefore seeks to explore and understand staff management using a framework based on human resource management (HRM). It also examines the recent trend of appointing dedicated Human Resource (HR) practitioners to independent schools and the reasons behind these appointments.

A qualitative research approach was adopted in order to better understand the issues and reveal the complexity that surrounds them. In all, seven independent schools were purposely selected from urban Western Australia, and the principals, finance directors and HR practitioners from these schools were interviewed to gain their perspectives. The conceptual framework draws on the business-derived human resource management (HRM) and the HR activities within this domain. The analytical framework used was that of the ‘hard’/‘soft’ duality contained within HRM, which allowed tensions, such as that between ‘independent schools as businesses’ and independent schools as ‘communities with heart’, to be highlighted and examined.

The interviews revealed a broad understanding and knowledge by respondents of HR activities considered ‘necessary’ for the recruitment, and the day-to-day management of
staff, including remuneration, and to some extent, induction and performance management systems. Most revealing in these schools was the lack of structure and strategy in the implementation of the various HR activities and ways to work through the hard/soft duality. By way of contrast, the HR practitioners appointed to five of the independent schools had a broad based knowledge of all HR activities and were attempting to ‘educate’ those in schools about HRM and what the function, collectively applied, could do for them. They encountered entrenched attitudes and, in some schools, resistance caused by misunderstandings associated with both the role and function.

The thesis concludes with implications and recommendations for independent school leaders on the application of HRM in their schools. By re-thinking the paradigm of staff management in this way, and through the adoption of a systematic and holistic approach using the suite of HR activities, both hard and soft, the research points to the potential for improvements in the quality of teaching staff recruited and retained, and ultimately also in student outcomes.
Acknowledgements

Through my research journey of almost five years, I have had support and encouragement from a number of people. At the beginning of my journey were two supervisors: the warm and insightful Dr Lucy Jarzabkowski and the big picture thinker, Dr Judy MacCallum. When Lucy pursued a different career path and resigned as supervisor, I invited methodological expert Dr Peter Wright to continue the journey with me. While there have been many pauses and work distractions along the way, these three have ‘hung on’ and ‘hung in’ to guide my ideas and shape my writing.

To Associate Professor Helen Wildy who gave me my first experience in research, and my understandings about leadership, thank you. To Coral Pepper, my colleague, who became my friend I express my deepest gratitude for the many coffees and opportunities to share and compare. With both of these women I continue to travel, both metaphorically and literally, internationally to present papers at conferences. At various times during my journey I have also had the pleasure of chewing over ideas and concepts with Kathleen Baldwin, Dr Kathryn Choules, Michael Snadden and Dr Madeline Burgess. While we no longer share an office or even a University, my memories of our conversations remain. To Angelina Chilino in ERAP and Julia Hobson who inspired with her helpful and grounded post graduate presentations, thank you.

And, finally to my family …. my husband, Erwin who has a demanding job but nevertheless took over some domestics; to my son Michael and my daughter Anna, I apologise for being there in body, but often not in spirit. Thank you for your understanding and support, especially during these past months. This experience really has been a life changing journey!
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>IX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>IX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL CATALYSTS FOR UNDERTAKING THIS STUDY</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDENTIFYING A FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOPE OF THE STUDY</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL STAFF MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF CHANGE</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANGE IN SCHOOLS – THE IMPACTS</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On principals</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On heads of department</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On teachers</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts summarised</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESPONSES BY SCHOOL LEADERS TO THE IMPACTS OF CHANGE</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS AS ORGANISATIONS - AS BUSINESS</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AS A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE APPLICATION OF A SOFT APPROACH TO THE MANAGEMENT OF STAFF</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUMAN RESOURCE ACTIVITIES, HARD, SOFTENED AND ‘CONTEXTUALISED’</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRE-HIRE</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR planning</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job analysis and design</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job descriptions</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and selection</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POST-HIRE</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal framework</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching and mentoring</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance management</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and development</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational development</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succession planning</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy and conflict management</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling and pastoral care of staff</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEPARTURE</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit interviews</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE RESEARCH DESIGN</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRAMEWORKS FOR RESEARCH DESIGN AND ANALYSIS</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual framework</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive framework</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4

STAFF MANAGEMENT IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS – AN EXAMINATION

INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................................. 78

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS AS ‘HUMAN BUSINESSES’ ............................................. 78

Summary...................................................................................................................... 82

IMPACTS OF CHANGE ON PRINCIPALS, HEADS OF DEPARTMENT AND TEACHERS ... 84

STAFF MANAGEMENT RESPONSES ......................................................................... 86

HR activities ................................................................................................................. 87

PRE-HIRE ...................................................................................................................... 89

HR planning .................................................................................................................. 89

Job analysis and design .............................................................................................. 90

Job descriptions .......................................................................................................... 91

Recruitment and selection .......................................................................................... 92

Summary ....................................................................................................................... 94

POST-HIRE ................................................................................................................... 94

Remuneration .............................................................................................................. 94

Induction ....................................................................................................................... 98

Legal framework ......................................................................................................... 100

Coaching and mentoring ............................................................................................ 102

Performance management ......................................................................................... 104

Training and development ......................................................................................... 109

Organisational development ...................................................................................... 112

Succession planning .................................................................................................... 114

Staff advocacy and conflict resolution ....................................................................... 117

Counselling and pastoral care of staff ...................................................................... 119

Summary....................................................................................................................... 124

DEPARTURE ................................................................................................................. 125

Exit interviews ............................................................................................................ 125

The people performing HR activities ......................................................................... 125

CONCLUSION.............................................................................................................. 127

CHAPTER 5

HR PRACTITIONERS IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS: AN EMERGING TREND OR TOOL?

INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................... 130

PERSPECTIVES OF SCHOOL LEADERS ..................................................................... 130

Catalysts for the appointment of Human Resource Practitioners in independent schools ... 130

Inefficient processes and poor documentation ............................................................. 131

Desire to recruit ‘quality’ staff ..................................................................................... 131

Policy development and legal compliance .................................................................. 133

Undeveloped HR activities .......................................................................................... 133

Desired outcomes of the HR appointment .................................................................. 134

Attributes and competencies of the HR practitioner .................................................. 136

Attributes and competencies of the middle manager in ‘traditional’ structured independent schools ......................................................................................................................... 138

Summary....................................................................................................................... 139

WHY THE MAJORITY OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS ARE MAINTAINING TRADITIONAL STRUCTURES .... 141

PERSPECTIVES OF THE HR PRACTITIONERS ......................................................... 142

The HR practitioner’s welcome to independent schools ............................................. 142

The HR practitioner’s role ............................................................................................ 145

Attributes and competencies of the HR practitioner .................................................. 150

Challenges and constraints ........................................................................................ 150

CONCLUSION.............................................................................................................. 154
List of Figures

Page

Figure 1........................................................................................................3

Figure 2........................................................................................................13

Figure 3........................................................................................................13

Figure 4........................................................................................................41

Figure 5........................................................................................................66

Figure 6.......................................................................................................140

List of Tables

Table 1......................................................................................................... 61

Table 2......................................................................................................... 77

Table 3......................................................................................................... 88

Table 4.......................................................................................................128
Chapter 1
Introduction

A survey at a Sydney independent school, which 81% of teachers responded to found only 35% felt they were treated with respect and dignity, 13% believed they had “effective leadership from the Council and Headmaster”, 11.7% felt the Council and Headmaster were concerned for their welfare and 41% were dissatisfied with the job. Just 6% reported high or very high morale, contrasting with 75% who reported low or very low morale.

Another 84% said their morale had declined in the past year. One in three teachers believe they do not have a future at the school; 48% are unsure and just 19% are sure about their future. Despite the poor morale 92% said they mostly or always put in extra effort. It found 79% reported high to very high work stress, mainly due to poor leadership, organisational change, work intensification and job insecurity, (Sydney Morning Herald, 16 October, 2006)

Background and context
Step into any number of schools and you might find the sort of disaffection among staff that the above newspaper article illustrates. Reports like this one, and a number of other catalysts, provided me with the impetus to examine staff management in independent schools and critically consider the potential of human resource management (HRM) practice to address staff issues such as those outlined.

The context of this study is the relentless change and work intensification occurring within schools. As the newspaper article illustrates, the effects on teachers include increased stress, reduced job satisfaction and lowered morale, leading upward of 39% of newly trained teachers to leave the profession after five years (Ingersoll, 2002). Over several years many leadership frameworks have been developed to address these kinds of issues. Yet these issues still arise in schools across the three school sectors in
Australia; government, catholic, and independent. This situation led to such questions as “have [we] now reached the limit of the usefulness of traditional management structures in schools?” and should we be considering “the development of new systems and structures to handle the ever increasing workloads that staff in schools are facing?” (Knight and Trowler, 2000, p. 211)

‘Traditional management structures’, as the following diagram (Figure 1) illustrates, involve a school principal having overall responsibility for leading academic staff; heads of schools, house and departments having line-management responsibility over teaching staff, and finance directors, bursars or administrators holding management responsibilities over non-teaching staff. On the other hand, an emerging ‘non-traditional’ addition to the organisation structures of independent schools in Australia is a trend of appointing Human Resource Practitioners (HR practitioners). Why are such appointments being made? Are they a ‘tool’ chosen by school leaders to address the increasing demands and workloads faced by themselves and their staff? Or are these appointments being made for other reasons? These questions provided a further impetus to the conducting of this study.
Personal catalysts for undertaking this study

While teaching in the independent school sector several years ago, I was party to situations between line managers and staff that had resulted in similar outcomes to those outlined in the Sydney Morning Herald article presented on page one. Discussion with two other teachers, Jenna and Annie, who also worked in the sector and had experienced similar issues, was another factor. A further catalyst was my studies at Master’s level in human resource management (HRM). These studies provided me with a new perspective about how staff in schools could be managed. They also provided a reference point upon which to reflect; they helped me to make some sense out of what I had observed and they provided a structure and terminology to describe my experiences and observations (Patton 2002).

Jenna and Annie had worked in two different independent schools as I was completing my HRM degree. Because of my similar experience in schools in this sector I could identify and empathise with their stories. These stories piqued my curiosity and helped
focus my study. Together, we had several meetings and the outcomes of these are described here in narrative form. Jenna’s story is retold first.

Jenna had commenced her role as a 0.6 full time equivalent Information Technology teacher in a high-fee Kindergarten to Year 12 (K-12) independent school six weeks into first term. She says:

When I was offered the position, maybe the principal expected that I would just slip right into the classroom and school culture with confidence because of my age and extensive experience in both teaching and information technology. However, starting so late into the term I missed the new staff orientation and the principal did not bother to formally welcome, or introduce me into the school. A colleague showed me around the school and as we bumped into people, she introduced me. That was the extent of my induction! I soon found out that my predecessor Mia, who had left to take on another role, had been loved by the students. This became apparent when they starting telling me how Mia had done things and complained about the way I did them. To feel more involved in the school I began attending departmental meetings but felt a bit out of it because IT’s head of department was, quite inappropriately I thought, primarily the head of art and this area tended to dominate discussion.

Only a few weeks into second term I began feeling isolated and unsettled, which was exacerbated by the location of the office, shared with my two colleagues, on the far side of the school. My colleagues were really nice people but Prem was rarely in the office because he was pursuing a range of other activities, and Sal was juggling teaching commitments with the sad reality of her marriage break down. It became obvious that Sal needed far greater emotional support from me, than she was able to reciprocate. Also, the Director in charge of staff was also in charge of services and she was so overloaded in the ‘services’ side of her portfolio during this time, when large building projects were under way, that she had little time to spend on staffing issues or to notice who was unhappy. Other teaching colleagues, who worked full-time, were well acculturated into the school and social groups and, finally there was nothing to indicate that either the Chaplain

---

1 The narrative form was employed here because it enables a reader to ‘live’ someone’s story and ‘see’ their experience in a social context. The writing of narratives is based on the notion that “humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. The study of narrative, therefore, is a “study of the ways that humans experience the world” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, p. 2). Herrenstein-Smith (1981) argued that narrative is something that is embedded in human action; it is a series of verbal, symbolic, or behavioural acts sequenced for the purpose of “telling someone else that something happened” (p.228).
or Counsellor were available to assist me, because I knew that their priorities lay with the students. With the situation unchanged in Terms 3 and 4, my feelings about the job continued to decline and at the end of the year I resigned.

Subsequent discussions with Jenna exposed a number of factors that, we agreed, caused her low morale and dissatisfaction to the point of resigning. Primarily, Jenna was given no induction and no staff manual to tell her how things were done in the school, and her introduction into the school was low key. Also, with no head of department in her area she did not feel supported and, during the times she did see her colleagues, she tended to discuss students and teaching relating matters, rather than how she felt. If she had known that the chaplain and counsellor were available to her, she would perhaps have visited them and felt like someone cared, but again she didn’t know whom to ask.

Finally, she did not know anyone well enough to seek mentorship, and it was apparent that no such programme existed in the school. Following, is Annie’s story.

Annie, a qualified teacher, also held HRM qualifications. In a change of career direction, she commenced her role as assistant to two deputy principals in an independent school, but resigned after just nine weeks. We met several times to talk about her experiences and their implications. Annie says:

Upon the completion of my Masters degree I found work as assistant to the two deputy principals. I commenced early in the year and received an appropriately devised orientation into the school. One of my initial tasks was to review the induction handbook, and to revise the large staff handbook with a view to placing it on the school intranet. Another significant part of my role comprised arranging for teacher reliefs as well as a ‘catch all’ of a number of other tasks. When the teaching staff returned to commence the New Year, I met and shared with them my experience and qualifications in both education and HRM. I was surprised to find that soon after this a number of staff began stopping me in corridors and visiting my office to share with me their ‘unhappy’ anecdotes.

In tying together the pieces of the jigsaw it became evident that this discontent stemmed from the small executive team that comprised the principal and two deputies. While the staff were attempting to address and adapt to pedagogical change and to collaborate, they found the Executive authoritarian and unsupportive of their efforts – “they listen
but don’t hear”. The unhappiness in the school was palpable and endemic, which surprised me, but it also added a whole new dimension to what I saw as my role in the school. Despite my role being entitled ‘assistant’, it incorporated tasks that were traditionally undertaken by management, with one example being the organisation of relief teachers from an office that was, (as with Jenna) located several classroom blocks from the staff room. This necessitated much running, literally, to and from within tight deadlines. This role subsumed many of the other tasks outlined in my lengthy job description and was based on a system of using teachers already on staff to save costs, before calling in others from outside the school. During my job interview this significant area of what in most schools is a managerial responsibility, was barely discussed. Nor was it remunerated accordingly. Within days of the school term commencing I found my job design unworkable. Feeling increasingly under pressure, I suggested the introduction of processes that may well have enhanced the well-being of staff and improved the structure of my own role. However, these were rejected outright by the deputy principals and, with the realisation that the situation was unlikely to improve for me or the teachers, I resigned.

A number of issues are evident in this narrative that are different from Jenna’s situation. Unlike Jenna, Annie had received both an introduction and orientation into the school. Within the school there was also a deputy principal, pastoral care and a voluminous staff handbook which indicated the availability of the deputy to assist staff if needed. However, anecdotally Annie had been told by teachers that when they had sought the assistance of the deputy their concerns had been listened to but no action was taken. In frustration, these teachers had then turned to an over-stretched school counsellor who was often busy catering to student problems. It was during Annie’s brief tenure that staff then turned to her because they saw her as understanding and empathetic.

Annie’s and my studies in HRM undoubtedly helped us to reflect and analyse the implications of these experiences. In Annie’s school, as in Jenna’s, we believed that the problems derived from school leaders not having the benefits of the training that we had received that piqued our awareness about staffing issues, nor the specific skills to address them. If they had, we believed they would have been more likely to view the staff management aspect of their role from a broader perspective. This would perhaps
have seen them develop processes that acknowledged individuals, monitored their ‘issues’ and put in place actions to overcome them. The outcome may have been a more efficient and effective delivery of human resource services, and perhaps more satisfied staff.

Some of the HR activities that we thought could be implemented into schools include: workable and realistic job designs derived from comprehensive job analyses; information systems that record relevant details and enable appropriate responses to people’s concerns and issues, and the adoption of recruitment processes that identify people who are likely to ‘fit’ within an identified school culture. Other activities that have the capacity to enhance the sense of belonging by staff are formal inductions, professional development, and the allocation of appropriate rewards and recognition to deserving staff (DeCieri et al. 2005). Collectively applied, we thought that these activities would have the potential to improve how staff felt about themselves and also the attitudes they held about their schools.

It is these stories and experiences that provided the motivation for this study. In order to address the issues contained within I explored the literature on leadership and teacher satisfaction, which is outlined in Chapter 2. In seeking to address my questions about how staff management was conducted in independent schools, little literature was found, other than about isolated HR activities. Similarly, in relation to the appointment of HR practitioners to independent schools, no literature was located. It is, therefore, these topics that are examined and analysed in this study and are described in Chapters 4 and 5. The human resource management framework was used to analyse both issues and the following section outlines the rationale for this choice.
Identifying a framework

HRM is defined by Stone (2005, p. 4) as a process of “managing people within the employer-employee relationship … specifically [to] involve the productive utilisation of people in achieving the organisation’s strategic business objectives, and the satisfaction of individual employee needs”. This definition highlights the dualistic nature of HRM referred to in the literature, for example by Legge (1995) and Truss (1997) as the hard aspect (the productive utilisation of people) and the soft aspect (satisfying employee needs) which are described in detail in Chapter 2.

HRM was selected as the conceptual framework for this study for two reasons. First, it reflects my values and ideology. Second, although HRM derives from business, I argue that HRM as a framework for managing people is appropriate to examine staff management in schools because contemporary schools have a number of similarities with business. As such, it provides a useful frame of reference for examining HR activities, analysing them and enabling the drawing of conclusions (Usher & Edwards, 1994).

Despite the pervasive nature of HRM as both a practice and discipline in business, government, industry and commercial organisations it has been found, up until recently, to be virtually a non sequitur in school systems. One reason for this, suggested by Middlewood and Lumby (1998, p. 5), is that in education “concepts of professionalism, professional autonomy and collegial approaches to decision making militate against the perception of teachers as a resource to be managed, manipulated or directed in pursuit of school objectives”.

Legitimately then, the question has been raised about the relevance of a business related staff management framework to independent schools. It is argued, however, that the contextual location of this study, the independent school sector in Australia, is
increasingly being regarded as a ‘business’. This is because many independent schools now turn over in excess of $AU10 million annually and their operational departments are similarly devoted to finance, marketing, IT, training and development, property and maintenance and, in just a few, human resources. This view is supported by Bush (1995) and Handy (1984) who argued that schools have much in common with other organisations, principally in the areas of finance, human resources and relationships with ‘clients’ in the wider community.

Australian independent schools are non-government, not-for-profit institutions founded by religious or other groups in the community and are registered with the relevant State or Territory education authority. Many of them provide a religious or values based education, while others promote a particular education philosophy or interpretation of mainstream education. They are independently governed by a school council or board, and most operate with hierarchical organisational structures like many businesses (see Figure 1). In order to maintain or increase their share of the K-12 school market, independent schools have also become market driven, entrepreneurial, flexible and strategic (O'Faircheallaigh, 1999).

In another similarity with business, an independent school demonstrates its focus on relationships with the external environment by setting up systems that facilitate the achievement of objectives, involving staff in decision making and providing service to stakeholders (O'Faircheallaigh, 1999; Valle, 1999). These factors support the choice of independent schools as a relevant context in which to conduct a study using a ‘business’ derived framework. Nevertheless, as part of the research, independent school leaders were asked how they viewed their schools. Their responses are addressed in Chapter 4.
Significance of the research

Significant changes, driven by the precepts of economic rationalism and the New Public Sector (NPS) movement, have occurred in schools over the past two decades represented by the terms ‘school improvement’ and ‘school restructuring’ (Murphy, 1993). One outcome of this movement has been the increase in expectations by the tripartite of government, parents and the community, of school leaders and teachers in terms of improved student and school outcomes. In line with the increased expectations there has also been an increase in the accountability requirements of professional staff in schools.

Two examples of the changes that have occurred in schools include rapid advancements in technology, and devolution in responsibilities and decision-making from leaders to middle managers and teachers. Competition for students and resources has increased, generating a more competitive environment. In addition, educational settings have become more complex due to increased language and cultural diversity in student populations, the integration of children with disabilities into mainstream schooling, national standardised testing, detailed student reporting requirements and the increased demands on schools to fulfil functions such as welfare and counselling, and a range of other services previously undertaken by parents (Australian Education Union, 2003).

Caldwell and Spinks (1998) concurred “that schools as workplaces have been transformed in every dimension, including the scheduling of time for learning and approaches to HRM, rendering obsolete most approaches that derive from an industrial age” (p. 13). In response to the magnitude of change and the intensification of workloads, the morale of teachers has lowered Australia wide, the processes in place to manage and support them are sometimes inconsistent and contradictory and it has been observed that current practices are not functioning well (Black, 2001). This has had a
compounding effect. Black (2001, p. 1), for example, found that “when teacher morale sinks, achievement drops and other problems come to the surface. More importantly, teachers with unhealthy attitudes often are a symptom of an unhealthy school organisation”.

Dinham and Scott (1998) also called for schools to rethink leadership and administrative roles and structures, many of which have been in place for decades. However, despite such findings the Independent Education Union (2003, p. 2) concluded that “the actual resources available [to support staff] have diminished”, and anecdotal evidence suggests that the majority of independent schools are still relying on traditional staff management structures. According to Gorey (2003) the reason for conservatism is their ‘reluctance’ to consider different structures that might more effectively address the demands on staff in schools such as the appointment of a dedicated HR practitioner. However, the importance of this issue cannot be underestimated, as illustrated below:

The management of human resources is as important in an educational organisation, staffed by professionals who may be protective of their autonomy, as it is in a business setting. In many societies educational organisations are coping with the effects of globalisation, experiencing forms of new public management and learning to manage multiple change. These pressures are affecting the nature of professional work and highlight questions about how professionals should be managed (Graduate School of Education, Bristol University, 2007)

In a school sector that is autonomous and independent, and in which few studies have been found on areas such as staff management, HRM and the new trend of appointing HR practitioners to independent schools, this research can be seen to break new ground. In order to understand how staff management functions in a sector that is autonomous and discrete during a period of rapid change, and the reasons for appointing HR practitioners to a few schools as an example of these practices, this study therefore seeks to answer two research questions:
How is the staff management function understood and enacted in independent schools?
How is the role of the human resource practitioner perceived and understood in the independent school sector?

Scope of the study
To explore how staff management is understood and enacted in independent schools the literature on leadership frameworks, which derived primarily from the state school sector, was considered. In state government and catholic schools, school principals hold a combined leadership and staff management role which has increased in complexity since the school improvement movement (Hopkins, 2001). Next, the impacts of change on all levels of staff in schools were explored in the literature. Many leadership styles and frameworks were found that facilitated the change process on behalf of staff, and attempted to address the impacts, but none pertained to the independent school sector (see Chapter 2). Nor was there evidence in the literature of a coherent staff management framework to address the staffing issues that arise from change and work intensification. This study therefore seeks to address these issues in independent schools and contribute to knowledge about this important area.

In respect to the second research question, the rationale for appointing dedicated HR practitioners to some independent schools in this era of increasing “corporatisation of schools and commodification of education” (Payne, 2004, p. 13) is explored. Suggestions are also made for why the majority of independent schools continue to share this responsibility between a range of administrators and senior teachers (Butler, 2000). Furthermore, the attributes and characteristics of the HR practitioner and their entrée into the independent school sector are examined. Finally, I propose a new way of thinking about and implementing staff management activities within this sector using a mix of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ processes, and emphasise the significance of the HRM function.
The following diagram drawn from ‘business’ literature signifies the influence of leadership on the development of people management processes via policies and procedures and the provision of resources. It purports that these processes ‘enable’ staff and client satisfaction, which affect society and derive (implied) positive business results.

Figure 2: Performance categories deemed critical to excellence in organisational performance (business). (European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), 1993, p.2).

Similarly, in independent schools it is argued that school leaders influence the people management processes and policies put in place that enable staff and parent (the paying clients) satisfaction. These have the potential to affect students in a positive way, which enhances the potential to improve both student and school outcomes.

Figure 3: Performance categories deemed critical to excellence in school performance. (adapted from European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), 1993, p.2).

To undertake this investigation data were collected from seven selected independent schools through interview, and the transcripts were interpreted within a constructivist-hermeneutic theoretical framework. This framework, explained in Chapter 3, was
chosen because it enabled me to identify themes derived from the data, to interpret and report on the perceptions, explanations, beliefs and worldviews (Patton, 2002) of the school leaders and HR practitioners and to ‘construct’ their perspectives in regard to the staff management activities performed in their schools.

The interview was the method used for collecting data because it allowed me to ‘capture’ the views of the primary decision makers in the seven participant independent schools, whose roles also contained a staff management function. It was these same school leaders who had made the decisions in five of the participant schools to appoint HR practitioners. The HR practitioners were also interviewed to examine their introduction into this sector and, to explore their reasons for retaining traditional school structures, school leaders from two other independent schools were interviewed.

**Overview of the thesis**

Chapter 2, *School staff management in the context of change*, locates the research in a historical context and provides some common ground for subsequent chapters. It describes the impacts on all levels of staff in schools of significant change and explores ways in which leadership is being transformed to adjust to the increasing demands and expectations made upon them, and their staff. Also defined in this chapter are the HRM conceptual framework and the HR activities within the HRM domain.

Chapter 3, *The research design*, describes the methodology and conceptual and interpretive frameworks utilised during the research phases of data collection and analysis. Collectively, these facilitated my acquisition, interpretation and understanding of the respondents’ views about these important issues.

Chapter 4, *Staff management in independent schools – an examination*, describes the organisational attributes of the seven participant independent schools. It also explores
the staff management activities performed in each of the participant schools from the perspectives of the school leaders interviewed.

Chapter 5, *HR practitioners in independent schools: An emerging trend or tool?* outlines the reasons behind the appointment of HR practitioners to independent schools and how they have been introduced and adjusted to working in this sector. The perspectives of both school leaders and HR practitioners are considered in respect to these topics.

Chapter 6, *Implications and conclusion* describes the implications for school leaders of re-thinking their traditional staff management approaches towards the ‘soft’ aspects of HRM. It also provides suggestions in light of the research about the appointment of an HR practitioner and their early months in the role.

**Conclusion**

This chapter described the background and context to this study and the reasons for this undertaking. I was concerned that traditional management practices and structures are being retained in independent schools despite the frequency with which change continues to ‘knock’ at their sometimes ancient doors. Perhaps it is the history and tradition upon which old school values are based that limit exploration of new ways of handling old issues, such as those that relate to staff. This reluctance to consider new structures has the potential to engender low morale, dissatisfaction and stress among teachers who are leaving the profession prematurely. It is also perhaps hindering bright, enthusiastic and effective teachers from entering it. This has special significance in the independent school sector where substantial school fees are charged and parental expectations are high.
In the following chapter, the historical issues and tensions on staff in schools across sectors are explored, as is the HRM framework and the HR activities that fall within this domain. Alternative leadership frameworks and models that have been developed are described, together with the impacts that their ‘failure’ has created.
Chapter 2
School staff management in the context of change

Introduction
This review examines the literature relevant to the study context and research questions. First, the effects on varying levels of staff of relentless change are examined. Second, the support structures and staff management activities in place to potentially address these are outlined. Third, the extent to which schools and business ‘intersect’ from an operational and management perspective is explored. Fourth, HRM, which provides both the theoretical underpinnings of my research and the conceptual framework is explored through the literature. Finally, the analytical framework is explained, with emphasis on the hard/soft dichotomy of HRM practice.

To reiterate the context for this review, the processes of school reform and change have generated a large number of sometimes conflicting studies about leadership and staff management in schools, and the evolving nature of both the leader and the led. While many of the principles expounded about these issues in the literature are similar, and school leadership frameworks continue to be developed, there are still leaders in schools who are battling to address the ever increasing demands made upon them. This dilemma led me to ask whether policy makers should be re-thinking the existing staff management paradigms in place and implementing an HRM framework to facilitate the management of their staff.

To examine these topics the relevant literature has been addressed in the following order:
• The impacts of significant change on three levels of professional staff in schools: principals, teachers, and heads of department;
• The responses by school leaders to these effects;
• Independent schools as organisations – independent schools as business;
• HRM as a conceptual framework which incorporates a description of the HRM activities practiced in business; and
• An explanation of the hard/soft dichotomy of HRM practice and its use as the analytical framework for the data collected.

**Change in schools – the impacts**

Schools in Australia have not generally been regarded as ‘businesses’, yet, since around 1983 they have been forced through globalisation, and political and economic rationalism to adopt a managerial focus. ‘Managerialism’ is denoted by strategic application, greater accountability and transparency, staff performance and financial audits, improved service quality, and involvement by staff in decision making. Managerialism is market and target driven and, through adoption of the principles outlined, it facilitates improvement to the operating efficiencies and effectiveness of organisations, enabling them to remain competitive in global markets (Hood, 1991).

For schools to remain competitive they also needed to restructure in ways that minimised bureaucracy and maximised flexibility, and to undergo constant change and learning (Peters & Waterman, 1982). During the past two decades staff roles were thus re-configured, and curricula, pedagogy and information and communication technologies (ICTs) were re-structured at a time when greater demands were also being articulated by parents, communities and state governments on the staff in schools (O’Faircheallaigh et al. 1999). Within the state (government) school sector these characteristics translated to devolution from bureaucratic central office control to the
exercise of leadership and advice from a number of district offices, and principals employed ‘bursars’ to assist them to formalise budgets and equitably allocate resources. Such shifts also satisfied the elevated accountability requirements implicit in managerialism, and were accompanied by an increase in collaboration and sharing between staff in schools. Attempts were made by principals to adapt their management styles and systems to moderate the changes. However, Elmore (1993) and Murphy (1994) point out that the different approaches met with varying success. These are outlined in the next section.

**On principals**

The ‘push’ to managerialism affected principals in a number of ways. In responding to the imperatives outlined by Hood (1991) principals were expected to ‘know’ and respond to a number of new concepts and ideas associated with leading and managing their staff. These included how to develop key performance indicators (KPIs) and use them as the basis of staff appraisals, and strategic plans that might facilitate improved school outcomes. They were expected now to think like ‘corporate’ leaders in the allocation and management of resources, and to behave like ‘marketers’ on behalf of their schools to encourage parents to remain within them. Yet, with the strong focus on school leaders to ‘drive’ the multitude of changes imposed, it was observed by Evers and Lakomski that insufficient attention was paid to “the frailties of human knowledge”. Much was expected of school principals, but scarce support and training were provided to them by the education authorities and governments who had initiated the changes (1996, p. 11).

While it is acknowledged that, as a product of the reform process, school leaders inherited greater autonomy and power, in order to meet the expanded accountability requirements their roles also incurred increased workloads, responsibilities and
pressures (Dunlap & Goldman, 1991; Grace, 1995; Hooper & Potter, 1997; Pounder & Merrill, 2001; Reay & Ball, 2000; Whan & Thomas, 1996). The specifically staff-related issues add to this complexity and pressure. Such issues include providing support for effective learning and teaching, staff supervision and mentoring, managing conflicts, team building, influencing and inspiring others, motivating, evaluating performance and providing pastoral care (Australian Principals Centre, 2003). In addition, Wildy and Louden (2000) found a number of dilemmas in the role of principal, which intensified the demands of the role. These include efforts to balance professional autonomy with management control, individuality with hierarchy, and structural authority with participative decision making.

These tensions, as well as the dual roles of supervising teaching staff and undertaking the myriad of management tasks assigned to them led to an underlying concern that the role of principal has become essentially unfeasible (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998). The role is also risky, as noted by Brown and Harvey (2005, p. 45) who observed that “when change occurs too rapidly the capacity of employees to react is strained, creating the danger of future shock”. The implications of these increased demands are two fold. One, school leaders and other people managers have had to become a great deal more knowledgable, adaptable and flexible than previously. Two, there has been a decline in the number of quality applicants to the role of principal and difficulties associated with retaining them. Pounder and Young (1996, p. 289), for example, asserted that the “retention, recruitment and selection of effective school leaders represent some of the more challenging HR functions today”. Similar pressures have been applied at the next

---

2 Future shock refers to the adaptive reaction of people to rapid changes in society, often resulting in distress (Tofler, 1970).
layer of staff management, the heads of department. These are outlined in the section following.

**On heads of department**
The middle managers in schools, known generically as heads of department, hold line-management responsibility for the staff in their departments. They perform a number of other duties and responsibilities in a role that is considered important, complex and demanding. At various times they experience role conflict, ambiguity and role overload, resulting in some cases in high stress levels (Aubrey-Hopkins & James, 2002; Earley & Fletcher-Campbell, 1989; Turner & Bolam, 1998). Dinham and Scott (1999) too found that many heads of department regard their responsibilities as onerous and at times contradictory as they try to reconcile their own teaching with their various other roles. Some of these other roles include staff development, curriculum leadership, pupil discipline and welfare, school administration, their own professional development, and juggling the formality of being staff supervisor and coach with “the key role of initiating and responding to change in all areas” (Deece, 2003, p. 49).

In another study, Brown and Rutherford (1998) found five obstacles to the effective functioning of the role of head of department. These included: lack of time; lack of curriculum stability; too few training opportunities at the level required; lack of direction and vision from school leaders and often a lack of effective communication between themselves and school leaders. As with school principals then, the role of heads of department has become similarly complex and demanding. Teachers are affected as well, which is outlined in the next section.

**On teachers**
Teachers in schools work at the ‘chalk face’ and, as such, the expectation is that they will enact and implement the mission and focus of schools, which are outlined in The
Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century (1999) (see Appendix B). Teachers are also expected to enable their students to become powerful and competent learners and citizens (Hopkins, 2001).

In addition to these responsibilities, teachers experience the added workloads associated with change, including more detailed reporting requirements, increased diversity in the student body and the expansion of their roles into areas that were formerly undertaken by parents and the community (AEU, 2003). Increased diversity in students is characterised by the variety of countries, cultures and family backgrounds, and those with disabilities which range from the mild to severe. Also during this ‘phase’ of change national standardised testing was introduced, which increased the level of accountability requirements for student achievements and helped determine the allocation of funding to independent school by the federal Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) (AEU, 2003).

However, despite the increased responsibilities, Dinham and Scott (2000) found that funding and resources to schools have been reduced and lower levels of support are being provided to teachers by ineffective principals. Ineffective school principals were described in a study initiated by the Quality Learning and Teaching Environments Initiative (2005) as having the following characteristics. They control rather than lead; decisions are top-down and without ‘team’ input; they possess inadequate social skills and lack warmth or concern for the teachers; they are not primarily focused on the education of children, but rather on administration trivia, and they are not ‘available’, that is, communication happens rarely and only through email.

According to Hargreaves (1994, p. 83), as a result of the demands being made upon them over a sustained period, teachers are suffering “occupational flexibility and technological complexity… doubt and insecurity … moral and scientific uncertainty …
and organisational fluidity”. This has raised their levels of stress and dissatisfaction, not helped by the community’s apparently poor opinion of them and their ‘easy working conditions’ as portrayed by the media. Combined, these factors have made teaching a less attractive career for both practising and prospective teachers (Senate Employment, Education & Training References Committee, 1998) who are now ‘voting with their feet’. A recent survey by the AEU (2006) revealed that more than half of new teachers plan to leave the profession within five years because of heavy workloads, class sizes, poor pay and badly behaved students. Around 80% of the teachers surveyed added that they were not adequately trained to deal with parents or colleagues, and nearly 39% said they had received no instruction or experience in classroom behaviour management (Hiatt, 2007).

Notwithstanding the political agenda that existed during this period, education ‘decision makers’ had started out with good intentions. Their initial objective was to ‘empower’ all school stakeholders through greater role ownership and a distribution of decision-making among more staff. This enhanced leadership opportunities and increased involvement with parents and the community (Dinham & Scott, 2000). It also facilitated self growth, mastery of professional skills and built collegiality among staff in many schools (Dinham & Scott, 2000). The anticipated outcomes among staff were higher ‘quality’ professionalism, acceptance and implementation of decisions by school staff because they were involved in them, strengthened staff morale and ultimately, improved school effectiveness and student achievement (Brost, 2000). While such improvement has occurred in some pockets, clearly the pace and breadth of change have been maintained, with negative impacts on professional staff continuing. These impacts are summarised in the following section.
**Impacts summarised**

In this section the outcomes of sustained change on the three levels of staff in schools, previously identified, are summarised. Such outcomes include disempowerment, stress, physical and emotional impairment, reduced self esteem, anxiety, frustration and even burn-out in staff at all levels. Collectively, and in isolation, these outcomes have reduced job satisfaction, and increased absenteeism and staff turnover in some schools (Hastings & Bham, 2003; Shann, 1998), although, distinction is made here between state schools and independent schools. These outcomes are derived primarily from research undertaken in government schools. However, according to Liu and Meyer the staff in independent schools are affected differently because “private schools do not institute the same culture in school administration and they affect teacher morale and career commitment differently” (2005, p. 987).

Regardless of the school context, such outcomes have led authors such as Dinham and Scott (1998) and Knight and Trowler (2000) to assert that more thought to leadership and administrative roles in schools is needed, towards those that improve the balance between people and performance, and that enable all staff to cope with the environmental pressures and management imperatives derived from unremitting change. In the next section, the responses by school leaders to the pressures and demands on their staff are outlined. Note that the literature primarily derives from studies conducted in government schools. Few studies have been found on this topic in the independent schools context.

**Responses by school leaders to the impacts of change**

Mortimore (1999) found that leadership is a key element in determining school success (see Figure 3). For this reason, there is a focus on the perspectives and attitudes of school leaders in this study - they have a significant influence over the direction and
functioning of their schools; they control many of the contingencies in the work environment and they are the source of much reinforcement for teachers (Blase and Kirby, 1992).

Effective leadership was identified by Caldwell and Spinks (1992, 1998) in terms of ‘new professionalism’; Evers and Lakomski (1996) argued for leaders as being resilient and Mulford and Johns (2004) suggested that it is underpinned by the beliefs and core values of the principal. They also stated that successful leaders are supportive, balancing three types known as “one-off or crisis support, support for individuals as they undergo change processes, and ongoing support in the form of acknowledging others” (2004, p. 57). Furthermore, successful leaders engage in capacity building of staff through good communication and they carefully manage processes of change. They also promote cultures of collaboration, collegiality, support and trust. Mulford and Johns concluded that, “such actions result in staff feeling valued and cared for” (2004, p. 58) and, according to Blase and Kirby (1992) teacher morale is higher in schools where principals create positive school cultures and climates.

Effective leaders tend to ‘shape’ customer needs within unique environments, rather than ‘meet’ them (Gunter, 1995); they delegate (Hellawell, 1991) and their actions are generally interventionist (Stacey, 1992). The predominant leadership styles identified as meeting the needs of the self managed school and the impacts arising, are known as ‘transformational’ leadership (Bogler, 2001), ‘distributed’ leadership, and ‘positional’ leadership (Andrews & Lewis, 2002; Andrews et al. 2002, Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Mulford, Silins, & Leithwood, 2004). More recently, the concept of ‘sustainable’ leadership has also emerged (Hargreaves & Fink (2004).

The characteristics of a (change) transformational leader include: paying personal attention to followers and, through intellectual stimulation, motivating them to think of
innovative and extraordinary solutions to problems, usually by being charismatic (Bass, 1985). The transformational leader inspires followers to achieve higher levels of morality and motivation (Burns, 1985), involves staff in the development of vision and setting of goals (Brost, 2000) and offers individualised support. They also model professional practices and values, demonstrate high performance expectations and develop structures to foster participation and school decisions (Jackson, 2000; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). He or she transforms feelings, attitudes and beliefs through information sharing, open communication and delegated authority to staff to gain consensus (Hopkins, 2001; Russell, 1996) and develops a bond with followers (Sums, 1994). It has been reported that teachers derive greater satisfaction from their work when their principal adopts these attributes (Bogler, 2001).

With ongoing school reform, however, teachers have also been urged to take control rather than wait to be given it (Gunter, 1995), with the result that many have emerged as leaders to fill some of the roles in schools, helping their principals, as colleagues, to achieve their schools’ desired goals (Crowther et al., 2001). This distribution of responsibilities between professionals in schools is known as ‘distributed leadership’ and is driven by increased collaboration, communication and sharing among stakeholders.

Collaboration as a technique is underpinned by the view that professionals internalise their knowledge. This ‘tacit knowledge’, as it was labelled by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) is highly personal and is deeply rooted in an individual’s action and experience, as well as in the ideals, values or emotions that he or she embraces. Subjective insights, intuitions and hunches also fall into this category of knowledge thus making it hard to formalise, and difficult to communicate or share with others. As such it needs some structured forum in which it can be encouraged and nurtured to emerge. Collaboration
and sharing provide this structure and, in addition, are techniques that facilitate innovation and risk taking, which in turn empower staff in schools (Mulford & Johns, 2004). Fullan (1999) also recognised that successful learning was a product of converting this tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge that could be communicated through the whole organisation on an ongoing basis.

Building collaborative and consultative networks was therefore seen as a significant strategy in the development of individuals in schools and by default, the students in the school and the schools themselves. Also known as collaborative learning, this concept is supported by a number of other researchers (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998; Jackson, 2000; King et al., 1996; Short & Greer, 1989). Other key components of the processes of change involve regular evaluation of the school’s context, vision and goals, as well as both individual and organisational capacity and outcomes, tied in with critical reflection (Mulford & Johns, 2004).

In addition, to effect change Hopkins (2001) suggests that school leaders need an understanding of a range of pedagogic approaches, a strategic orientation, an entrepreneurial bent and a commitment to promote enquiry in order to improve student achievement and learning. Other traits of effective school leaders, outlined by Brost (2000) and Hopkins (2001) include committing to staff development on instruction and curriculum, providing information on school performance and instructional best practice to all stakeholders, and making practical efforts to involve staff in policy making and deciding the direction that the school should take. This level of collaboration has been found to increase the involvement, engagement and affiliation across all staff, and the potential to improve the whole school (Hopkins, 2001).
A key force leading to meaningful, long-term change, however, is leadership sustainability. Hargreaves and Fink (2004, p. 8) expressed the view that leaders develop sustainability by:

…how they approach, commit to and protect deep learning in their schools; by how they sustain others to promote and support that learning; by how they sustain themselves in doing so, so that they can persist with their vision and avoid burning out; and by how they try to ensure the improvements they bring about last over time, especially after they themselves have gone.

Hargreaves and Fink (2004) outline five action principles for achieving sustainability in practice: activism, vigilance, patience, transparency and design. Resilient leaders engage assertively with their environment through network building, forging strategic community alliances, influencing the media and protesting openly against misconceived policies. Through vigilance the environment is monitored to check it is staying healthy and not beginning to decline. Patience means a deferral of gratification instead of seeking instant results. Short term achievement targets are the epitome of wasteful, unsustainable policies that cultivate and capitulate to the craving for instant political gratification but they waste resources, human energy and people’s time. Transparent sustainable leadership is always open to scrutiny and inspection. An organisation lacks transparency when it withholds sensitive data, hides its errors, communicates in impenetrable language and presents only positive information about itself. Through design, systems are created that are personalised for people’s use and compatible with human capacity. It puts people first and is personalised to their needs. Instruments and an action plan need to be developed that incorporate each of these dimensions (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005).

The literature outlines other ‘sustainable’ type strategies that might facilitate the transition to a more effective school. Leaders must build a culture that makes staff feel safe, valued, comfortable, secure, fully employed and protected in an atmosphere of fun
(Bate, 1994). Ideally, they will foster a knowledge of the culture and values of the school and how they work for or against student progress, development and achievement (Stoll & Fink, 1996). They will manage by vision and values rather than by rules; they will invest in learning, knowledge and people development and will celebrate successes (Umiker, 1999). They should make staff explicitly aware of the rules and standards expected of them and ensure they are followed through modelling (Deal & Kennedy, 1982) and also award staff “freedom, responsibility and considerable autonomy based on delivery” of results (Peters & Waterman, 1982, p. 318). Finally, leaders must be ‘authentic’ in their behaviour in order to build trust (Evans, 1996).

This section has outlined a number of leadership characteristics and styles that have the potential to address the impacts of change on staff in schools. However, while there are many descriptions and much idealism expressed by various researchers there is little evidence in the literature of how independent school leaders are addressing the impacts; of any strategic input by school leaders, or by external bodies to facilitate managing and developing staff within schools. Without a clear vision and framework for change, and improvement in staff management and leadership practice, the likelihood of the ideal translating into the actual is lowered, and sustained improvement is less likely (Brown & Harvey, 2006). It is for these reasons that these elements are explored in this study in independent schools, and that HRM is suggested as the tool and means by which independent school leaders effect holistic improvement of staff management practice into the future.

Although explored briefly in Chapter 1, the determination of whether independent schools are a relevant context in which to implement such a framework is investigated in the next section. As with the previous section, no literature was found that addressed this issue specifically. As a result, the question of any perceived similarities between
the operations of independent schools and business was also explored with school
leaders in this study.

**Independent schools as organisations - as business**

The communities in which we live perceive schools differently to the business sector
from which the principles of HRM emanate. Schools are viewed as soft and humane,
while business is perceived as hard and competitive. We have, therefore, been urged by
Bush (1995) to approach cautiously any attempts to compare them. He stated that “the
special characteristics of schools and colleges imply caution in the application of
management models or practices drawn from non-educational settings” (p. 10) and he
outlined a number of differences which should be considered in any comparisons. In
particular, Bush (1995) highlighted educational objectives as being different from
business because they are politicised, unclear and based on the long term, and their
evaluation is based “on the subjective and personal”. He added that one cannot
“process, program or manipulate” children as you can financial data and other products,
and that the nature of relationships that exist between teacher and student over extended
time periods are unique, as are the fragmentation of structures both within and outside
schools that influence decisions within (p. 10). In another difference, Bush argued that,
unlike managers in business, teachers and heads of departments in schools have little
time for the managerial aspects of their work (1995, p. 8).

Nevertheless, Morgan (2000, p. 9) argued that the independent school sector operates as
a “classical free market” in an economically rational society. Parents are a lot more
knowledgable about what they spend their money on, and increasingly they are making
business decisions and demanding value for their money. There has been a shift of
expectations to more of a consumerist or hard attitude on the part of parents, replacing
the more familial relationships and soft views of the past.
In the community there is the perception that independent schools will provide both academic and pastoral advantage, as well as a myriad of extra curricula opportunities to engender the ‘rounded’ student. Behaviour of students is also perceived to be managed better, resulting in fewer behavioural issues. In addition, the perception of academic excellence remains a key driver of parents in the selection of an independent school for their children to attend, and is therefore a significant factor in a school’s ‘competitive advantage’. Chubb and Moe (1990) attributed the good academic performance of private school students to structural differences between the independent and government school sectors. Key factors are the autonomy in decision making that independent schools enjoy and, more particularly, the lack of bureaucratic control experienced. All schools that operate with substantial autonomy, it was argued, are more effectively organised which, in turn, engenders academic benefits (Chubb & Moe, 1990).

In today’s market driven environment then, the old feelings of being part of a community are being replaced by the view of parents as clients, customers or consumers and schools as providers of a service (Munn, 1993). As a result, parents are therefore likely to have increased and different expectations of independent schools and demand a higher level of satisfaction from them. The pressure is on independent schools, therefore, to provide this value in order to remain viable.

If the relative autonomy and organisational structures of independent schools enable them to operate as businesses it may well be asked just what type of business is performed in these organisations. Their ‘core’ business is undoubtedly education, but the means by which this is provided is through service. It follows then that independent schools are in the business of providing the service of education. According to Korzynski (2002) service organisations provide a service to ‘customers’ who, in this
instance, are the paying parents. In keeping with the service orientation and a desire to provide top quality of (teaching) service to students (and parents) Korczynski (2002) proposed the development of support systems, reward systems and favourable HRM practices.

If you are planning to lead a company where all members of your staff are customer focussed, you need their commitment, not their obedience. Well designed support systems allied with favourable HRM practices lead to a passion for service, which will lead to behaviours that give [students] positive views of overall service quality. Recognition and celebration are also a way of reaffirming to people in highly human terms that they are an important part of something that matters (2002, p. 24).

So, while it would seem that independent schools have responded to the ‘hard’ criteria imposed upon them by governments and funding bodies through the adoption of many ‘business like’ operational practices and managerial approaches, it is argued that by adopting more of a service orientation, they can also retain their heart. This will be examined further in later chapters. Because HRM has been identified as the conceptual framework underpinning this study, the next section explores it in detail.

**Human Resource Management as a conceptual framework**

HRM is defined in different ways by various researchers and has multiple meanings, emphases and applications. Schuler (1990) stated that HRM is an elusive and vague concept, which she based on two factors. One was the conflict between the now outdated ‘welfare’ tradition of personnel management, and the more strategic orientation of modern HRM. The second factor involves the gender divide between ‘female’ or ‘soft’ people management at lower management and administrative levels, and the ‘male’ or ‘hard-nosed’ HR management within the upper echelons of corporate headquarters.

This distinction between hard and soft HRM is discussed by several authors, for example, Beardwell & Holden (1997), Beer et al (1984), Guest (1989), Hendrey (1995), Storey (1992), and Walton (1985), and is broadly outlined below.
In defining HRM, Clark and Seward (2000, p. 41) viewed it as “the management of the employment relationship with the purpose of enhancing the achievement of organisational objectives and goals”. In describing just what HRM is Clark and Seward (2000) added that it is a staff function, while Batt (2002) and Capelli and Neumark (2001) saw it as comprising individual or bundles of practices that formalise the relationship between employer and employee. Meanwhile, a definition that highlights the ‘hard’ process-oriented view of HRM is one by DeCieri et al (2005, p. 4), who describe HRM as the “policies, practices and systems that influence employees’ behaviour, attitudes and performance”. Another definition by Stone (2005) emphasises the ‘hard’/’soft’ dualistic slant. He stated that HRM involves “the productive use of people in achieving the organisation’s strategic business objectives and the satisfaction of individual employee needs” (2005, p. 4).

As the hard/soft dualism provides a useful framework for examining the HR activities in independent schools it is further elaborated. According to Storey (1992) the hard approach to HRM emphasises the quantitative, calculative and business-strategic aspects of managing the headcount resource in as rational a way as for any other economic factor -- as organisational assets. It focuses on the importance of strategic fit and views humans as resources that can be quantified and manipulated to maximise gains. Clark and Seward (2000, p. 43) concur with this view. “Employees are increasingly regarded as a component of corporate costs and management is concerned with their economic and effective utilisation”. They added that HRM has “become more results oriented than in the past with financial measures used to ascertain the value of many activities previously assumed to be intrinsically worthwhile” (2000, p. 45). Legge (1995) referred to the hard approach in terms of Instrumentalist Utilitarianism. With the clear slant towards bottom-line and productivity factors it has been suggested
that this so called hard approach to the practice of HRM has deterred many organisations, such as schools, from integrating it into their management structures (Singh, 1990).

In contrast, the humanist approach, which emerged from the human relations school of Herzberg and McGregor (Storey, 1987) saw managers become concerned with how they could integrate the ‘self-actualising’ individual with the organisation (Limerick et al., 1998, p. 34), and interpersonal competence with organisational effectiveness (Argyris, 1964). The ‘humanist’ perspective of organisational theory, suggested that “human needs and the placating of those needs occupy a central place” (Dalin, 1998, p. 37). This approach implies that organisations, implicit in their operations, consider the satisfaction of human needs while also working towards fulfilling organisational goals, and highlights the importance of ‘fit’ between the needs of the individual and the organisation to facilitate this. Bolman and Deal (2000, p. 61) argue that when this fit occurs, both employees and the organisation benefit:

When the fit between the individual and the organisation is poor, one or both will suffer; individuals will be exploited, or will seek to exploit the organisation. But if the fit is good it benefits both; human beings find meaningful and satisfying work and organisations get the human talent and energy that they need.

The humanist approach is thought of in terms ‘soft’, and is called Developmental Humanism by Legge (1995). Ideologically schools lean towards the ‘soft’ precepts that underpin HRM because they are perceived to be aligned with ‘heart’ and are indicative of a “spirit which values employees as human beings and enables them to do extraordinary things” (Riches, 1997, p. 17). Nonetheless, the thread that links the different approaches and definitions of HRM is the focus on people in the work place.

HRM has multiple purposes. It contributes “to organisational efficiency and effectiveness” (Clark & Seward, 2000, p. 3), and to the value of ‘human capital’ through
the enhancement of knowledge, skills and abilities. Note that human capital is an economic term, which refers to the ‘stock’ of productive skills and technical knowledge embodied in labour. In terms of economic theory then, human capital is a means of production, into which additional investment yields additional output (Becker, 1964). HRM can thus add to an organisation’s value and profitability through processes that facilitate selecting the ‘right’ people, developing employee capacity and changing its culture in a positive way. Therefore, it has a key role in determining the competitiveness of businesses (DeCieri et al. 2005). Meanwhile, the implementation of HR activities is largely carried out by HR practitioners who provide the advice, service, execution, coordination and audit of HRM (Clark & Seward, 2000).

The practice of HRM emerged during the 1960s. It derived from a focus on employee welfare and personnel and evolved into one of managing employees to obtain the highest productivity possible, using methods that would provide them with both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (Torrington, 1991). Thus, while the various staff related activities emanated from the so called personnel department, HRM was being practiced in terms of ‘managerial behaviour’, which incorporated two main streams of psychology, ‘behaviourism’ and ‘humanism’. Behaviourism utilises strategies that are likely to provoke behaviours that are considered advantageous in terms of work place performance and the achievement of organisation goals (Ferris et al., 1984; Schuler, 1989). Applied by leaders and staff managers, behaviourist techniques have the potential to influence and modify human behaviour in terms of higher motivation, increased satisfaction, reduced absenteeism and increased productivity (Wright et al., 1994).

In the late 1990s, HRM practice moved away from concepts of human relations and towards the concept of humans as a ‘resource’ (Storey, 1991) that were “capable of
providing sustained competitive advantage” (DeCieri et al., 2005, p. 6). At this point, management became more concerned with the economic and effective utilisation of staff and defined the ‘success’ of the HR department in terms of its ability to ensure: a) the supply of a trained workforce within the cost constraints of the business and, b) that the regulatory framework operating on the employment relationship was not breached (Clark & Seward, 2000). Colwill and Birchall (1992, p. 162) summarised the rationale for HRM practice in organisations as the means by which they are “staffed effectively with the appropriate people who possess motivation and skills for the tasks necessary to achieve the goals of the organisation”. Beer et al (1984) meanwhile apportioned HR outcomes in terms of the level of commitment, competence, congruence and cost effectiveness of the human capital employed by organisations. The long term application of effective HR policies generate individual well-being, organisational effectiveness and societal well-being (see Figure 1).

The latest trend in HRM practice is its use as an in-house consultancy service. Flatter organisation structures mean that staff administration and management is largely being undertaken by line managers across the business. So, people in HR departments are now expected to gain more expertise and provide new services in the form of guidance and advice that line managers can access to add value to their own decision making processes. Colwill and Birchall (1992) took this idea a step further when they argued that all line managers need to act as HR managers in order to achieve the working relationships that form an essential basis for productive work.

More recently HRM has also moved into executive suites and board rooms. From the traditional personnel function there has been the integration of HRM into strategic management and a pre-occupation with the utilisation of human resources to achieve strategic management objectives (Storey, 1991). Strategic human resource management
(SHRM) which is considered hard is described as the “pattern of planned HR deployments and activities intended to enable an organisation to achieve its goals” (DeCieri et al., 2005, p. 4). This strategic orientation, according to Kidombo (2003, p. 5)

…fosters the quantitative, strategic and calculative approach to HRM aimed at efficient production. The emphasis in this approach is on the term ‘resource’, which implies that people are viewed as any other factor of production to be used rationally and deployed in a calculative and instrumental way for economic gain.

This approach facilitates capacity building across an array of interrelated process areas in that it helps identify the skills that require development. For example, in schools it is considered that training in communication, group processes, planning, decision making skills, personal reflection, stress relief, conflict management and organisational analysis are critical to the success of school reform and to overcome the debilitating effects of rapid change (Brost, 2000; Murphy, 1997). Note the interesting contradiction here, that while the process of strategising is hard, the outcomes are soft. Researchers also suggest that SHRM be adopted to increase the sophistication of the recruitment, selection and induction procedures, professional development and career planning for members of staff, and potentially solve the ambiguity and paradox (Gunter, 1995) associated with people management because such an approach is “holistic and targeted” (Hofer, 1980, p. 7).

The questions arise then, in what ways are hard HRM approaches relevant to schools, which are seen as humane, and how could they legitimately be integrated into schools’ staff management practices in such a way that school leaders benefit, and school outcomes potentially improve (see Figure 2)? The business literature suggests that one means is through the offsetting of hard approaches by the so-called soft approaches, which are explained in detail in the next section.
The application of a soft approach to the management of staff

Soft approaches to the delivery of a human resource service emphasise communication, motivation, training, development, effective leadership and the mutual commitment of employees and employers to the achievement of organisational goals (Storey, 1992). Processes devised with these human relations characteristics in mind foster workforce satisfaction and well-being, and increase the affective commitment of individuals to organisations. Affective commitment is described as attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation (Benkhoff, 1997). Employees with strong affective commitment continue employment with the organisation because they want to do so (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Other soft features include selecting individuals to ‘fit’ the culture of workplaces, high quality training and competence development once in an organisation, well designed support systems, appropriate measurement, teamwork and team rewards, individual rewards and recognition and development of a ‘service culture’. They also include the application of principles of distributive and procedural justice, work-family policies, information sharing, extensive socialisation and opportunities to have fun, flexible working conditions, training in conflict resolution and promotion from within (Huselid, 1995; Korczynski, 2002; Meyer & Allen, 1991).

In addition to engendering job satisfaction, such approaches make people feel valued, safe, secure and protected and they facilitate feelings of autonomy and freedom (Bate, 1994). Collectively, these ‘soft’ activities also enhance the skills, motivation and empowerment of the workforce, and signal an organisation that is supportive of its employees, is fair in the treatment of its people, and imbues them with a sense of personal importance, leading to affective commitment (Delery, 1998; Delery et al., 1998; Huselid & Becker, 1996; Moynihan et al., 2002). Furthermore, studies show that
where employees believe they are treated fairly in the workplace they hold positive attitudes towards the organisation (Moorman, 1991), whereas HRM practices that are perceived to be unfair have been found to result in the employee feeling bewildered, betrayed and thus less committed (Schappe, 1996).

Despite the best of intentions by decision makers in humane organisations however, Truss et al. (1997, p. 70) in a study of ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ models of HRM, provide a sobering reminder that “even if the rhetoric of HRM is ‘soft’, the reality is almost always ‘hard’, with the interests of the organisation prevailing over those of the individual”. Similar conclusions have been reached by Keenoy (1990), Poole and Mansfield (1992), Guest (1989) and Legge (1995a, b, 1998). It is argued that a key to offsetting this reality in schools is to find some combination of the ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ approaches (Gratton, in Hammonds, 1999) which, it is acknowledged, places further workload strain on leaders who have not had the appropriate training to acquire the knowledge that might facilitate them.

The following section draws from the HRM literature to differentiate between the hard and soft elements of the HRM domain. These elements, the hard and soft are presented as a framework for analysing the various HR activities used in the participant independent schools (see Chapter 4). They are summarised in Table 1, and again in Appendix C. A further dimension to the framework, described in terms of ‘mediating factors’, has also been added to account for the ‘situational’ or ‘real’ constraints that exist at this time in the sector under discussion. Note that soft elements are discussed in terms of ‘softening’. While the activities themselves are in most cases procedural and therefore hard (DeCieri et al., 2005) the job and cognitive structuring of these processes can ideally be softened to enhance the commitment employees make to
organisations in which they work and also to take into account the emotional labour they expend.

Emotional labour is an under-explored concept in the teaching profession, verified by the paucity of research found. However, it is defined as a form of task that requires an employee (such as a teacher) to suppress or simulate their emotions under ‘capitalistic’ working conditions (Korczynski, 2002) in order to maintain professionally positive expressions for their ‘customers’ (the students in their care). The consequence of the physiological 'bottling up' of emotions, over time, is to potentially create significant stress (Grandey, 2000) and to tax other parts of the body. Extended periods of job related stress engenders mental and physical costs including fatigue and burnout, with the result that work absenteeism increases and productivity declines.

To cope with the stress and tension that arise from emotional labour, Korczynski (2000) suggests that systematic approaches that focus on the soft HRM characteristics of nurturing and facilitating, as well as providing opportunities for socialising and gathering informally should be encouraged in the development of HRM activities. Particularly mentioned are recruitment, training and appraisal in which soft and hard elements are intertwined (Marchington & Crugulis, 2000). The following adapted model (Figure 4) of the HRM function illustrates the activities within, and influences upon commercial and government organisations. It is this framework, in conjunction with the hard and soft process definitions that will be used to analyse, define and describe the HRM activities that occur in participant independent schools (see Chapter 4)
**Figure 4: Human Resource Management activities and situational factors.**

**Human resource activities, hard, softened and ‘contextualised’**

As an organising tool, the many HR activities outlined are divided according to the three phases of employment – the pre-hire, post-hire and departure phases. Each activity is defined briefly here to provide a foundation for comparison and description.

In the pre-hire phase a number of related processes occur. These are HR planning, job analysis and job design, development of job descriptions and recruitment and selection.

In the post-hire stage, once an employee is appointed to a position, a number of other HR activities are activated. These are remuneration, induction, mentoring, performance management, coaching, training and development, legislative compliance, industrial relations, organisation development, staff advocacy and conflict resolution, succession planning, counselling and pastoral care.
Just prior to departure, the exit interview is an activity that should ideally be conducted to gather vital information from the departing employee about their experience within the organisation. Note that, while the processes themselves are considered hard, softening that takes into account the humanistic aspect can occur in the procedural enactment. As illustrated in Figure 4, there are also a number of external and situational factors, (contextual factors) that should be considered in discussions about environments in which independent schools operate. These factors actually ‘blur’ the hard/soft division, but also ‘ground’ them. They are elaborated upon in the section to follow (Chapter 4).

**Pre-Hire**

**HR planning**

HR planning ideally links to strategic planning that typically occurs in many organisations. Using forecasting, and taking into account both internal factors and the external marketplace, estimates are made for labour requirements within a predetermined time into the future. When it has been identified that extra labour will be required (labour shortage) or that labour will need to be laid off (labour surplus) strategic planning will need to occur in so far as determining the jobs and positions in the organisation that will need to be recruited or dismissed to achieve organisational goals.

The HR planning process translates organisation goals into HR goals through forecasting, and so helps determine staffing needs, levels and allocations (DeCieri et al., 2005). In theory HR planning, which requires a ‘hard’, bottom-line approach to maximise efficiencies, precedes all other steps in the pre-hire phase. When using appropriate methodology, it ensures that the right numbers of employees with the
appropriate skills are available to cover anticipated work loads and achieve organisational objectives.

HR planning may be softened by ensuring the right balance exists between employees and their workloads so that they are not under, or over occupied and a work/life balance is maintained. However, currently, in Australia, there are dire and predicted teacher shortages. Independent schools are more successful at attracting teachers because of their perceived advantages over government schools, but fewer school graduates are enrolling in teacher training and within five years of graduating more than one third are leaving for better paying, less stressful jobs. The best-laid HR planning, in this context, is unlikely, therefore, to yield the desired results.

**Job analysis and design**

Underpinning all HR planning and job design is the process of job analysis. Job analysis is the process of studying jobs to obtain, analyse, synthesize and report valid information about job tasks, functions and requirements (DeCieri et al., 2005). It is considered an essential prerequisite to HR and succession planning, organisation structure planning, job design, recruitment and selection processes, remuneration planning, decision-making and performance management. The information generated by job analysis covers the actual work content of the job, the skills, aptitudes and knowledge required to perform it, and the outcomes and measures that are used to judge the performance of those carrying out the job. Job analysis also reveals the key features of a job that enables training to be tailored to suit particular requirements (Clark & Seward, 2000; Heneman, et al., 1997). Job design is integral to the outcomes of a job analysis. It describes the job to be performed and the tasks required to perform it (DeCieri et al., 2005).
Job analysis is considered a ‘hard’ process of data gathering and scrutiny. However it can be softened by ‘matching’ a person to a job. A successful matching of a person to a job has the potential to enhance job satisfaction, motivation and performance of the person, and satisfy organisation outcomes, demonstrated by improved performance, reduced turnover and reduced absenteeism (Gately Consulting, 2004). Softening also occurs through analysing jobs not only in terms of the tasks undertaken, the responsibilities of a role, and the anticipated time expended but also in terms of the emotional, intellectual and physical demands of the job.

While intellectual and physical demands of jobs can be quantified through psychological and physiological testing, emotional demands are much more difficult to measure. It is reiterated here that ‘emotional labour’ may create significant stress which leads to physical and mental costs (Grandey, 2000). Teaching jobs today are considered stressful because they are low wage (relative to other professions); low status and teachers have little or no control over their workplace conditions. However, teachers are expected to maintain professionally positive expressions for the children under their care. The design of jobs in this profession should ideally take this into account.

Another aspect to consider during job analysis within organisations where female employees predominate are the demands made upon women by their own children and the myriad of home ‘housekeeping’ duties they endure in the determination of job design and workloads. This is illustrated in the finding by Baxter et al (2004), that shows that “women spend far more time on housework than men”.

While the data on the hours and emotions expended during child rearing and housekeeping are thin, any woman will tell you that the demands and conflicting pressures are very real. This is affirmed in the research undertaken by Marshall (2006):
Dual-earner couples who worked long days doing their job plus housework and who had dependent children at home were less satisfied with their work-life balance. They also felt more time-stressed, particularly women.

Women generally tend to feel more time-stressed than men, regardless of length of workday or presence of children. For example, among couples with the longest workday and children at home, two-thirds of the women felt time-stressed compared with one-half of men.

Research has found that mothers, regardless of employment status, consistently feel more time-crunched than fathers.

Longer workdays and the presence of children also affect women more than men in terms of satisfaction with their work-life balance. Only 52% of women with children in couples with long hours felt satisfied with their work-life balance, the lowest rate overall. In contrast, 71% of their male counterparts were satisfied.

A consideration of all these factors during a job analysis will help to soften the outcomes in terms of job design and maintenance of work/life balance. Nonetheless, quantifying the emotional and intellectual demands of teaching is difficult, although tests have been developed. The physical demands can be measured, as can the time expended to prepare and deliver lessons. However, individual differences in motivation and general coping are such that generalisations about the demands of jobs cannot be made with precision, nor can their softening.

**Job descriptions**

The information gathered during job analysis is collated into job descriptions, which are critical components in the recruitment process, in performance reviews, as a basis for wage and salary administration and in the targeting of training and development. A job description “identifies what a job holder does, how the job is done and why it is done, expressed in a written statement in terms of the tasks, duties and responsibilities of the job; job content, environment and conditions of employment” (Robbins et al., 1998, p. 624).
Job descriptions with the most utility also contain information about the attributes of the person being sought to fill vacant positions. This ‘person specification’ is a written record of the knowledge and qualifications needed to fulfil job requirements, the skills and competencies, and also abilities which are the enduring capabilities that have been demonstrated by a candidate’s previous experience. Other attributes add depth to the person specification, and might include characteristics like being flexible, adaptable and working well under pressure. The acronym used in the HR domain to describe the various attributes is KASOCs – knowledge, abilities, skills and other characteristics (Clark & Seward, 2000).

The process of collation and reporting of job descriptions and person specifications is considered ‘hard’. However the enactment of job descriptions may be softened by ensuring that the responsibilities and tasks of the job are closely aligned to the knowledge, skills and abilities of incumbents, and are therefore workable and achievable. Just the same, with fewer applicants to teaching positions on offer, alignment and matching may be difficult. Alignment or fit also assumes that applicants are being totally honest and transparent about the knowledge, skills and attributes they possess compared to the positions they apply for.

**Recruitment and selection**

Recruitment is defined as a “practice or activity carried on by the organisation with the purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees” (DeCieri et al., 2005, p. 66). Selection is the “process by which an organisation attempts to identify applicants with the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics that will help it achieve its goals” (DeCieri et al., 2005, p. 66). The catalysts for recruitment include staff turnover, and HR planning and succession. It thus comprises a number of steps that emanate from the identification of staffing needs. Once identified, the job specification
and description are devised and decisions are made on whether to outsource the process, the advertising strategy, the media to be used for receiving applications, short-listing criteria for interview, interview panel composition, interview process and questions and selection of the best ‘fit’ candidate. Other decision-making tools that might be utilised during this process include aptitude tests, background checking and performing job related tasks. The use of structured interviewing and cognitive testing, combined with the collection of biodata, provides the most valid means of matching person and jobs in organisations (Robertson & Smith, 2001). Again, the steps in recruitment and selection are considered ‘hard’.

Softening of the recruitment process occurs through the adoption of ‘realistic’ interview practices that provide candidates with an accurate picture – with both good and bad aspects – of the job being applied for (Raub & Streit, 2006). Honesty reduces disenchantment with the job, and therefore turnover. It is acknowledged, however, that teaching can be a difficult and demanding job. If the positive aspects of the role are offset by too many negative factors, candidates may be discouraged from pursuing it. Of independent schools, parents expect higher levels of teaching quality and pastoral care with associated accountability requirements.

Softening of selection occurs by performing a values and cultural audit of the school and ensuring alignment of a person’s characteristics with those of the organisation so that a ‘fit’ occurs. The best determination of a good match lies initially in analysing the KASOCs of a person. According to Jamieson and O’Mara (1991, p. 45) “motivation, productivity and morale depend in part on the fit between the demands and characteristics of the job and an employee’s competence, needs, interests and values”. They add:
Too many people work in jobs that don’t fit them; they lack the skills, are not interested or are unhappy. Often employees are trapped into such situations by the organisation’s culture, traditional career paths or reward systems (1991, p. 45).

Prior to selection, undertaking a values and cultural audit of schools and aligning an applicant’s characteristics with those of the school to ensure a ‘fit’ is also likely to create more satisfied employees. However, not all applicants are prepared to make the concomitant commitment required. In addition, the values and culture of a school are only as good as the values of the individuals who work in the school. In asking candidates to describe their values, selection panels need to assume that candidates know what their values are in the first instance, and also whether they are providing an honest assessment of those values.

**Post-Hire**

**Remuneration**

Pay, remuneration or workplace compensation refers to “all forms of financial returns and tangible services and benefits employees receive as part of an employment relationship” (Milkovich & Newman, 1999, p. 6). The different forms of pay include base wages, merit pay, which recognises past accomplishments and work behaviours; incentives that are struck to influence employees’ future behaviour, and other benefits and services that might include salary packaging of cars, phone use, school fees and medical insurance.

In setting pay, DeCieri et al (2005) state that distributive and procedural justice and fairness must prevail; this has the effect of ‘softening’ remuneration policy. These concepts of justice presume that the procedures that underpin the setting of pay levels, and the pay itself, must be perceived as being fair and equitable in line with the contribution that employees make to an organisation. However, with staff salaries comprising upward of 70% of school budgets, limitations apply to the salaries that can
be paid to teachers despite the application of procedural and distributive justice. Generally speaking, if salaries are increased 5%, then fees are also increased to this level. There is minimal scope to differentiate between exceptional and average teachers with merit pay, largely because in the setting of salaries in the independent school sector, the education sector unions, for example the Independent Education Union (IEU) and the Australian Education Union (AEU) have a significant influence, particularly in the setting of enterprise bargaining agreements (EBAs). EBAs are collective industrial agreements negotiated within independent schools among teaching staff before being presented, in this sector, to the Independent Education Union for signing off. In the case of non-teaching staff, negotiations are between staff and AISWA.

Nevertheless, union bargaining on behalf of teaching staff as a collective is a soft process because usually there is extensive collaboration among staff within schools prior to approaching the union. Rewards and recognition are also ‘soft’ because they recognise ‘individual’ achievement. They also help to motivate individuals to perform at higher levels (Milkovich & Newman, 1999).

**Induction**

Induction is a process in the HRM domain that ideally occurs when new employees first join an organisation to welcome, orientate and socialise them into the organisation. Its aim is to give new employees the base information they need in order to be able to settle down quickly into their jobs, feel engaged and perform. Induction information is ideally conferred at both organisation and departmental levels (DeCieri et al., 2005). Research has indicated that there is a link between the orientation/socialisation process administered to new employees and their decision to remain with an organisation (Garger, 1999). Comprehensive induction and orientation can also reduce the anxieties of new employees, and foster positive attitudes, job satisfaction and a sense of
commitment at the start of the employment relationship (Halton, 1996). Cost savings are made, therefore, because “orientation reduces the likelihood of new employees quitting before they feel bonded to the organisation” (Stone, 2005, p. 351). Staff turnover is costly.

Induction is thus considered a critical HRM activity that, if done early into the employment of new people and comprehensively, it ‘softens’ the unfamiliarity of new work environments. However, while many schools have introduced 1-2 day induction programs for staff who commence at the beginning of the school year, those who start into the term miss out on this valuable introduction because only minimalist programs are offered. As a result, some fail to feel engaged within the school and commit to it.

**Legal framework**

Industrial or labour relations pertain to the legal regulation of the relationship between workers and employees. These regulations facilitate social justice and fairness in the workplace and are written to protect people in the workplace from discriminatory or potentially harmful behaviours, including harassment and invasion of privacy. Some of these Acts are Commonwealth level, such as the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, the Racial Discrimination Act 1992, Sex Discrimination Act 1984, the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act, 1999, and at State level, the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984. Industrial relations are underpinned by legislation in Australia known as the Workplace Relations Act 1996 (Cwlth) and the Workplace Relations Act (Work Choices amendment) 2005 which provide for:

…ensuring that the primary responsibility for determining matters affecting the relations between employers and employees rests with the employer and employees at the workplace or enterprise level (Section 3b).

These Acts intend to promote workplace efficiency and flexibility through practices that are aimed at improving Australian economic performance and international
competitiveness (Wheelright, 1999). Workplace conditions and wages are negotiated between unions, tribunals and workplaces to set Awards, Australian Workplace Agreements, Certified Agreements, Enterprise Bargaining Agreements and individual workplace contracts (DeCieri et al., 2005).

Such compliance and negotiations can be softened by two means. One, by putting in place consultative networks of staff, and two, by ensuring all employees are aware of the compliance statutes and implementing policies with guidelines that enable ‘breaches’ to be reported and rectified. Just the same, staff handbooks containing compliance information have been written or posted on-line to many school intranets with varying degrees of complexity and depth. Few staff are inclined to read through lengthy tomes unless directed to do so, and if early induction is missed, it is unlikely that attention will otherwise be drawn to compliance matters.

**Coaching and mentoring**

Coaching is a form of training that is considered more effective over a longer time period and is generally conducted one-on-one (Green, 1999). Coaching facilitates the learning of skills to maintain core competencies and capabilities, commitment to organizational values and culture, and improvement in performance skills. Four different approaches may be used: motivational, mentor, personal growth and goal based. A coaching system is developed by a skills analysis, the technical and job skills are written and, based on job performance, a list of development goals is created, following self assessment and self rating. A manager can be a better coach by helping individuals observe, describe, and manage their own behaviour (Green, 1999). However, personal coaching can be expensive and when issues are identified in individuals, several sessions with a coach would normally be prescribed. Coaching is
offered to senior members of the school staff, but rarely to teachers who will determine a need and pay for sessions themselves.

A mentor, on the other hand is typically an experienced, older person in an organisation who ‘models’ behaviour and shares advice with a less experienced colleague about what to do, and how to do it using experience and wisdom (DeCieri et al., 2005; Green, 1999). While both activities are considered ‘soft’ because they rely on the building of interpersonal relationships and ‘informality’, mentoring was found by Martinez (2004) to be premised on a deficit view of teacher education and of beginning teachers. In such models, “the major purpose of mentoring has been to ensure that the new teacher at a particular site fits in quickly with least disturbance to the ways that ‘business as usual’ is conducted” (p. 105).

Nevertheless, softening of mentoring and coaching can occur in the three following ways. The first is by ensuring that high quality, targeted coaching links directly to an employee’s job to enhance their performance and is provided by a willing peer or manager. The second is by ensuring that mentees have some say in the selection of their mentor. This way, a relationship is more likely to bloom if interests and values are similar and the employees involved like one another. The third is through monitoring the coaching and mentoring to ensure the relationship is satisfying to both parties. Successful mentoring programs really need a dedicated individual to set them up and coordinate them, however. Few schools can afford this luxury and the result is mixed success.

**Performance management**

Performance management is a significant function that occurs in organisations and it is conducted to satisfy a number of organisational objectives, including accountability, development and knowledge (Chelimsky, 1997). Effective performance management
systems are useful forums for providing feedback to the employee and for setting goals and communicating work expectations in the form of performance targets, indicators and output objectives (Clark & Seward, 2000; Green, 1999). Other reasons for evaluating human performance at work are to: motivate employees and mould their behaviour according to company determined norms; enhance the consistency between employee actions and organisation goals; gain better cost-benefit outcomes; measure employees’ performance levels; improve the efficacy of human resource planning, training, succession and salary decisions and to provide a record in cases of dismissal, demotion, grievance or appeal (Blandford, 2000; Clark & Seward, 2000).

According to DeCieri et al (2005), performance management comprises five functions: 1) defining, 2) facilitating (through removal of obstacles), 3) encouraging and motivating, 4) measuring or appraising, and 5) providing feedback on performance to employees. Each of these functions may be ‘softened’ by ensuring that they satisfy the following criteria as proposed by Piggot-Irvine (2003):

- Transparent, yet confidential;
- Independent from disciplinary action or criticism;
- Educative;
- Well resourced with training and time;
- Based on objective informative data (usually taken from the subordinate’s job description);
- Grounded in mutual respect; and
- Beyond the superficial – frequent, on-going and in-depth.

Effective systems also engender trust, involve staff in their design, have clearly defined guidelines, are easy to use, and they integrate both development and accountability. They link to work plans and incentives and they provide well defined expectations in
the form of specific and achievable objectives (Nevo, 1995; Performance Management Institute, Australia, 2006; Piggot-Irvine, 2003).

In the education sector, performance management is typically described in terms of ‘summative’ and ‘formative’ processes. Summative evaluation is defined by Weimer (1987, p. 8) as “a judgment about teaching that is used to make a decision – a decision about promotion, tenure, or, even, teaching awards”. Rando and Lenze, (1994) define the formative process in terms of information gathering for the purpose of improving and developing teaching. Meanwhile, Nevo (1995) defines the performance management process in schools as one that “describes and judges the merit and worth of teachers on the basis of their knowledge, skills, behaviour and the results of their teaching” (p. 135).

Valid and reliable measures, which vary considerably, are also characteristics of effective performance management systems. Measures are considered to be ‘hard’ or ‘soft’. Hard measures provide numerical data of inputs, outputs and outcomes through regular monitoring, evaluation studies and external comparisons. Soft measures have expanded into “a growing array of methods involving subjective judgment” (Annett, 2005, p. 970). These tend to be qualitative, based on collecting data on attitudes and perceptions of people that help explain why certain practices are considered important and whether they are effective or not (Hirsh et al., 1997). In schools, the evaluation instruments and procedures used vary between hard and soft and include: teacher competency tests, field experience evaluation, classroom observations, clinical supervision, student ratings, peer evaluations, reflective practice, student test scores and teacher portfolios (Nevo, 1995).

Performance management then is seen as both an activity and a process which, if developed with the effective components in mind, contributes to the collective learning
of those engaged in the process; it monitors the efficiency and effectiveness of
organisations; it facilitates judgements being made on the basis of expressed values or
sets of criteria; it enhances the quality of decision-making; it meets the demands of
greater accountability and it promotes equality of opportunity (Cowan, 1998; Kellerher
et al., 1996; Singh, 1990).

Independent schools began to adopt performance appraisal processes in varying forms
that generally emanated from ‘business’ type approaches. It could be said that their
decision to mirror business, and hence follow the managerial trail imposed by the state
government in the mid 1980s, had the effect of legitimising these processes. However,
despite the ‘push’ to evaluate teacher performance, it has proved difficult to measure
because teachers act autonomously and in isolation within their classrooms and, as
O’Neill and West-Burnham (2001, p. 5) add, “the classroom presents a range of
complex factors which would appear to militate against the sorts of models of
performance management that are possible with easily quantified outcomes, subject to
minimal interpretation, in the context of easily controllable variables”.

Some people in school environments apparently view the process as one of “seemingly
irreconcilable contradictions” (Down, Chadbourne & Hogan, 2000, p. 214), and many
reject what they see as the undue preoccupation with outputs and objective performance
criteria; the heavy reliance on the measurable; the stifling of dissent and a linking of
management competency almost solely with monetary rewards (Armstrong &
Guimaraea, 1998; Zifcak, 1997). However, Drucker (1995) argued in defence of
conducting performance management in not-for-profit organisations such as
independent schools. He stated that without performance managements systems in
place, such organisations “never quite reach their potential, believing that good
intentions and pure heart are all that is needed” (1995, p. 242). It is evident, though,
that valid and reliable PM systems require knowledge, understanding, time and training to set up, apart from other factors. They are time consuming to develop, deliver and analyse; hence they are undertaken three-yearly in most independent schools. Existing systems in schools are reluctant to identify the elements of teacher ‘performance’, let alone measure it. Such failures reduce the efficacy of performance appraisals, leading to watered down systems of little value.

**Training and development**

Training is a process of learning that is typically contextualised in the work place. Its purpose is two-fold, according to Rabey (1990). The first is to enhance the production of work to required standards of quality, quantity, costs and time, which contribute to higher productivity and effectiveness of operations and a safer, more harmonious environment (Rabey 1990). The second involves the development of employees in terms of skills and knowledge to meet the foreseeable needs of the organisation and to realise the potential of each. Clark and Seward (2000) argue that if employers want their organisations to stay competitive and profitable, and to survive into the future, targeted training of employees is necessary.

It is argued that Rabey’s (1990) second purpose of training outlined – the development of the individual to realise their potential – is the soft aspect of training. Provision of professional development by an organisation also meets the second criteria of DeCieri et al’s (2005) performance management model – encouraging and motivating, which are softening techniques.

Directors of teaching and learning in independent schools are typically given the task of sourcing and allocating appropriate training for teachers. Many of the people in these roles are trained teachers with experience in teaching. Their understanding of training as it links to gaps in skills, post-training reporting, performance reviews and need, rather
than want is generally limited as is the location of training within a strategically based framework

**Organisational development**

Organisational development comprises a series of sub-processes that result in systemic change and improvement to an organisation’s productivity, efficiency and human performance. It is preceded by a diagnostic and ‘audit’ process of all operations and is sometimes initiated by some cataclysmic event from outside the organisation necessitating change. At the level of implementation, the three main areas to be considered are the human resources, the financial capacity of the organisation to effect change, and the physical resources (Brown & Harvey, 2006).

The school improvement program has enhanced collaboration between staff, but consultation between staff and school executive about bigger picture issues is more often a reflection of the leadership in place. Capable, confident leaders tend to be transparent and open about proposed changes but others want to protect their busy staff from the intricacies of major developments. Nevertheless, critical to the success of organisation development is communication, consultation and collaboration with an organisation’s employees. The process is further softened for staff through frequent and deep consultation about change that is likely to affect their jobs.

**Succession planning**

Succession planning is a sub-set of human resource and strategic planning. It involves identifying suitably qualified people within an organisation, or attracting those from outside, to fill key vacancies. DeCieri et al. define it as “the identification and tracking of high-potential employees capable of filling higher-level managerial positions” (2005, p. 687). Succession planning may be softened in two ways; first, by adapting database software to gather, store, analyse and retrieve not only contact, remuneration,
knowledge, skills, abilities, training and leave data of employees, but also their, goals and aspirations so that when opportunities arise, individuals can be appropriately identified and second, by providing a career path along which employees can aspire.

Privacy laws to some extent prevent the accumulation of biodata on staff that could be used for decision-making about succession. Gathering of data ‘below the surface’ of demographics, and its analysis, require time and understanding, which are rarely available to already busy administrators. In addition, skeleton staff within and labour shortages external to schools limit the succession planning that can be done. ‘Just in time’ planning is the result.

**Advocacy and conflict management**

In any organisation, issues will arise between staff that may require another to conciliate and advocate on an employee’s behalf. This is known as staff advocacy. Part of the advocate’s role may also be to help resolve conflict. Conflict management is the practice of handling conflict in a fair, sensible and efficient manner (Gordon, 2004). The handling of advocacy and conflict in a sensitive, non-judgmental and discreet manner helps to soften interactions between parties in a dispute.

Ideally, grievance procedures are in place to inform staff about their rights and responsibilities in addition to suggestions, or training on how they might handle conflict. Mediation occurs as a last resort but few schools are geared up for this. The independent schools associations in each state have industrial relations advocates who provide advice and, in a worst case scenario, industrial relations advocates or lawyers may be engaged. In a sector that is viewed as having ‘heart’, such measures are adopted reluctantly. Costs may mount too, at the expense of resources being used for the benefit of students.
Counselling and pastoral care of staff

In the workplace, counselling is required when employees feel that issues, conflicts or crises that arise from within their workplace or outside, are affecting their performance and are beyond their control. Counselling, also called guidance, is something that provides direction or advice as to a decision or course of action. It is about “problem solving and improving working relationships” (Summerfield & van Oudtshoorn, 1995, p.3).

Pastoral care means the work involved, or the situation that exists when one person has responsibility for the wellbeing of another. This includes the provision of spiritual advice and support, education, counselling, medical care, and assistance in times of need. Grove (2004) argued that attention to relationships, and respect and responsibility towards others are keys to proactive, collaborative approaches of pastoral caring in organisations. These approaches, in total, represent the soft aspect of HRM and if they are in place in the workplace they symbolise “an organisation that is taking care of its health… and employee well-being” (Summerfield & van Oudtshoorn, 1995, p. 7).

Not all school leaders are aware of the availability and process involved in engaging an employee assistance practitioner or program (EAP), however. If policies in place are unclear and there is no one dedicated to provide pastoral support to staff in need, this could pose further problems.

Departure

Exit interviews

Human resource (HR) departments typically conduct exit interview surveys to gather information from departing employees to help the organisation improve working conditions, retain existing employees and identify problem areas within the organisation. One of the good aspects of exit interviews is that the departing employee
often feels less concerned about the ramifications of 'treading on toes' and hence is typically willing to provide extremely open and honest feedback about their reasons for leaving and their thoughts about what the company could do to improve (Levin, 2007).

This process may be softened through being proactive about contacting the departing employee, and being non-judgmental and confidential in the listening and receiving of information. However, school leaders and middle managers may be reluctant to discover why staff are leaving the school, fearing criticism. Attitudes may need to change to view exit interviews as a fact finding and improvement process for the staff remaining and to facilitate staff retention. The following table (Table 1) summarises the information outlined above.
Table 1

Hard and ‘softening’ of HRM activities and the mediating factors that might constrain the softening ‘ideal’ (see also Appendix C).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Hard’ HRM processes defined</th>
<th>‘Softening’ of HRM activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HR planning</strong> – translates organisation goals into HR goals through forecasting (DeCieri et al. 2005)</td>
<td>Ensure sufficient numbers of employees are employed (or dispensed) to cover anticipated work loads. The right balance is critical so employees are not under, or over occupied and work/life balance is maintained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job analysis</strong> – details the tasks, functions and responsibilities of a job and the KSA’s required to perform it (Clark &amp; Seward, 2000)</td>
<td>Analyse jobs ‘realistically’ in terms of the emotional, intellectual and physical demands of the job, not only in terms of the tasks undertaken, the responsibilities and the anticipated time expended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job design</strong> – defines the way work will be performed and the tasks required to perform it (DeCieri et al. 2005)</td>
<td>Design jobs that facilitate work flow, provide variety, autonomy and stimulation, with appropriate provision of equipment and technology and a pleasant work environment. Consider work/life balance, emotional labour and allow for flexibility during job structuring. Provide a path to higher level positions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job description and person specification</strong> - reports both the job content or position and the knowledge, skills and abilities required for a person to do the job (Clark &amp; Seward, 2000)</td>
<td>Ensure responsibilities and tasks are aligned appropriately to the knowledge, skills and abilities of the incumbent, and are achievable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruitment</strong> – attracts and identifies potential employees to an organisation (DeCieri et al. 2005)</td>
<td>Adopt ‘realistic’ interview practices that provide candidates with an accurate ‘picture’ of the job being applied for. Honesty reduces disenchantment with the job, and therefore turnover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selection</strong> – selects applicants to a role with the KSAs that will help an organisation achieve its goals (DeCieri et al. 2005)</td>
<td>Undertake a values and cultural audit of the organisation and align the person’s characteristics with those of the organisation to ensure a ‘fit’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Remuneration</strong> – the financial returns and tangible services and benefits employees receive as part of an employment relationship (Milkovich &amp; Newman, 1999)</td>
<td>Adopt procedural and distributive justice principles in the design of pay. Develop a fair reward ‘system’ and/or KPIs that motivate good performers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Induction</strong> – orients and socialises new employees when they first join an organisation (Molner-Kelly, 2004)</td>
<td>Encourage commitment to an organisation by providing detailed and early induction and socialisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The legal framework</strong> - outline the legislative and compliance regulations associated with the employment relationship (Wheelright, 1999).</td>
<td>Ensure all employees are aware of the compliance frameworks that apply to the workplace and implement policies with guidelines that enable ‘breaches’ to be reported and rectified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>on-the-job one on one training by a subject matter expert (Stone, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>involves senior colleagues advising, role modelling, sharing contacts and giving general support to junior colleagues (Stone, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance management</td>
<td>determines how well employees are doing their jobs through communication and feedback (Stone, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
<td>teaches employees knowledge and skills to enable them to better perform their jobs (Stone, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational development</td>
<td>systemic change and improvement to an organisation’s productivity, efficiency and human performance (Brown &amp; Harvey, 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succession planning</td>
<td>identifies and prepares high potential employees to fill key professional and management positions to enable an organisation to achieve its strategic objectives (Stone, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff advocacy</td>
<td>involves active representation or support by one party on behalf of a cause or positions put by another party (Gordon, 2004).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict resolution</td>
<td>involves any of mediation, conciliation, negotiation and arbitration between parties in a dispute (Gordon, 2004).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace counselling &amp; pastoral care</td>
<td>policies and procedures that are put in place to help solve problems and improve working relationships (Summerfield &amp; Oudshoorn, 1995)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Exit interviews** – interviews that take place with a departing employee to explore the reasons for leaving, identify consistent trends and to reduce further turnover (Levin, 2007).

Invite departing employees to an interview and ensure non-judgmental listening and receiving of information.

### Conclusion

This review outlined the impacts of relentless change on the three levels of professional staff in schools and attempts by both researchers and school leaders to address them through the development of various frameworks and programmes. A number of leadership behaviours and activities were also identified in the literature to address the effects of change. Nonetheless, other literature revealed that these were neither comprehensively applied nor coordinated with the result that staff continue to be affected with reports revealing high levels of stress, low morale and job dissatisfaction.

While there was ample literature on these subjects on studies undertake in government schools, very little was found about models and behaviours within the independent schools’ context. On the subjects of how independent school leaders viewed their schools ‘organisationally’ there was also a paucity of literature, nor was there much literature found on the staff management activities undertaken in these schools. Finally, because the trend of appointing a dedicated HR practitioner to independent schools is relatively new (within the past five years) there was no literature found that explained and described this phenomenon. These subjects, thus, became the focus of my research and, in order to explore and make some sense of them, a methodology was devised that is explained in the next chapter.
Chapter 3
The research design

Introduction
This chapter describes the action plan developed in order to address my research questions. The frameworks for the research design and analysis are also described, as are the data collection and analysis methods.

Exploring how school leaders and HR practitioners ‘understand’ and ‘know’ about managing and supporting staff in schools required a qualitative research approach. According to Goetz and LeCompte (1984) and Patton (2002) qualitative research facilitates a number of steps in the research process which I adopted. First, it provided a framework and direction for my chosen research. Second, the frameworks and methods I used for collecting and analysing data facilitated engagement with the research participants and enabled the building of patterns. Third, qualitative research generated insights and constructed meaning for me within the social context of independent schools. Fourth, qualitative research facilitated connections between the varying elements contained within my study by virtue of me ‘having been there’ during the study as both onlooker and participant (Becker, 1996).

The semi-structured interview, using guide questions, was the method of data collection I chose for this study and the derived interview transcripts were the medium of analysis. This choice was made in spite of a view that ‘talk’ is sometimes seen as trivial but which, nevertheless, has increasingly become recognised as the primary medium through which social interaction takes place. It is through talk as text that a researcher can interpret the perspectives of participants, and thus ‘construct’ their version of ‘reality’ (Silverman, 2000).
This research is applied in nature and, aligned with this the outcome of my study is contribution to knowledge about the issue of staff management in schools. According to Patton (2002, p. 217) applied research is intended to “help people to understand the nature of a problem in order to intervene, thereby allowing human beings to more effectively control their environment”. Translated into the context of this study, the ‘problem’ was my issue with the way staff management was conducted in the independent schools my sources and I had exposure to. The intended outcome of the study was to ‘intervene’ with suggestions as to how school leaders might more effectively manage the staff in their schools to potentially improve teacher morale and enhance student achievement.

To conduct this undertaking, and to maintain focus, an organisational framework was developed in the form of a ‘hermeneutic circle’ (see Figure 5), which is explained as follows. Throughout my four-plus year research ‘journey’ I found that I was continually linking my thoughts and observations back to the assumptions and experiences that had launched the study. Early on, it was the ‘discomfort’ I felt about my experiences and those of Jenna and Annie that led me to ask a series of ‘why’ questions about the issues of leadership, change and staff management in schools. A literature search on these topics followed and, informed by Patton’s (2002) assertion that how we know what we know (the epistemology) is informed by our beliefs, values, attitudes and perspectives, the conceptual framework originated. Underpinning this framework was the methodology that was to direct my research, and which incorporated the method I used for data collection and the analytical framework adopted for data interpretation. Through the development of this circle and the outcomes derived I was able to convert what was known and valued by the study participants into an account that is both explanatory and descriptive (Neuman, 1997) and that can be applied in a
practical way into schools. Following, the elements of the methodology are described in more detail.

Figure 5: Hermeneutic circle that symbolises my research journey.

**Frameworks for research design and analysis**

**Conceptual framework**

As reviewed in Chapter 2, Knight and Trowler (2000) argued for a new framework of staff management in schools; one that would balance a concern for people with their performance in the workplace. Quite neatly, their views mirrored my experience and observations that “things were not right as they were or, most certainly, were not as good as they might have been” in respect to staff management practice in independent schools (Wolcott, 1992, p. 15). However, to interrogate the underlying ‘truth’ of these observations, I chose a conceptual framework that would make sense of the many
variables identified during the study and to build a picture that would also be meaningful to others through words on a page. To help identify a conceptual framework appropriate for this study I used Reichel and Ramsey’s (1987) definition. They described the conceptual framework as having three main functions. It comprises a broad set of ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry that: scaffold the steps of the research process; assist the researcher to examine a problem and identify relationships between variables, and interpret and make meaning of subsequent findings. Overall, it provides a structure upon which to build the thesis argument. Using these principles as a guide, the conceptual framework identified for this study was HRM and the reasons for its selection are outlined as follows.

The first reason was a philosophical one. HRM, applied with a ‘slant’ towards the ‘soft’ aspects of the various activities in organisations, reflects my underlying values and belief about ‘how’ people should be treated in the workplace, that is, equitably, and with respect. At the very least every individual, regardless of position and status, deserves acknowledgment by colleagues, and interest shown them by supervisors in terms of who they are and what they personally seek from their experience at work. Application of ‘softened’ HR activities facilitates this.

Second, HRM provides a structure upon which to base my methodology and the process involved in the research. The third reason, suggested by Crotty (1998), relates to the way HRM underpins the criteria and logic developed throughout the thesis. This is significant because Human Resource Management is a discipline/function that I know and understand. As a result a process derived naturally and logically, which helped me to find meaning in the study outcomes. This conceptual ‘positioning’ of the researcher indicates that the motivation for this study was not the result of some naïve choice, nor was it value neutral (Caelli et al., 2003).
Interpretive framework

The interpretive framework chosen for this study is known as the constructivist-hermeneutic paradigm which, according to Patton (2002) emanates from a similar philosophy: it focuses on the ‘problem’ of interpretation. The ‘constructivist’ aspect pre-supposes that ‘truth’ or ‘constructed reality’ involves gaining consensus from multiple perspectives among informed and sophisticated constructors who are immersed in the context of the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 44). These perspectives are also shaped by cultural and linguistic constructs (Patton, 2002). The hermeneutic aspect, on the other hand involves me, the researcher, understanding “this complex and constructed reality” from the points of view of the constructors who interact with one another, and with me, from within their own cultural context (Schram, 2003).

Through this framework, therefore, I have been able to interpret the multiple realities and experiences of the study participants, who were immersed in the context of their schools, in my own way and through my own ‘lens’. Similarly, I have constructed a series of implications from their perspectives to not only their own lives, but also the lives of those with whom they interact.

In respect to the validity and reliability of findings, Smyth (2004) discussed the constructivist approach as being a secure ‘philosophical tether’ on which to base the analysis and findings of her own study. In line with this, and also studies by Becker (1996), Denzin and Lincoln (2000) and Miles and Huberman (1984) I framed my findings in terms of ‘credibility’, ‘trustworthiness’ and ‘authenticity’. Neuman (1997) argued that ‘validity’ and ‘reliability’ are virtually impossible to achieve in qualitative research, although they represent ideals to which one should aim.

Guba & Lincoln (1989) argued that ‘facts’ and phenomena can only be understood within the context they are studied. This implies that findings cannot be automatically
generalised beyond the context of the study which, in this study, was the independent school sector. However, I argue that while the ‘context’ of independent schools is specific, the roles of the staff and staff managers are essentially the same as for other school sectors. Therefore, the implications gleaned from this study do have currency across the sector as a whole.

Constructivist-hermeneutics as an interpretive framework has thus provided me with a particular way of looking at things and the means through which I have acquired “meaning from a socially constructed perspective, with special attention given to a certain standpoint, praxis, situational context and the original purpose of a study” (Patton, 2002, p. 114). It has also provided a foundation for interpreting data with help from the study participants with whom I developed a rapport based on mutual understanding of the language, and a link between the interview method of data collection and the findings. Following, the rationale for using the interview method is described.

Data Collection – Method and Participant Selection

The semi-structured interview

Fontana and Frey (2000, p. 646) said of interviews, “[they] are not neutral tools of data gathering but active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results”. Of the different interview approaches used in the field, the semi-structured interview questionnaire was chosen as the appropriate data collection method for this study, in line with its purpose and aims. This approach enabled me to explore with participants those things that could not directly be observed, like feelings, thoughts and intentions; to find out what was in their minds and to gather their stories and perspectives within a specific context (Patton, 2002). This method also provided a
voice to the study participants and, through the eliciting of some unexpected responses, provided rich data (Carspecken, 1996).

Typically, the semi-structured interview lists the wording and sequence of questions in advance, which has the effect of encouraging responses to issues that could be compared during later analysis, producing rich data on each issue and facilitating the organisation and analysis of the data (Patton, 2002). The semi-structured interview is also called the “interview guide” (Patton, 2002, p. 344). My guides provided a basic framework for acquiring information in a consistent format, but also allowed for some spontaneous questioning through probe questions. These evolved, with some participants, into a conversation that had the effect of creating a more relaxed and open means of information exchange. Probe questions thus deepened the level of responses and added a richness and depth to them (Patton, 2002).

Prior to contacting participants that I had identified for the study, three interview guides were developed in questionnaire format (see Appendices 3.1a, b, c). Each question set was slightly modified according to the participant group being questioned. These were:

- the principals and Finance Directors and/or Bursars at five independent schools that employed a HR practitioner at that time;
- the HR practitioners at five independent schools, and;
- the principals and Finance Directors and/or Bursars at two independent schools that had retained traditional staff management structures.

The question sets developed evolved naturally, in line with what I wanted to explore, but during their construction I was cognisant of the need to design questions that would encourage open responses, reduce power differential, build rapport and conform to the principles inherent in constructive enquiry. Finally, to keep participants on track and to
reduce confusion and potential irritation, each question was formulated with only one part, that contained a clear beginning and end.

**Participant selection and context**
Australian independent schools are non-government, not-for-profit institutions founded by religious or other groups in the community and are registered with the relevant State or Territory education authority. Many independent schools provide a religious or values based education, while others promote a particular education philosophy or interpretation of mainstream education. They are mostly independently governed and operated, which allows them the autonomy (within legal and educationally prescribed boundaries) to make their own decisions, although this autonomy is being compromised by the level of Department of Education, Science and Technology’s funding provided, of up to 60% of income. Nevertheless, independent schools are idiosyncratic and represent discrete units that can self select both teachers and students (Association of Independent Schools, WA, 2006).

The enrolments in independent schools in Australia are growing rapidly, in comparison with the state government sector. This feature makes them an increasingly relevant feature of society and therefore an appropriate context in which to situate this study. This national drift to independent schools is confirmed by the following statistics. In Western Australia the rate of increase in non-government schools has jumped 40% in the past decade compared with a 2.6% increase in government schools in the same period. Nationally, student numbers at independent schools increased 22% while government schools rose by just 1.7% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006).

The independent schools at which the participants were interviewed, and the participants themselves, were selected purposively from all independent schools in Western Australia, of which there are 149 (AISWA, accessed on 10/4/06). The sample
of research sites comprised three all-girls’ schools, two all-boys schools and two of mixed gender. At the time of data collection the mix of schools that had already employed a human resource practitioner included two all-girls, one all-boys’ school and two co-educational schools. The two schools that retain ‘traditional’ structures comprised one all-girls and one all-boys schools.

The information about the sample might appear scant, however, this is deliberate. In Western Australia, there are still only a few schools that employ a Human Resource Practitioner, making them easily identifiable. As I had assured my participants of anonymity, I did not want to compromise them and the information they shared with me in any way. For this reason, I have chosen to provide minimal identifying data about the participant schools, but have included aspects that assist in interpreting the data.

In my selection of participants to interview there was a specific purpose in mind - to speak to those who would informatively answer my questions about staff management activities, and the role of the HR practitioner in independent schools (Neuman, 1997). The logical choice of participants therefore were those whose roles comprised the management of staff, namely the principals who had overall responsibility for the teaching staff in the K – 12 schools, the finance directors, to whom the HR practitioner reported and the HR practitioners themselves, whose responsibility was to all staff. It should be noted that only the principals of a participant school were interviewed – to differentiate from the heads of senior, middle and junior schools who also hold executive responsibilities and a staff management role. At this point ethics approval was sought and approved from the University’s Ethics Committee.

Access was negotiated with principals, via their personal assistants (PA), to gain permission for me to interview them, their finance directors and HR practitioners. Once contact was made with a PA a consent letter was emailed through, which contained the
study rationale and expected outcomes of the study (see Appendix G). This was discussed with the principal and if approval was granted for me to proceed the PA then organised appointment times and subsequent arrangements by email.

At the beginning of the scheduled interviews with participants, the consent form was signed and dated by the participant. Permission was also sought to tape the interview, which was granted by all participants. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and two hours in duration, and were conducted consecutively within schools with each participant. The participants who interviewed for the longest periods were those who were happy to interrogate their own thinking and philosophise on the various issues elicited by a particular question. The data transcribed from these participants were particularly rich.

**Data analysis process**

While the interview was chosen as a tool to gather participants’ perspectives I was aware that with the words recorded on tape, the act of transcribing an interview turns it into a written text, with consequent implications for its analysis. First, interpretation of this text involved opening the researcher to the text and questioning it (Kneller, 1984). Second, was Silverman’s (2000) assertion that, although categories developed by a researcher furnish a powerful ‘conceptual grip’, which is helpful in organising the data, they also potentially deflect attention away from uncategorised text. Thus, in developing themes or codes of analysis, there is potential to diminish or de-value some of the text that does not ‘fit’ comfortably within any particular category.

Another implication was the issue of validity of ‘self-reported’ data. Cook and Campbell (1979) have pointed out that subjects (a) tend to report what they believe the researcher expects to see, or (b) report what reflects positively on their own abilities, knowledge, beliefs, or opinions. Another concern about such data centers on whether
subjects are able to accurately recall past behaviors. Cognitive psychologists have warned that the human memory is fallible (Schacter, 1999), and thus the reliability of self-reported data can be tenuous. To overcome the potential limitations of self-reported data, a form of ‘triangulation’ (Patton, 2002) was adopted whereby at least two participants were interviewed from the same independent school. The same questions were asked of each, and information derived was cross-checked for similarities, consistencies or inconsistencies in perspectives.

Early in the process of data analysis the issue of how to handle the quantity of data transcribed arose. As in all qualitative projects, the amount of data was both voluminous and overwhelming. No clear cut answer to this issue was found, and reassurance was not forthcoming from Miles and Huberman’s comments that “we have a few agreed upon canons for qualitative data analysis in the sense of shared ground rules for drawing conclusions and verifying their sturdiness” (1984, p. 16). Patton’s (2002) assessment of qualitative analysis, however, struck a chord; that we can only do our very best to fairly represent the data and communicate what the data reveal given the purpose of our study. He added that, to make sense of the data “this involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal” (2002, p. 432).

The data were organised by collating and grouping the entire participant responses according to the questions asked. These questions were then re-categorised according to the research questions and the HRM analytical framework. These groupings represented a form of content analysis in which data were reduced into themes or patterns from which core consistencies and meanings were derived (Patton, 2002).
The responses to the first research question were first tabulated into a matrix by school and HR activity (see Appendix VIII). This matrix was derived from a three stage process of data reduction, data organisation and interpretation (Sarantakos, 1993), and was informed by Ryan and Bernard’s claim that “it is hard to see patterns in words unless one first does some kind of data reduction” (2000, p. 777). Analysis also included a process of “manipulating, integrating, transforming and highlighting the data” collected into a format of patterns and themes that facilitated their interpretation (p. 300).

Themes, which are defined by Ryan and Bernard (2000) as “abstract constructs that investigators identify before, during and after data collection” were induced in this study through “careful, line by line reading of text while looking for processes, actions, assumptions and consequences” (p. 780); looking for metaphors, word repetitions and shifts in content (Agar & Hobbs, 1985); aligning my values and prior experience with participants and finally, by using professional definitions and commonsense constructs (Bulmer, 1979).

Miles and Huberman (1984) used the terms ‘codes’ and ‘categories’ as tools of analysis which are keywords used to classify or categorise text. In this study, the process involved assigning a keyword to a section of text, or labelling it such that particular meaning was derived in the early analysis stages. Pattern codes are described as significant in that they are employed to identify an emergent theme, pattern or explanation through data reduction (1984, p. 67), and are developed around four factors, according to Sarantakos (1993) “themes, causes/explanations, relationships and theoretical constructs” (p. 304).

Ryan and Bernard (2000) claimed that coding is the heart and soul of whole text analysis, while Miles and Huberman asserted that “coding is (my italics) analysis”
Coding forces the researcher to make judgments about the meanings of contiguous blocks of text. To analyse the data and report on it, the following coding techniques were adopted. Patterns and trends in the material were identified by marking the text and clustering key words in margins, which reduced the data sufficiently to identify patterns of activities performed and the perceptions by participants about different themes. Matrix displays were used to discover relationships between variables and conceptual coherence was developed as I moved from data to constructs. Using the concept of "analytic comparison" (Neuman, 1997, p. 419) ideas and assumptions about the data were developed through induction and comparison with established theories. Regularities were identified in the data which were compared with different ideas and assumptions, from which more regularities were established, initially in a restricted area and then at a more general or abstract level.

In the reporting of the data responses by participants, they were first described, informed by Patton’s (2002) assertion that description forms the bedrock of reporting, followed by interpretation. Interpretation involved explaining the findings, attaching significance to some results and putting patterns into an analytic framework.

To ensure anonymity, school names and participant names were changed. The following table (Table 2) has been drawn up to list the ‘schools’ and the ‘names’ of principals and HR practitioners so that throughout the analysis, they are personalised (see also Appendix H). To upend gender stereotypes, it will be noted that principals’ and finance directors’ pseudonyms are feminine and the HR practitioners have masculine names. The first initial of schools and participant names are the same to provide coherence.
Table 2: Schools and participants’ pseudonyms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School name</th>
<th>Principal’s name</th>
<th>Finance director’s name</th>
<th>HR practitioner’s name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ariana</td>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>Anthony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelsall</td>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Kevin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farray</td>
<td>Fiona</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Frederick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranford</td>
<td>Cathryn</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Chas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregg</td>
<td>Gerri</td>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>Gary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighton</td>
<td>Belinda</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Barry (Dir. T &amp; L)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eaton</td>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

This chapter mapped both my research experience and the methodology that was followed. In the first instance the research design and selection of a qualitative approach derived from the research questions. However, although the selection of the interview method to collect data and the conceptual and interpretive frameworks used to analyse the data were underpinned by my values and personality, even more so they derived quite naturally from my experiences, observations and studies in the HRM discipline. Finally, the analysis methods ultimately used were those that made the most sense to me, in that they were inherently logical and enabled me to interpret and transform the data into a meaningful form.

In the next chapter, the data collected from the study participants in relation to the staff management activities conducted in their schools are described. In addition, the perspectives of the participant school leaders and HR practitioners, as they relate to their schools’ ‘core business’ are revealed.
Introduction
This chapter examines the data derived from interviews on a number of topics identified through the literature review. First, school leaders outline their view of their as organisations and the milieu in which they believe they operate, to affirm the relevance of the HRM analytical tool. Second the impacts of change on the three categories of staff in independent schools; the principals, heads of departments and teachers are described. Third, the responses by independent school leaders to these impacts are conveyed in terms of the staff management activities practiced in their schools, and by whom. Finally, the HRM activities employed in the participant independent schools are analysed against the HRM framework (Table 4) developed in Chapter 2.

Independent schools as ‘human businesses’
Independent schools, because of their autonomy, have struggled for decades with the community’s perception and the expectations held by parents of their performance, particularly academic. While most observers would agree that they bring together people for the purpose of ‘education’, others have described independent schools as being in the ‘business’ of education (Morgan, 2000) or as providers of an education ‘service’ (Munn, 1993). Thomas Sergiovanni (1994), meanwhile, described all schools as ‘communities’ in which kinship, unity and identity prevail in environments of cooperation and humanity. Others added, however, that these ‘cultural’ attributes are only attained by staff committing to these principles and through being offered interpersonal caring and support of one another (Louis & Kruse, 1995; Wehlage et al., 1989).
As a parent to children who attended independent schools, my assumption was that schools in this sector were likely to function well in these areas, supported by relevant systems and structures. In fact, the evidence in this section suggests that human needs do occupy a central place in the participant independent schools. However, in a later section it is revealed that care and support was more directed towards the students, as one would expect, than the staff.

The ‘humanity’ ascribed to independent schools is illustrated by the participant school leaders’ use of language, in which they discuss the ethos of their schools, compared with business, examples of which are captured here:

> I think we are very human based and believe that feelings matter. Schools have the potential to be much more emotional than other workplaces. We take a lot more notice of people’s feelings and opinions (Emily, Eaton).

> Schools are more caring places; there is more pastoral care and compassion (Frederick, Farray).

> You can’t just think with your head. You have to put head and heart together. Also, trust is engendered and this community building encourages people to work out things together. Not always but most of the time. In this sense we are vastly different from a business (Fiona, Farray).

Comments reveal the perspectives of participants in relation to the school culture as a whole, and an assumption could be made that they refer to both staff and students. However, the following comment by one finance director, originally from the commercial sector, clearly illustrates that her view of humanity relates particularly to the students.

> Everything is focussed here on having better outcomes for the boys, which is much more positive and unifying to actually say we do things a little unusually but underlying this is whether it is good for them. That’s a fantastic driver of culture and more positive than the one I’ve come from (Beth, Brighton).

The selection of ‘affective’ terms by participants, such as ‘human based’ and ‘feelings matter’ and ‘caring places’ to describe the culture and values of these schools indicates
alignment with the ‘soft’ approach to HRM, described in Chapter 2, in which human needs occupy a central place within organisations (Dalin, 1998). It also validates the use of the hard/soft HRM framework for analysing the HRM activities practiced in participant schools.

Cultural attributes and values were not the only factors used to differentiate independent schools and business. Respondents also mentioned six other factors as points of difference, including: decision making, strategic decisions, the financial rigour, outcomes and measurement, and the idea of parents buying a service. In respect to decision making and strategic thinking, one participant said:

There’s devolvement on the academic side of things but less so on other, strategic and financial functions; less decision-making that’s going on at line manager level in this school than I would see happening in the business sector. Decision-making happens at the principal level; not to say that others don’t get asked, but I think this school and other schools have less formalised strategic planning so it’s not happening in a cohesive way (Gary, Gregg).

The situation described, in which school leaders in this school were making the significant financial and strategic decisions, typifies the division between the roles of school leaders and middle managers in most schools. This was affirmed by Conners (1999, p. 27) who found that middle managers “have little time for strategic thinking” because a “key indicator of effective departments is their ability to effectively organise teaching”, which has implications for the design and evaluation of the head of department’s role.

In respect to the finance function, two other respondents outlined their views:

One major difference is that in business you have a finance director who sits on the Board while here you have a Treasurer who presents all the figures to the Board of work done by me or the accountant. I find that really strange and hilarious (Emma, Eaton).

We don’t have the kind of financial rigour that a commercial organisation has, whether large or small (Beth, Brighton).
In terms of outcomes, three respondents highlighted the difficulties associated with measuring the “end product” (Kevin, Kelsall).

It is difficult within the school to measure outcomes. It might be easier to measure processes and how well you are doing them because the outcomes may be dependent upon [the students] you have in your class. Many educators might say we are interested in producing a rounded child, whatever that might be. My own perception of what a rounded child might be is different from yours, and perception and reality don’t always match (Grace, Gregg).

Another principal stated:

We have a difficulty with the complexity of measurement of performance. We have to have a black ‘bottom line’ but really, if we have a slightly larger bottom line, no one will say, we have had a successful year. And that’s because people will determine a successful year through all manner of judgments they make about the academic success or the happiness of kids or a vast number of other factors, none of which is easily able to be proven or disproved (Amanda, Ariana).

Another respondent, meanwhile, used business terminology to define the difficulties associated with measurement:

I think it is a responsibility of this school after a $60-70,000 investment that (parents) will see a return on their product and quality added that they wouldn’t have got for $70,000 less, but how we measure that is difficult because we are in a triangle of a boy’s personality at adolescence plus a set of parents with a particular set of values and a school which might have a different set of expectations (Belinda, Brighton).

These difficulties align with Bush’s (1995) view of measurement as being politicised, not clear-cut, and with judgments based on the personal and subjective. However, in spite of these perceived differences, it was suggested by one respondent that differences between sectors be used in a positive way:

Business and schools should feed off each other. We should teach the business sector our values – looking after your customers – and they should teach us about efficiency and effective operations (Anthony, Ariana).

In fact, this sort of cross-fertilisation of culture and ideas was observed to have begun already, with the appointment of finance directors to independent schools from business
and commercial environments at three of the participant schools, Brighton, Eaton and Gregg, and another respondent admitting to the use of two HR activities from ‘industry’:

Most independent schools are trying to use the industry culture much more in terms of review of staff and linking of staff development and training (Barry, Brighton).

Four respondents, meanwhile, conceded that their schools had similarities with business, particularly in respect to their operations, structure, and the dynamics:

We have to think of ourselves as a business now. We are a multi-million dollar business (Fiona, Farray).

The structure is fairly similar (Emma, Eaton).

The organisation dynamics are exactly the same (Grace, Gregg).

There is hardly any difference at all. It is a human business, but it is a business … you have leadership; you have staff, customers, clients, all those sort of things (Kevin, Kelsall).

Another similarity between the sectors expressed, which aligns with the view of Morgon (2000), was that parents were being referred to in some schools as ‘customers’ or ‘consumers’ in recognition of the substantial fees they paid to ‘buy’ the services provided by a school.

You have to take account those people who are buying your service and that is education, and your people are students, and their parents are buying $13,000 worth of investment in their boys, which they are choosing to spend after tax, and that makes it like a business decision (Beth, Brighton).

Nevertheless, according to Gary (Gregg) it is unlikely that schools will link themselves to the business world, entirely, for some time into the future. This is largely because “they consider themselves different” from business in so many ways, and they always have done.

Summary
The evidence suggests that in decision making and strategic planning at senior levels, as well as being viewed as providers of a service, participant schools are similar to
business. However, particularly in regard to their culture and values, and the focus on humanity, school leaders chose to align their schools differently from the traditional ‘hard’ view of business, verbally at least. Defining outcomes and measuring them was also seen as significant area of difference.

Chubb and Moe (1990) challenged the claim by participants that their schools emphasise humane values. They found that lower value is now being placed on the ‘heart’ side of independent schools by the parents of students in a society that has become ‘consumerist’. Instead, they claimed that parents are placing greater emphasis on academic performance, which is a significant factor in their choice of independent schools, but is also being used by some schools to increase their competitive advantage over other, ‘like’ schools. Tensions thus emerge between the makeup and motivation of the students, the values and expectations of their parents, and the schools that must increasingly improve the quality of education service they provide in order to satisfy parental expectations and to differentiate between other, similar schools. These tensions, according to Chubb and Moe (1990), are not easily resolved.

Having illustrated the similarities and differences between schools and business, the following sections describe the fall-out upon staff of the changes that have been made upon and within schools, in response to managerial imperatives. In Chapter 2, many studies were found on the effects of change in government sector schools. However, no studies were found on this topic in independent schools. Thus, in the next sections school leaders discuss, first of all, the impacts of change on their staff. Second they describe their responses to the effects of change on themselves and their staff, in terms of the HR activities introduced, the people in place to perform them, and any ‘softening’ of activities they have undertaken in their efforts to realise the underlying values of their schools.
Impacts of change on principals, heads of department and teachers

This section explores whether the relentless changes that have occurred in schools over the past two decades have impacted on staff in independent school in similar ways as upon staff in government schools. Participants talk in terms of the pressures their staff face, the complexities of the environments in which they work, and the underlying reasons why pressures and complexity of roles may have increased, if in fact, they have.

In the following excerpt, the principal of Ariana discussed the effects on teachers and heads of department of change, and indirectly, upon herself:

I think teachers put a lot of pressures on themselves. They talk up their anxieties. I don’t believe there is an imposition of things that are more difficult on teachers now than 20 years ago. You had a bigger class 20 years ago, longer hours and a variety of different things. I get a bit bemused that there is so much talk about teacher anxiety. I’m not sure where the external source of addition anxiety is coming from? I don’t think the teachers here at present are increasingly accountable and I think some need to be a lot more accountable than they are.

Ariana’s principal agrees that her teachers are under pressure, but disagrees that they suffer more pressure than teachers of two decades ago: the pressures are only different.

She also believes the link between increased accountability and anxiety is tenuous, claiming that she solely remains accountable to parents, on behalf of teachers.

The director of teaching and learning at Brighton held a different view, however:

The accountability is enormous and the emphasis on academic results is huge. Parents pay huge money at school and then also throw money at tutors, so they expect results.

While participants at Ariana and Brighton discussed impacts on staff in terms of accountability the principals at Kelsall, Farray and Eton articulated other pressures. They particularly mentioned the changes associated with the handling of the curriculum framework, assessment and reporting, the post-compulsory review, student-centered learning approaches, advances in computer technology, parental expectations and questioning, emailing and the expectation of instant responses, increased workloads,
development of personalised learning programs for each child, increased documentation and the adaptation of older teachers to different approaches. This is summarised in the following excerpts from participants that address all these areas:

The teachers’ job is much more complex and the curriculum framework has changed that because now we shouldn’t be teaching every kid as if they are the same and we now talk about differentiated learning and personalised learning and where does it stop so the levels of accountability and documentation are huge. It puts more and more work back on the teachers but you can’t risk not doing it (Kelsall).

There is just so much to do these days; workloads and expectations are high more so in the teaching side of late because of the curriculum framework and, although we are not a laptop school, technology takes a lot of time. The curriculum framework is not necessarily a change of greater impact than previously but I don’t think it is a very good change and it has not been well handled and now with the post compulsory review, it’s going to be an even bigger shambles (Eton).

The more recently trained teachers know nothing else. Some of the older staff who are in learning areas that are process focussed rather than content focussed have caught onto it easily. But there are others who are finding it very, very difficult and are struggling. We have spent a lot of time working on that. Some will continue to struggle because they haven’t got that mindset (Farray).

Older teachers are less dynamic and they get tired and they have been doing the same thing for a long time – it’s pedestrian (Gregg).

The principal of Gregg also suggested that:

… teacher demands are greater than previously. They are expected to do more things that used to be more family, community and society expectations. We have lost the notion of villages and extended families. The impact of technology means more kids are sedentary and they expect quick stimulation and quick outcome and they don’t want to slog through. There’s been a loss of the understanding of process, just a desire for outcome.

Parents have more expectations, which I think are unrealistic because they remember and relates things today to what their schools did. They say “I’m paying this as insurance for you to fix it”. Parents just want things drilled in and they want their kids to beat others. Kids are harder. They just don’t do what they are told. Parents don’t accept things as they used to. They want instant results also. There is a culture of blame and excuse that the law and media have facilitated. However, I think a child’s success is determined largely before they get here (to this school). What we do is give some shape and some value and fine tune and balance.

Nevertheless, she adds:
I believe that teachers don’t have it as bad as they are making it out to be. I think they are getting well paid for their expectations, given the amount of leave that they get but I do think it’s become a more stressful job.

These comments suggest that the sorts of impacts being felt by the heads of departments and teachers in independent schools are similar to those experienced in government schools. In other words, the influences external to, and the situational factors within create similar impacts in regard to morale, stress, commitment and turnover. In both sectors teachers are coping with high workloads, technological advances and high parental and community expectations. If anything, however, parental expectations and accountability are higher at independent schools where considerable fees are paid for services rendered. Potentially, the pressure on these staff might be greater, offset perhaps by the behaviour management issues prevalent in some government schools.

Just how independent schools leaders are responding to the effects and managing their staff will be described in the next section.

**Staff management responses**

Staff management is considered a sub-section of educational management in the literature and, while definitions vary, it “has at its heart matters concerned with the purposes or aims of education” (Bush, 1995, p. 1). Gray defines staff management as the process that “is concerned with helping the members of an organisation to attain individual, as well as organisational objectives, within the changing environment of the organisation” (1979, p. 12). Within the independent schools’ context and for the purposes of this study, staff management is concerned with helping middle managers and teachers to attain their personal goals within relentless changing school environments that value humanity.

Historically, staff management activities have been carried out by principals in state government primary schools, and in catholic and independent junior schools. However,
in middle and secondary government, catholic and independent schools, principals have typically held the responsibility for leading all teaching staff, while heads of department have undertaken the day-to-day management of teachers. This is contradicted by Collier, et al (2002), who found that this staff management function is a misnomer because heads of departments, in reality, don’t have the time to manage their staff. This is illustrated by the comment of one head of department. “Most of my free (non-teaching) time currently goes in the day-to-day running of the Department - I don’t have enough time to sit down with individuals” (p. 24).

Nevertheless, the HR activities that have been adopted in the participant schools are described below, followed by an assessment of their softening. In Chapter 6, the contextual implications of the capacity for softening of activities, and the extent to which they were actually softened, are discussed.

**HR activities**

In this section, staff management (HR) activities adopted by the seven independent schools are described and analysed against the HRM framework developed in Chapter 2, according to the ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ principles. A summary of the analysis is found in Appendix I. As discussed in Chapter 2, the procedural aspects of HR activities are considered ‘hard’, but each may be softened by taking into account the humane, caring and emotional values that participants outlined in the previous section as applying to their schools.

The various activities, which were defined in Chapter 2, are categorised according to the three phases of employment, the pre-hire, post-hire and departure phases (see Table 3). The order in which they are described is similar to the order in which they are typically introduced and flow within organisations.
In the pre-hire phase of the HRM domain, a number of linked processes may be activated. While HR planning links to an organisation’s strategic plan, job analysis generally stands alone as a significant pre-requisite to the design and description of jobs and the specifications of the people who will best fit them. Recruitment and selection processes are typically ‘built’ upon the jobs derived from job analysis.

The two next phases after pre-hire are the post-hire and departure phases. The bulk of activities in the HR domain are implemented during the post-hire phase in some form or other into organisations. This phase includes remuneration, induction, the legal framework, coaching and mentoring, performance management and training and development. Performance management is considered pivotal because of the links inherent in the process to the achievement of organisational goals. For this reason it is addressed in more detail than other processes. The post-hire phase also includes staff advocacy and conflict resolution processes, organisation development, succession planning and the counselling and pastoral care of staff. The departure phase includes just one process, the exit interview.

Table 3: Human Resource Management activities performed in organisations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-hire</th>
<th>Post-hire</th>
<th>Departure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HR Planning</td>
<td>Remuneration, Induction, Legal framework and IR</td>
<td>Exit Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Analysis</td>
<td>Coaching and Mentoring, Performance Management, Training and Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Design</td>
<td>Organisational Development, Succession Planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Descriptions</td>
<td>Workplace advocacy and conflict resolution, Counselling and Pastoral Care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person Specifications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and Selection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pre-hire

*HR planning*

In all seven participant schools it was evident that little HR planning had actually occurred, with the process implementation being described by two school leaders as ‘minimalist’ and ‘ad hoc’. It was minimally implemented because of the perceived manpower required to undertake what was considered a time consuming task and because there was no one identified that could do it (Emma, Eaton). It was called ad hoc because it occurred in an “operational, reactive sense, that is, on an as needed basis” (Karen, Kelsall), rather than in a planned and strategic way. One finance director summarised this situation thus:

> Planning tends to be reactive, rather than proactive, and operational rather than strategic. Looking at the staff profiles and identifying the present is easy enough; identifying the ideal is a little more difficult. It represents a large part of the strategic focus, if it is done at all, but it tends to be driven more by financial outcomes than anything else. Mostly it is the principal who will initiate any planning (Grace, Gregg).

This minimal approach to HR planning resulted in outcomes that were, according to one school leader, potentially ‘problematic’ (Amanda, Ariana). These included: staff who stayed on for a long time in “our sort of schools”, which prevented the entry of new teachers with fresh ideas (Amanda, Ariana); complacency by teachers who knew that they did not have to compete with professionals from outside the school for promotional positions, and then once in those roles, for example as heads of departments, employing their ‘mates’ (Cathryn, Cranford); anticipated teacher shortages as the workforce aged and needed to be replaced in a short space of time (Grace, Gregg) and exposure in terms of ‘risk’ (Fiona, Farray). If planning had been undertaken more proactively, it is less likely that the ‘risk’ of issues such as those described above would occur, leading potentially to some “accidental loss” and “wastage of the organisation’s [human] assets” (Zimolong, 1997, p. 989).
Minimal HR planning had occurred in the participant schools, and respondents confirmed that, apart from being involved in the strategic planning processes about three-yearly, had ‘reacted’ to the needs and issues that had arisen in the school or were anticipated to arise some time in the near future. Softening of the process, in which school leaders in their planning try to offset teacher work loads generated by student cohorts at any point in time with increased DOTT time, smaller classes or more staff to cover for them to reduce pressures were not considered.

**Job analysis and design**

Five of the seven respondent school leaders indicated that some form of job analysis was undertaken in their schools, although it was difficult from the evidence to determine the extent. At two schools, however, the comments indicated that: “little is happening in this regard”, and “job analysis and job design are at a primitive level that we hope to improve upon” (Gerri and Gary, Gregg). At Kelsall, Kevin said “not much of that is done here”.

In terms of who undertook the processes of job analysis and job design (which was not specifically mentioned by any respondent), at each of the seven schools, the process was undertaken by different individuals or groups of people. At Ariana, Eaton and Farray the principal had an involvement. At Brighton, it was coordinated by the director of teaching and learning, and analysis was undertaken by a head of department and staff member in a collaborative process. At Ariana, Cranford, Kelsall and Farray the HR practitioners were involved, though more at the administrative level. Only at Kelsall was it mentioned that job analysis was undertaken at the council level by the policy and planning committee.

Little information was provided by the respondent school leaders on these activities, but the evidence suggests that neither job analysis nor job design ventured far from the
historical norm in the participant independent schools, particularly in respect to teaching staff and heads of department workloads. It is argued that the job analysis process may be softened through a broadening of the scope of reporting on the tasks, responsibilities and duties of a job to include the emotional, intellectual and physical demands, and the time taken to perform the various tasks. An example is the expectation by heads of departments to provide pastoral ‘caring’ for their staff. However, even in spite of the significant pedagogical, accountability and technological changes occurring during the past two decades (and outlined previously) and the resulting intensification of school curricula workloads, and ‘duty statements’, the emotional and physical effects on staff have apparently not been considered by school leaders, nor has softening been applied. Job designs for teachers and heads of department could be softened if school leaders were able to facilitate work flow through provision of greater flexibility in room allocations, collaborative teaching and fluid timetables; provide for variety and stimulation in their job roles and supply job appropriate equipment and technology within pleasant working environments. Other possibilities lie in structuring for work/life balance and flexibility for women teachers, particularly in the female-dominated profession of teaching and their added responsibility of child care.

**Job descriptions**

Job descriptions had been developed to varying degrees at all participant independent schools, although at Gregg it was admitted that they were more “duty statements” than job descriptions. One other school leader conceded that job descriptions would be dynamic documents that would “continue to evolve, and never get quite right” (Belinda, Brighton). Mostly, however, they had been improved and/or standardised by the HR practitioners working in the five independent schools.
At Ariana it was the job of the HR practitioner; at Eaton creating job descriptions was the job of the principal and executive. At Brighton a consultant was engaged to revise the generic job descriptions that existed, with maintenance being done on them by the director of teaching and learning. At Gregg the principal indicated that the standardised ‘templates’ were passed on by the HR practitioner (who was standardising them) to the heads of department to complete in consultation with their departmental staff, and at Cranford the HR practitioner was also standardising them.

Softening of this process may occur through closely aligning the responsibilities and tasks of a job identified through a job analysis, to the knowledge, skills and abilities of the person sought. A job/person match is achieved in this way, with tasks more likely to be performed well, resulting in enhanced self-esteem. The evidence suggests, however, that the design of job descriptions was viewed by respondent school leaders as a mechanistic and therefore a ‘hard’ process, without any reference to the principle of job/person ‘fit’. In addition, as with job analysis, the writing of job descriptions was conducted as a discrete process, in isolation to any other HR activity. This suggests, again, a poor understanding of the relationships that exist between HR activities and the importance of these links to the achievement of a coherent and holistic approach to staff management.

Meanwhile, at Gregg job descriptions and job analysis were being linked as people departed the school and they were contemplating replacements, and at Kelsall the HR practitioner indicated a link with the performance management system.

**Recruitment and selection**

Independent schools are usually in a better position to attract teachers during the recruitment process than the public sector, for a number of reasons. Apart from the more obvious differences that can be observed between independent schools and public
schools, such as quality of buildings, grounds and gardens, independent schools have been found to perform more effectively academically than their public counterparts (Chubb & Moe, 1990). These attributes were picked up on by one respondent who observed that “quality staff are attracted to this school because of its reputation, standards and values” (Anthony, Ariana).

Because all schools engage staff at various times of the year, recruitment and selection processes were undertaken by all participant schools, although the steps and people involved varied. Where employed, HR practitioners undertook the coordination and ‘mechanics’ of both recruitment and selection processes. Selection panels for teachers typically comprised the principal and/or heads of department in all participant schools and decisions were made at this level. For non-teaching positions, interviews and decisions were typically made by the leader of non-teaching staff whose title was either finance director, administrator, or bursar.

At Ariana the selection process for teachers was undertaken a little differently. An interview was held with short-listed candidates, who were then asked to prepare for a 20 minute practical lesson they delivered. This process elicited the comment “this really came up trumps because teachers who came up trumps in interview; sometimes in the classroom they were terrible” (Anthony, Ariana).

To reiterate, softening of recruitment and selection occurs through realistic interviewing (Raub & Streit, 2006) and a linking of a person to both school ethos and culture and the job requirements. It was found that only Karen (Kelsall) talked to candidates about the school’s ethos during employment interviews and when offering a job she asked if candidates would be prepared to work within that ethos. The evidence suggests that in the other participant schools, processes were conducted mechanically and reactively, and with little softening.
Summary

In line with HRM being a dualistic function in which hard processes are ‘softened’ for the context of ‘humane’ independent schools, there were some contradictions in the implementation of HR activities in the participant schools. In analysing the four HR activities in the pre-hire phase - HR planning, job analysis and design, job descriptions and recruitment and selection - the most developed and employed processes in these independent schools were job descriptions, and recruitment and selection, but only in response to job vacancies. Job design occurred in association with job descriptions but again, there was no evidence to suggest that this was regarded as an important activity nor was there any linking to job analysis. The processes of HR planning and job analysis were recognized by school leaders as important, but were considered too time consuming to effect appropriately, especially without the required understanding in terms of the utility of each as tools for effective decision making. Also, in terms of softening processes to reduce the impact of change and work intensification of staff, little was, or could be done. The reasons for this are outlined in Chapter 6.

Post-hire

In the following sections each of the activities that are conducted post-hire will be described.

Remuneration

In the setting of remuneration in the participant independent schools the HR practitioners at Gregg and Kelsall were involved at a research and administration level. Remuneration was paid according to two methods; individual contracts or enterprise bargaining agreements (EBAs). However prior to the involvement of unions to formalise agreements in six of the schools, in a collaborative process, finance directors and/ or Bursars of the participant independent schools shared salary information and
other working conditions. Such sharing softened the bargaining process in the 
participant independent schools and was indicative of the application of procedural and 
distributive justice in the design of pay.

As indicated in Chapter 2, softening also occurs through developing a fair reward ‘system’ that may or may not include money. Rewards are individually devised to motivate good performers to achieve higher performance, but in the education sector, the issues of rewards and identifying and measuring ‘good’ performance remain problematic. This is demonstrated by the comments of one respondent:

There are few rewards and bonuses and there is resistance to that because it is a little difficult to measure. What is it that you are doing that’s exemplary so that you should be paid more? While I worked in the tertiary sector it was suggested that a formula be adopted for the awarding of bonuses for teaching, research, supervision, function components and at schools a similar approach could be adopted that implies the need for key performance indicators (Grace, Gregg).

The awarding of rewards or bonuses for working ‘above and beyond’ in independent schools (as with other sector schools) is therefore constrained and remains ‘hard’ at this point in time.

Ariana was the only school offering employer/employee contracts to teaching staff, rather than an EBA for the following reason:

All my staff are on common law contracts and I shall endeavour to keep it that way. I have no desire to have the union involved and I don’t think it works to have the union involved. I have access to every EBA written so I can determine what advantages go to other people, so we can work towards offering them here as well. I am perfectly comfortable to look at any resolutions and if people say this is an area we are a little behind others, and we feel appropriate our school should match it and I look at it and agree that this should be the case, then all of that can happen in a couple of weeks rather than going through a protracted bargaining process (Amanda, Ariana).

The perception by Amanda is that union negotiations protract the process of setting pay.

She would much prefer doing her own research and negotiating directly with her staff
than through a third party. In this respect, Amanda has softened the setting of remuneration and conditions on behalf of her staff in the school.

At three schools, Ariana, Cranford, and Eaton a fixed salary was paid to teaching staff, but at three other schools, there was a variation from the norm. The principal of Farray (in conjunction with the Council) agreed to pay salaries at a fixed 3% above those paid in the public school sector. This ‘recognised’ the attendance by teaching staff at two camps during the school year and extra curricular hours worked. At Gregg, an allowance was paid to staff who did extra, but the principal had also paid a ‘bonus’ to two staff “who came into the school under difficult circumstances and made a really good start” (Gerri, Gregg). At Brighton a ‘significant allowance’ was paid to teachers who supervised extra-curricula sport:

For both teaching and non-teaching staff we pay at the top of the sector for all positions. Council feel happy to pay staff well because they want the staff to be the best in the sector (Beth, Brighton).

Meanwhile, at Kelsall, the principal had taken the unique step of employing an external consultant to conduct a job evaluation for heads of department. Job evaluation is a subset of remuneration planning and is considered by DeCieri et al. (2005) to be an administrative procedure that measures a job’s worth. In this instance, the catalyst was the perceived ‘unfairness’ of payment to heads of department in the different subject areas. Karen justified the job evaluation with her heads of department by using several criteria, which included the number of staff being supervised by a department head, the core or elective nature of the subject, the amount of marking and assessment, and class sizes. She gave this example:

An example I shall give is about the head of English who is responsible for literacy across the school and large classes. Why should he get paid the same as the head of Art whose subject is not compulsory; there are fewer students and fewer staff to manage? A change in staff provided me with an opportunity to undertake a job evaluation so I got someone in from New Zealand who was excellent. He came up with a
recommendation and there was a clear distinction that you could quantify. He allocated points to the different tasks and these were rated, thus making them objective. There is an appeal mechanism, but it is fair, transparent and equitable.

While the process undertaken here was seen as transparent and therefore soft, perhaps because Karen had advertised it within the school, individuals whose remuneration was affected on the down side are more likely to regard the outcome of the process as hard. In the setting of evaluation criteria, what should also have been taken into account and appears not to have been, for example, were the experience and qualifications of the other heads of departments and the hours they may put in outside of normal school hours. Process fairness and equity, to such heads of departments is perhaps in dispute.

With respect to teachers, on the other hand, Karen believed that there should be no differentiation. She said:

> Teachers are paid on the same salary scale because upper school teachers are compensated with more DOTT time than primary teachers, for example. There is the notion that you have only ‘made it’ if you have taught Year 12 but in my view there must be good teachers at every level. There must be no distinction with pay.

In terms of rewarding teachers, the only means that is acceptable to the Independent Education Union (IEU) at this time is through the financing of staff to undertake professional development, whether in the home state, or interstate and also through the awarding of Senior Teacher (ST 1 & ST2) status, which attracts both extra pay and status for teachers who met the criteria. This formal recognition of ‘exceptional’ teaching, however, has to be applied for in what is regarded as a time consuming and rigorous process. For this reason, few teachers apply, as demonstrated by the following comments from Brighton and Eaton. Beth noted that; “there are few ST2s here”, which might also reflect the fact that Brighton “is one of the highest (salary) paying schools” while at Eaton, Emily indicated there were just “one or two applications to senior
teacher per year”. At the time of the study, an extra 6.9% of salary was paid to ST2 teachers.

**Induction**

Induction for teaching staff was conducted by participant independent schools at the beginning of the year, except at Farray where it was conducted at the end of the school year. However, all respondents considered induction ad hoc for those starting through the year, and arbitrary for part-timers and contractors. In the technical set up of new staff in these schools, induction was particularly good, as indicated by a director:

> I am stunned the way everything just happens – name badges, IT, programmes and meeting with the principal, Heads of House and Heads of department – the system is really good (Barry, Brighton).

For the teachers in each of the schools the process differed in scale, but it was perhaps best summarised by this comment:

> Staff who are appointed for the next year get a good induction but new starts through the year tend to slip through the net and it is very easy to overlook them (Fiona, Farray).

At one school, Ariana, the process comprised a day’s induction and was accompanied by an induction booklet. At Brighton induction comprised two full days at a rural property owned by the school and access to a staff manual, complete with policies, was provided on-line. Grounds staff at Brighton did not have access to a computer, however, so this was not viewed as ideal. Farray also provided staff policies on-line.

HR practitioners were involved in induction processes for teachers at each of the five schools that employed one, but their involvement was limited to the provision of administrative backup. They were more active in developing and conducting induction of non-teaching staff, however, because there was little turnover among this group, their involvement tended to be minimal.
At Kelsall, new staff induction was coordinated by the HR practitioner, who had created a “checklist” of points, but the process delivery was undertaken by the heads of senior, middle and junior schools. Kevin believed that, although induction was more ‘structured’ than it used to be, it would be improved if it involved the school’s HR department, because “if they come through HR there is some consistency and we can track people”.

Using a different approach for teaching staff at Ariana, induction was mostly organised by a long serving teacher, more or less as a ‘reward’ for her loyal service. At Brighton and Cranford induction was conducted by heads of department, while the heads of school and deputy principal were the organisers of induction at Kelsall and Eaton respectively. At Gregg, induction was a joint process conducted by the HR practitioner, director of teaching and learning, heads of schools and departments. It was agreed by them that “improvements could be made”, and ultimately, it was hoped that the heads of department would take over responsibility for new staff. Gary captured the school’s process in the following:

The induction process here is reactive. There is something in place for the teaching staff but nothing for the non-teaching staff, although I am reviewing both. I intend to evaluate its effectiveness by gaining feedback from new inductees in about 3-6 months. Both content and process need reviewing because it is too ad hoc with various people doing a bit here and there – so it is hit and miss.

Gary, whose previous employment was in business, also added his vision for induction of new staff into the school:

The process needs to capture what we want a new staff member to gain in terms of the organisation. Currently, it’s more about what they should be doing in the first week, rather than indoctrination into the culture and support structures available. We cover the school grounds and give them a password, but we do not cover the high-level stuff about who we are as an organisation and how we expect people to behave, and that’s where I am pitching the process and trying to engage the staff.
Fiona’s view of induction at Farray mirrored the views of others:

Induction is not as good as it could be. It is OK for people who start at the beginning of the year; not so good for the late starters. We do orientation in a weekend in November when we invite new staff to a morning at the school to meet other staff. For teaching staff we give them their timetables and answer questions and divide up into smaller groups and discuss issues and just go through some of the broad procedures and approaches to things.

In terms of softening induction, a major consideration is that it does occur early on after a new staff member joins the school, and comprehensively – involving lots of their colleagues. Both Gary and Fiona wanted to provide the best start for new staff, and to ‘soften’ their integration into the school through engagement with the culture. Fiona was able to achieve this by inviting current staff to talk to new staff about the ‘culture’ and ‘ethos’ of the school, as well as the issues that they considered important to inform them about. As an added measure, new staff at Farray were also allocated a buddy which she felt was not working well:

For some it works and for others it doesn’t. This is because of the way the ‘houses’ are structured and located on the campus. Staff are accommodated according to House, rather than by subject which made it difficult for heads of departments to buddy and manage their staff.

Because Fiona was acutely aware of the significance of early induction, and a ‘failing’ towards those who started through the year, she asked “how can you provide the best induction when everything around the school is already up and running?”

**Legal framework**

In all of the participant schools, the legal framework as it pertained to the employment contract between employer and employee, and the guidelines provided in the Workplace Relations Act 1996 (Commonwealth) had been complied with. Variations, however, lay with the extent to which polices that addressed some of the minor Acts had been written and implemented, for example, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, (WA) 1984 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1984, and the people involved in compliance. In terms of
softening the legal framework, this occurs through putting in place consultative networks of staff and writing, communicating and implementing policies that contain relevant compliance statutes with guidelines that enable ‘breaches’ to be reported and rectified.

Compliance with and softening of work safety, risk management and equity regulations was coordinated by the HR practitioners at Ariana, Kelsall and Farray, while at Brighton and Eaton the compliance paperwork was handled by the director of teaching and learning, and the finance director, consecutively. Policy writing was happening and being signed off by council at Kelsall although it was interesting to note that this activity was instigated following notification by DEST that it was a required step in the independent school registration process. It was also noted at Kelall that the principal would only get involved in legal compliance if the school was being taken to court through being sued by a staff member.

At Ariana, in a softening of the process, a representative group of staff met to talk through workplace issues with the principal, who was open to investigating and implementing conditions and benefits equal to, or better than, those offered at other independent schools. At Eaton a work safety and health committee had been set up and in respect to the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act, 1999 which addressed the issue of increasing the ratio of women in the workplace, exemption had been gained from reporting on this because the staff was already “dominated by women who were employed because they were considered the best people for the job” (Emily). At Gregg, where a previous senior staff member had applied to the court for restitution on the grounds of unfair dismissal, industrial issues were handled by the principal and finance director. The finance director was of the view that:
…industrial relations is a combination of communication and common sense. I can seek advice from AISWA but I’m not sure that the expertise is particularly high. In difficult cases, such as the one we are handling now, we have engaged a lawyer.

Generally then, compliance issues were handled by either HR practitioners or finance directors in these schools and, only if staffing issues were serious enough to get to the Industrial Relations Court did school leaders get involved. Staff representatives were on health and safety committees and other policies were either developed, or in the process of development by some schools. School Councils, in their governance capacity, approved and signed off on compliance policies which had also been passed through staff committees who provided input. This level of transparency and consultation therefore softened compliance and industrial relations issues in the participant schools.

**Coaching and mentoring**

The school leaders at each of the independent schools indicated that both coaching and mentoring happened in their schools. This situation was summed up by two of the leaders who stated “anyone in the operation may be doing mentoring at any one time” (Amanda, Ariana), and “I see myself as a coach. It is another name for a teacher – it’s part of the culture of the school” (Karen, Kelsall).

The setting up and coordination of coaching and mentoring programmes are hard, as are the aspects related to furthering organisation goals and expediting the ‘fit’ of employees into the culture. However, the concepts are ‘soft’ because they also involve the development of the individual. Mentoring is already perceived as a nurturing activity that may be further softened by pairing up employees in new roles with experienced others who will really look out for, and encourage them, as they settle in. And coaching can be softened further through linking it more closely to the job to enhance performance.
At Cranford, Eaton and Gregg the heads of department were mostly engaged in mentoring of their staff, although in most cases there was “nothing formal in place”. At Brighton and Farray, mentors and buddies were ‘appointed’ for new staff by heads of department, a situation that did not always work well, as explained by Barry (Brighton):

When staff come in we do set them up with a mentor through the heads of department. We tried one year to pair people up and it didn’t work very well. Sometimes there is natural affinity. In some departments heads of department are very supportive; in others they are not. We do expect our ST1 teachers to buddy up with student teachers.

At Kelsall’s there was a formal mentoring programme conducted as part of the induction programme. Here, they considered the allocation of mentors as working well. Mentoring was managed by each head of school (senior, middle or junior) with allocations at a similar level of responsibility, though not necessarily in the same department. Coaching was considered as part of the school culture – all teachers ‘coach’ their students and all heads of department coach their teams. For the non-teaching staff not much was implemented but a line manager could be asked to take on the role. For non-teaching staff, there was even less in place. This comment summed up the situation in most schools “we just expect them to get on with it” (Emma, Eaton).

Only at Gregg was it noted that coaching occurred at the executive level. This was undertaken by an external consultant to facilitate the building of teams, improve communication and re-align the culture of the school following a difficult period involving leadership. A significant role expected of the HR practitioner too was the coaching of heads of department. Gary said:

I know when new staff come here they are buddied up with a mentor but I don’t know how much actual input is given to the mentor as to what they are supposed to do. The principal wanted the process formalised for teaching staff and to develop line managers to provide coaching and mentoring to their staff. That is going to be one of the key things to shift the culture forward, to get people thinking about their roles as managers and about developing staff.
So, while coaching and mentoring occurred at varying levels in the participant schools, few formal processes had been developed to ensure their integration into school cultures and to soften the entry of new staff into schools.

**Performance management**

Performance management is a multi-faceted process that is significant in the HRM domain, not only in terms of its facilitation of human development but because of its link to the achievement of organisation goals.

In the evaluation phase, appraisals on staff were performed in all seven participant schools but the extent to which they were integrated into a fair, transparent and equitable system of performance management was clear – hardly at all. Specific comments revealed a process as follows. At one school it was observed that the system “doesn’t seem to be working. No one knows when a staff member is due for their appraisal, there are no rewards, or pats on the back and some people are ignored” (Kevin, Kelsall). He added “there is no connection to job statements at all, and the criteria in place for determining quality are a very weak aspect”.

At another school the process was done “appallingly” through being “paternalistic” and comprising a “warm and fuzzy” review and reflection process with some decisions by the principal being made solely on “gut instinct” (Fiona, Farray). Fiona added that the only basis for “moving on poor performers” was the number of complaints received from parents and senior students, and in reality she thought that performance management was actually “crisis management”.

At Brighton it was considered “window dressing” and “a collection of bits and pieces with no cohesion” (Beth, Brighton). At Eaton it was referred to as a “coordination nightmare”, while another participant observed:
I believe that every model I have seen so far has been a fundamental waste of time and that all it achieves is a sort of an assuaging of responsibility; that we are doing it and [therefore] we don’t have to worry. None has effectively contributed to the performance of teachers (Emma).

In terms of generalising across the seven schools, the only common factors were the frequency with which appraisals were conducted (three yearly), and that in four out of the seven schools there were no performance management systems in place for non-teaching staff. In business, performance reviews are generally carried out annually, but the ‘infrequency’ of three years was justified on the grounds that; “it is such a big job, so three yearly is about right” (Belinda, Brighton). “It is difficult to organise with the teachers because of timetabling issues” (Beth, Brighton). Only one HR practitioner agreed that “three years is too infrequent if there are issues needing to be put right, and with probationary staff, 12 months is too infrequent allowing them time in between to mess up” (Kevin, Kelsall). Another participant reflected that this frequency was “a reasonable compromise” (Gerri, Gregg).

Improvements to the process and softening of the steps could be made, however, by adopting the framework outlined by Piggot-Irvine (2003) and others in Chapter 2. Here, it was indicated that the system developed should be transparent, educative, and independent from disciplinary action or criticism. Raters should be trained and given time to undertake appraisals that are based on objective criteria such as job descriptions. The process should also be grounded in mutual respect and allow for honest two-way feedback to engender trust. Finally, it should have clearly defined guidelines and development and improvement should be integrated into the process.

In assessing this level of frequency in conducting performance reviews against Piggot-Irvine’s (2003) framework, they could hardly be educative, certainly not accountable, professional development is unlikely to be integrated into the process and trust would be
difficult to engender. One therefore must question why this situation applies in independent schools still, other than at Ariana and Kelsall, where principals were reviewing their performance management systems in place. Perhaps it is because valid and reliable systems require knowledge, understanding, time and training to set up. They are also time consuming to develop, deliver and analyse, which might explain their application only three yearly in independent schools at present. A further constraint to effective processes may lie in the reluctance by schools in general to identify the elements of teacher performance, let alone measure it.

Nevertheless, as with other HR activities, it was found that performance appraisals were conducted by different people in each of participant independent schools. Formal reviews were conducted for long serving teachers by principals at Brighton and Farray. Informal interviews or chats were conducted by heads of house or heads of schools at all seven schools, although it was noted by three respondents that heads of department found it difficult to conduct any sort of performance appraisal on their staff because they were not trained, had little engagement with the process and they found it difficult to tell people they worked with that “they are not up to the mark” (Kevin, Kelsall). One participant believed that in this respect “Heads of department fail in their line management responsibility” (Beth, Brighton). In two other schools coordination of the process was undertaken by the Deputy principal (Eaton), and both the HR practitioner and director of teaching and learning (Gregg).

In response to the process in place being considered by Amanda as ‘a waste of time”, she had developed a four-part performance management system for her teaching staff in a proactive attempt to address this issue at her school. The reasoning behind her proposed framework was based on two components taken from models she had examined; self assessment and observation of teaching by a line manager:
There are [two] bases to it. One is that most teacher appraisal really relies on the teacher making comments about themselves and doesn’t require any substantiation at all. The other is that when schools decide that all they are getting out of that process is a vague fuzziness they look at observation of teachers and my reading suggests that observation of teachers is a fairly useless appraisal tool; that a teacher being observed is nothing like a teacher not being observed.

Amanda’s proposed framework comprises four parts:

The first part comprises the teacher under review to write a reflective report on the observation of another classroom teacher and its impact on his or her own practice; the second part involves looking at some standardised test results, (eg WALNA, TEE) and analysing them in terms of class cohorts, deciles between subjects, for example; the third part is a presentation to class or set of parents on an appropriate topic; and finally is an account of involvement in extra curricula activities that link to performance in the form of Key Performance Indicators and professional development. The outcome is a compendium of self-analysis.

Compared against Piggot-Irvine’s framework, evident in this proposed process are transparency, objectivity and accountability based on the use of indicators. It is educative because teachers can learn techniques from other teachers they observe by analysing and critically assessing them; with the support of the principal it looks like it will be well resourced with training and time and, because the system is multi-faceted it appears to be ‘beyond the superficial’. Not evident from Amanda’s description was ‘supervisor’ training nor the underpinnings of trust and respect. The potential for supervisors to make judgments and be critical is therefore implied.

Gregg was the only school at which performance management was discussed in terms of formative and summative evaluation. However, it was noted that teachers were still “managed” by the principal who, Grace observed, “could not possibly be sufficiently well acquainted with the performance of over 150 teaching staff to provide meaningful feedback”. Grace explained that it was difficult to appraise the performance of teachers who operated solely in classrooms and, as a result “performance evaluation is based on outcomes or peripheral knowledge”. Gerri agreed with this perspective indicating that
“hearsay is not deemed as reliable as empirical evidence”. In a recent adjustment to the process for teachers, however, thinking about their professional goals was included as were professional development plans that would help the achievement of these goals. This provoked the comment by Gerri “there is little accountability but it does encourage more reflective discussion”.

It is apparent then, that compared with Piggot-Irvine’s (2003) ‘softening’ guidelines, the performance management practices in participant schools ‘fail’ in most respects. The evidence indicated little involvement by staff in the development of the process, and therefore poor levels of transparency, trust or respect. Few clearly defined guidelines were in place, and job descriptions were only mentioned in one school as the basis for evaluation. As such, objective, informative data were not indicated, and neither was there much accountability. A professional development plan was only mentioned by one school linked to goals and at another as being implemented ad hoc. Heads of department apparently lacked the knowledge and “will” to enforce their management responsibilities, and only in one school was it acknowledged that training should and would be provided to them. In line with this assessment, one participant mentioned “this is not the sector to be looking for best practice ‘in performance management’.

Nevertheless, four out of the seven schools were planning a complete overhaul of their performance management systems. Only at Eaton, despite the process being a ‘coordination nightmare’, did they see no need to change or improve their process in any way. At Brighton, heads of department were being encouraged to take greater responsibility for their own teams, therefore “empowering them”, although the mechanics of this were not proffered. Kelsall was planning to use position statements as the basis for reviewing performance, with each task serving as a KPI, and greater
collaboration at all staff levels was occurring. Finally, the focus at this school, and at Gregg, was towards performance development of both the individual and the school.

**Training and development**

Professional development activities were undertaken in all of the participant schools but in six of the schools it was considered a distinct process, separate from performance management. In three schools, Brighton, Farray and Gregg a director of teaching and learning conducted the search for relevant training on behalf of teachers and helped identify needs. Heads of department were invited to make training recommendations on behalf of their staff in three other schools, Ariana, Brighton and Kelsall, while at Cranford professional development was decided by a PD committee and the HR practitioner. At Eaton, decisions were made by the deputy principal on behalf of the senior school staff and the junior school principal on behalf of these staff members.

Training allocation can be softened in the following ways: through links to the performance management system, which identifies professional goals and training needed to achieve them; ensuring that training also contains a ‘development’ aspect that expands and improves on an individual’s personal skill and knowledge repertoire and that allocation is fairly distributed among staff (distributive justice).

To rectify the perceived inequity in training allocation the principal at one school indicated that funds had been devolved “into the areas where it is needed and where the philosophical foundation for its use needs to come from” (Amanda, Ariana). Amanda added:

> All of this was done with the intention that the people running the department now have responsibility for the training of their staff so they have to work out a philosophy for the training of their staff, on an as-needed basis.

However, despite heads of department being asked to develop their own training philosophies, they were given no apparent guidance on how to do this. Nor was there
softness in the approach to fund allocation. With it based on the ‘philosophy’ heads of
department came up with, pressure was on them to be as creative as possible to access
the funds, which is more of a hard approach.

At Brighton, the finance director indicated that the training budget for which the
principal held the “purse strings” was “pretty generous at 1-1½% of payroll”, although
she thought the allocation of the budget was inequitable. This was indicated by her
comment that a “few [staff] having their snout in the trough every year” (Beth,
Brighton). However, in an attempt to ensure equity and fairness in allocation, the
director of staff development indicated that he liaised extensively with heads of
department to develop targeted training programmes. Between these two people there
appears to be a clash between hard attitude and soft process indicating that they either
don’t communicate about the issue or just agree to disagree with one another’s
philosophy.

The training budget at Kelsall was seen as “well above the minimum” and few requests
by staff were rejected. Some heads of departments and teachers were even allocated
budgets to attend interstate conferences (Karen). Training requests rarely passed
through the HR department, but according to the HR practitioner, Kevin, he had been
made aware that “those who ask for it get and those that don’t, don’t”. As with
Brighton, there appeared to be a soft/hard mix in terms of budget and its allocation.

At Eaton it was noted that “the PD budget here is very good”. At this school, some staff
enquired about training and were awarded it, while others were approached with
suggestions for PD that would be good for them. Of the non-teaching staff, IT and
maintenance staff received training but the grounds staff did not (Emily, Eaton).
At Farray training and development allocation had apparently improved markedly upon the appointment of a director of teaching and learning, predominantly for teaching staff. This appointment followed the observation by Fiona of the following:

The PD budget is adequate but staff think it could be better! Previously staff attended PD because something interested them, rather than to improve an area they weren’t very good at. One person going to something is not very effective and I have asked, are they the right person to effect change, or will they transfer their knowledge to others? So what we are looking at now is who the ‘right’ people to attend are. Attendance may also help to strengthen the gifts of individual teachers.

This illustrates that Fiona seemed to be taking a more balanced approach to the allocation of training funds, incorporating both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ elements, whereas previously it was too ‘soft’, with people attending courses that ‘interested’ them, not that ‘developed’ them.

At Gregg also there was a director of teaching and learning who worked in conjunction with the HR practitioner to organise PD for teaching staff. It was noted that in schools, training tended to be focused on “educating the educators” (Grace, Gregg) rather than on the non-teaching staff. However, the PD budget had been increased here and more structure had been put in place to redress this inequitable imbalance. Finally, it was noted that a significant weakness with the current PD structure at Gregg lay in the evaluation of training as a means of improving and the level of sharing that occurred post training. “I think sharing occurs in departments but not in a big way, and on an ad hoc basis” (Gary, Gregg).

In terms of softening and ensuring equity in allocation of training, four of the participant schools were developing some awareness and guidelines; however, there was little evidence of the form and function this training would take. Except at Kelsall and Gregg, there was no acknowledgment of the need to link training allocation to performance management outcomes, which realistically would have been difficult in view of the
three-yearly performance management cycle. There was also little evidence of offering training to those who needed it (for skills and knowledge development) as opposed to wanting it. Nor was there any evidence of post training reporting and sharing; hence no accountability. So, in training and development too, there was a need for further review and a tightening up to ensure fairness and equity.

**Organisational development**

All participant schools had engaged in organisational development (OD) at some stage, but different processes and people were involved in each school. Softening of the OD process occurs by involving all employees in developments that may affect their jobs and roles through frequent communication and provision of opportunities for collaboration, input and feedback. In reality, however, many school leaders want to ‘protect’ their busy staff from the ‘detail’ of major change and development and so consultation may not be as pervasive as it could be.

At Brighton, the principal stated that OD was propelled by “perception, management, the executive, the Board, but in reality it was driven by the strategic planning process” (Belinda, Brighton). She highlighted the benefits for staff in being involved in this process. “Working within a strategic planning framework is empowering for staff because consultation happens with all of them, giving opportunities for input into the direction of the school”. Brighton thus demonstrated a softened approach through their involvement of staff in the strategic planning process.

OD can take a number of forms, and at Ariana, structural change had occurred some years earlier through a review of the roles and tasks of individuals working in the school as a means of breaking down ‘power plays’. So-called ‘difficult’ people in the school were involved in the review:
We evaluated the roles and tasks of jobs in the school so that they are doable. If difficult people are part of this sort of process they take ownership and become more accountable. We had a little action plan and it worked a treat. We changed the structure of positions and we have changed the organisation as a result. We broke up a lot of the power plays (Anthony, Ariana).

At Ariana, the decision (by whom is not clear) to involve the difficult people was a ‘strategic’ one in terms of breaking up power plays, therefore making it ‘hard’.

However, by getting them involved and taking ownership in the decisions made, the process was softened through their collaboration. The implied outcomes involved softening too. This occurred through the re-structuring and breaking down of groups that obstructed a good working environment for other staff, who it seems were the ultimate benefactors.

Softening of the process occurred at Kelsall too where staff were empowered by the principal who placed the responsibility for, and decisions about, change upon them, as illustrated “I challenge and empower and encourage the different school areas to develop goals” (Karen, Kelsall). At Eaton all members of the executive would get involved in discussions about OD but it was noted that this area “is not one we do a lot of - we are not good at that” (Emma, Eaton).

At Farray, meanwhile, OD was initiated by the principal and “pockets of people who initiate issues” (Fiona). This disbursement of responsibility apparently created problems, as illustrated here:

We have not yet bedded down our strategic plan. We have all the latest new ideas and innovations but they are all disconnected and you forget the big picture and people are exhausted because they are not moving in the same direction.

Fiona apparently recognised the importance of creating a strategic plan that would guide the direction of staff in the school towards a similar objective. What she was seeking was a soft outcome, whereby staff knew where they were headed. However, Fiona was
frustrated that the process for getting there was not yet finalised and that the lack of vision and focus that existed was ‘exhausting’ her people (and herself) and was therefore ‘hard’.

Meanwhile, at Gregg OD occurred using a collaborative, or soft approach among teachers with decisions being made at the executive level.

I sit at the side of the table, not at the head. I am a member of the team. I like to think that everyone will be responsible for change but teachers are very operational and they get through each day. If they have good ideas it is good for them to present them, but the executive will be the decision makers (Gerri, Gregg).

In recognition that OD represents a significant change process in the life of a school, the evidence suggests that whether it was conducted as part of strategic planning, or as a stand alone process of change there was consultation with staff. In this respect, softening occurred in the participant schools that engaged in OD, although the frequency and extent to which information flowed through to staff were not evident.

**Succession planning**

In the participant independent schools succession planning was considered to be a problematic area, for a variety of reasons, outlined here by school leaders. Softening of the process may occur through adapting a staff information system to include, not only the payroll, holiday and job ‘facts’, but also the goals and aspirations of individuals which could be gleaned during the performance management process or through discussions with teachers in departments about career plans. However, the acquisition of such information is likely to be restricted by privacy laws, and the time required to get ‘below the surface’ of staff biodata to explore their deeper aspirations. In addition, skeleton staff within schools who perform any one role, and labour shortages external to schools limit the succession planning that can be done.
At Ariana Amanda indicated that succession planning had “clear application at management level”, although she believed that a replacement should come from outside the school. In the event of sudden departures from the workforce, Amanda thought it important to train up an ‘acting’ principal to cover for her but also for key positions in the non-teaching area. However, in this area the budget restricted the degree to which staff could be moved around to gain experience in certain skill areas, and yet maintain those skills at workable levels in the event that they were needed. The ageing of the teaching workforce was also considered by Anthony as a critical consideration in succession planning, not shared by the principal at this stage.

While Amanda took an ‘inactive’ view of succession, believing that the budget and lack of talent were constraints, the view of succession planning at Brighton was more about lack of opportunity:

Succession planning is the great furphy in independent schools because there are not enough places for those who want to succeed. We can plan as much as you like. Succession planning leads to an enormous amount of disappointment because if people are groomed and don’t get the position, they feel hurt and unsupported (Belinda).

Nevertheless, Brighton’s policy regarding succession for heads of department was to advertise, and employ from the external labour market for three reasons. One reason given was to re-invigorate the structure. A second reason given by Belinda was to attract “deputies of other schools and others from interstate, or from other schools with thick CVs who are genuinely good people”. A third was to alleviate the complacency that existed at this level and the expectation by some that they were being “groomed” for certain roles. This approach clearly represents a tension between being ‘soft’ through supporting long serving staff and providing (albeit limited) opportunities for them; and being ‘hard’ by advertising and seeking heads of department from external sources, which forced these same staff to compete with one another. Belinda’s
‘fundamental view’ behind this approach, however, was mirrored in her words “What is the best outcome for the boys? Who are the best people?” Heads of house, meanwhile, were promoted from within the school. This role is pastoral and requires staff who have been tutors and therefore know the pupils, and school well. For non-teaching staff it was considered difficult to define a career path.

At Cranford, succession planning occurred through a tradition of promoting teachers within the school into heads of department roles to provide a career path for them. Meanwhile, at Kelsall succession planning was considered ad hoc, although it was expected to improve imminently with the implementation of a database called Synergy. Leadership opportunities were provided, for example promotion to head of school, but the principal observed that there was a limited pool of talent to fill these positions from Western Australia. Using a ‘soft’ approach, heads of year and heads of department were appointed internally to motivate staff and provide them with a career path.

There was no succession planning in place for heads of department at Eaton. Using a ‘hard’ approach, generally these positions were advertised and appointments were made from the external labour market. At Farray no formal procedure was in place either, although the HR practitioner stated that this was because heads of department were in their position for “as long as they wanted”. There was little turnover and succession was not seen as an issue, although, as with HR planning, Fiona did view this passive approach as “risky”. She had just chosen to focus on other issues instead.

At Gregg, succession was considered integral to the strategic planning process. The principal said, “if we are going to be a strategic guru here, then succession planning is fairly significant” (Gerri, Gregg). She considered it “a bit scary” that staff in the school had not been promoted into positions outside of the school, while from the external labour market, several promotional positions had been filled. It was evident that
“scary” was attributed to Gerri’s view because some staff had been in the school for too long and had left their “run a bit late to move out of the school”. Gerri’s decision to retain them for now was ‘soft’, but her view that they had left it too late to move on was ‘hard’. The ageing of the teacher workforce was seen as a significant strategic issue by both the principal and finance director at Gregg, but succession planning was seen as integral to the strategic plan, the education plan and the performance management process in which school goals, personal goals and development plans could be married, thereby balancing ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ approaches.

**Staff advocacy and conflict resolution**

While disputes and grievances are perceived as hard, because they unsettle the people involved and those with whom they work, which potentially lowers performance, it is imperative that guidelines and procedures are put in place to alleviate this possibility. The objective is ‘hard’ because the organisation wants to restore ‘normal’ performance output, but the process is ‘soft’ because it provides a vehicle to potentially restore equilibrium between parties. Where disputes cannot be resolved, however, a ‘third’ party may need to be involved. Independent school associations employ industrial relations advocates who provide advice in these areas. In worst case scenarios, industrial relations advocates or lawyers may be engaged. However, in a sector that is viewed as having heart, such measures are adopted reluctantly. Costs may mount too, at the expense of resources being made available for the benefit of students. Nevertheless, if a case arises and remains in the school, softening of both processes may occur by the appointment of someone who is seen to be empathetic, non-judgmental and objective.

In three participant schools, Ariana and Brighton and Farray, heads of department were expected to get involved in addressing staff grievances. However, it was noted by the HR practitioner at Ariana (which had a grievance policy) that because heads of
departments at his school had not received training in mediation/ negotiation, this led in
some cases to an escalation of a grievance (Anthony). At Farray, where heads of
departments could not resolve a dispute, only then would the principal be asked to
mediate.

At Brighton there were clear guidelines, a grievance committee, a staff association and
grievance procedures in place which were advertised on the college intranet and also in
the photocopy room which all teachers visited during any week in term time. If
intervention by heads of department failed there was little hesitation by staff to see
either the deputy principal or principal, which indicated that there was a level of
comfort about this. The finance director at Brighton had shared that the principal “ran a
tight ship and the number of grievances had escalated” (Beth). In response, the
principal told the staff, “you are the best paid teachers in Australia and it’s about time
you started acting like it” (Belinda, Brighton). Thus, while attitudes expressed by the
principal, at least, were considered hard, there was provision for staff to address
grievances through well defined procedures and availability of senior people in the
school.

At Kelsall, Eaton and Farray clear grievance handling guidelines were not in place and
at Gregg there a grievance policy was being written. The HR practitioner at Kelsall was
involved in documenting any grievances and in two cases he had mediated in disputes
because of his perceived neutrality. An advocacy committee was also in place. At
Eaton if disputes turned into major conflicts the executive would get involved, although
apparently, “there are not many issues” (Emily, Eaton). At Farray, most conflict was
resolved within the school and people generally “agreed to disagree”. However, staff
with grievances were now being invited to record them in writing to the principal to
make them accountable.
At Gregg there was a staff association which was led by an elected common room chair who acted on behalf of staff. Together with the chaplain, the chair met regularly with the principal to talk about any grievance issues or disputes. Sometimes a head of department joined a meeting and, when appropriate, the staff union representative.

In two schools (Ariana and Kelsall) HR practitioners were involved in documenting disputes. Only at Gregg was it planned for the HR practitioner to be involved in coaching heads of department in conflict resolution and handling difficult people. The input of the other HR practitioners was evidently minimal. In each of the seven independent schools there was room to soften staff advocacy and grievances further, either through formalising procedures, providing training to selected people in mediation, or by electing a panel of people who staff relate to and trust with their issues.

There was no evidence to suggest why such ‘solutions’ were not yet implemented into the participant schools.

**Counselling and pastoral care of staff**

The levels of counselling and pastoral care available to staff in the participant schools varied from the minimal to a whole school approach. Primarily pastoral support structures were evident for school leaders but this was less so for the remainder of staff. Provision of such support is already considered soft, but publicising its availability broadly adds to this.

In respect to pastoral support provided for the independent school principals, the following emerged. The principal at Ariana indicated that she turned to the chairman of the board to discuss issues, or the chaplain “to get things off my chest”. She added:

> I do not have a lot to do with fellow principals through the Australian Heads of Schools Association (AHISA). It is quite a club. So far I have been to little that has been put on by AHISA which surprises me in a way because I thought I would be as active as everyone else but I have become a bit cynical about it. It has a club mentality and is a
boys’ network. I think they do support each other. I was so long a teacher that I am not convinced that heads need to support each other; some of the others need more support for what heads do (Amanda, Ariana).

When needed, Belinda at Brighton spoke to her deputy, the finance director and head of preparatory school whom she saw as mentors and guides. She said, “I have absolute and total trust in these three people who I have appointed”. She saw AHISA as having a pastoral care function and she also sought support from other principals she respected.

The principal at Kelsall indicated that she had regular meetings with the Chair of Council and “if it is a staff issue I make him aware”. She also confided in the HR practitioner on some issues, “but nothing earth shattering just sounding him out about correct process, etc”. Karen expanded further:

I have a good executive – we are open and friendly. Decisions are generally joint and I rely on my heads of schools and Council. Through AHISA I am the current mentor and we allocate mentors to other new principals. I have been around for a while. We have a PAL system – peer assisted leadership – a colleague from interstate where they come over and shadow you for a week and give advice (Karen, Kelsall).

Meanwhile, both the principal and finance director from Eaton shared any issues they had with other leaders within the school. The principal indicated that they were “a great group of people - we all get on and like each other”. Depending on the issue she also spoke to the council chair; sometimes the Industrial Relations consultant at AISWA and if she had queries about working conditions she might consult another independent school principal. The finance director stated that she would have a “bit of a whinge” to the principal if there was something she didn’t like or was not happy with. The principal would listen and then tell her, “well go and get on with it”.

Fiona from Farray indicated that she felt well supported by a number of people. From time to time she consulted the council chair, the finance director, her spouse, or the leadership team at the school. She added:
One of the heads of primary is a very sensible calm person so if I need to calm down I shall probably wander down and talk to her. The other is a very creative person. Another is very good with working with staff. The network is broad and meets a lot of my needs. In AHISA a mentor is now appointed to new heads but I missed out. I also feel comfortable phoning any number of principals.

She also sought spiritual guidance from time to time and encouraged her staff to seek similar sorts of help:

I get spiritual direction from a person who gives me perspective. She keeps me focussed on what is really important and keeps me grounded and I see her every 4–6 weeks. To get spiritual direction is really critical. What I say to people is that it is a strength to ask for help, not a weakness. She helps keep me sane, especially in a church school, which is really complex and a principal is ‘it’ and we write all the policies and get the funding and make all the decisions.

The principal from Gregg sought support, on occasion, from the council chair, a previous mentor and one or two other heads occasionally. She attended AHISA and had a mentor appointed to her. She also spoke of issues to the finance director and the director of teaching and learning. She elaborated:

I am pretty open. I talk to people when I need to. I talk to the consultant who did the cultural audit and leadership impact studies on the staff and I have a coach that I talk to but I am being careful about that because I don’t want to compromise the team stuff. There’s also a retired head who is a consultant who I worked under for six months. The main one is my previous head but I don’t know why because we are so different. We got on well. But the culture of his school was complex so one learnt how to be a head maybe a bit faster. I talk to the head of AISWA if I think she can help and I talk to the chaplain (Gerri, Gregg).

The executive staff at Gregg were told they could use the consultant coach on an as needs basis, but the finance director indicated that she approached the chaplain for counselling and advocacy when needed because of his separation from the line management role.

Meanwhile, pastoral and counselling support for other staff was mixed. At Ariana it was conceded that, “no, there is not much” in place for staff (Amanda) although at this school and five of the others, employee assistance programmes (EAPs) were made
available to staff in need. Gregg was alone in claiming that “an EAP attitude” existed in the school and a formal programme was not needed (Grace). School counsellors were accessible to staff in all schools, and at Kelsall and Gregg, chaplains were also available. At Kelsall it was admitted that no formal network existed, although an attempt was made by the principal to do so.

I was asked if we should set up a pastoral care team and I said staff will go to people they have a rapport with or confidence in and I guess I also think that’s part of the responsibility of the Heads of schools. Very few staff come to me. It’s about building up a culture - that if you have a concern you go to someone. Having HR people is another part of the network and they are seen as neutral, HR should be seen as making no judgment but listening and supporting and helping that person if something needs to be done. Staff know that the HR dept can be used for that and use it but not a lot. Not too many issues like that come up. It is another layer of how that’s managed in the school. Casual and part-time should be managed by the Heads of department (Karen, Kelsall).

At Brighton the availability of pastoral care for staff was well defined in an on-line document which stated that if staff had an issue with anything they should be referred through either the finance director’s office, if general staff, or the principal’s if teaching staff. It was noted; “Belinda’s door is mostly open and mine is always open. People walk through it a lot, not formally but informally” (Beth). Secondary schools staff members were also encouraged to approach the Deputy, as illustrated here. “Recently two staff members were particularly stressed and they approached the deputy who gave them a week off to get themselves together again”.

Pastoral support for staff at Eaton was limited to being advised “about what is happening around the school and about everything that is likely to happen so people understand context”. Emma went on to say “we keep them informed; some come up with different ideas” (Emma). Counselling was offered to staff as needed. For staff at Gregg there were a variety of avenues for care and consultation:
If teachers were unhappy they would come to me, or head of schools or the chair of the common room who is elected by the staff because of their people skills (Gerri, Gregg).

Finally, in a soft, whole school approach, one school leader indicated that the building of a collegial environment, a community was helpful in times of crisis, which was in line with Sergiovanni’s (1994) findings. Fiona elaborated:

Our school has a long tradition of staff being quite close to each other. Collegiality is promoted because the majority of our staff are practicing Christians and two mornings a week a staff member takes devotions – either they will talk about their family, listen to music or give a gift. This sharing and devotion builds community. Sometimes we walk out laughing but other times we walk out crying. Trust is engendered and this encourages people to work things out together. Not always but most of the time (Fiona, Farray).

Fiona also expected that the heads of school and departments would take care of their staff, although up until recently they were untrained. She had engaged a clinical psychologist to come in and do professional development to help deans ‘draw the line’ and know when it was time to refer on students and teachers to qualified professionals.

At each of the five schools with an HR practitioner on staff, there was a trend emerging of staff visiting and speaking to them. Amanda indicated some surprise with this, as illustrated in her comment “It was not my intention that this would happen, but it has been an unintended outcome of the appointment” (Ariana). Gerri from Gregg offered,

Gary definitely has a pastoral role. And, as a facilitator and coach there are pastoral elements to it. Some have already approached him but he is still not well known so trust has to be built

A separate issue that emerged was the ‘them’ and ‘us’ attitude that existed between teaching and non teaching staff in some of the schools. This was particularly highlighted at both Gregg and Brighton. To overcome the perceived division at Brighton, the PD committee had instituted ‘all staff’ PD days which had improved communication. The finance director added “this has been well received and it implies that all support staff are an important cog in the wheel” (Beth).
For the principals of the participant independent schools there were evidently many support networks in place. However, for the remaining staff, support appeared somewhat ‘hit and miss’, with a mix of informal and formal networks operating. Individuals were left to create their own networks or seek out someone they trusted from within, or outside the school. This indicated a hard approach by school leaders to the provision of pastoral support for their staff. However, value was being created by HR practitioners to fill this gap in service. That it was occurring by default and was not planned indicated a level of trust being built by the other staff in these people and in the role of HR practitioner.

**Summary**

As with the pre-hire phase the evidence outlined above suggests the use of a disparate array of HR activities in the participant schools. In terms of who performs the activities, some are initiated by the principals alone or with executive teams and others are performed by a mix of HR practitioners, directors, heads of departments and deputy principals. Due to time and human resource constraints that exist in independent schools there appears to be little rigour and coherence in the delivery of the HR activities. In addition, there are a number of other situational and external factors that constrain their implementation. These will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

A summary of the three distinct areas analysed in respect to staff management in the form of a table matrix – what is practiced, who performs the activity and whether it is hard or soft – has been developed and is found in Appendix I. The implementation of HR activities are summarised at the end of this chapter.
Departure

Exit interviews

Exit interviews with departing staff were only conducted at Ariana, Brighton and Kelsall. But, although the principals were involved at Ariana and Brighton, and the HR department at Kelsall, there was still “no formal process in place” at any school (Kevin, Kelsall). At Eaton, Emma indicated that when staff left there was nothing more than “a gift given and a kiss goodbye”.

Exit interviews were not given a high priority by any of the respondents, although HR practitioners at Kelsall, Cranford and Farray were making attempts to devise a process. While the primary purpose of exit interviews is to gather information about the work environment, the work and colleagues, softening of the process can occur through actually inviting departing employees to share their experience while reassuring them of confidentiality, and taking action where an issue is investigated and deemed appropriate. Reluctance to implement such a process by school leaders and heads of department may, however, relate to a fear of criticism. It is suggested that attitudes may need to be adjusted, therefore, to view exit interviews as a fact finding and improvement process for remaining staff, and to facilitate staff retention.

The people performing HR activities

In this section, the people in independent schools who were involved in performing HR activities, are revealed. School leaders, either principals or finance directors were marginally involved in the implementation or delivery of the following HR activities: HR planning (at Ariana, Farray, Gregg and Kelsall), job analysis and design (Ariana, Eaton, Farray); job descriptions (Ariana, Eaton and Farray), performance management (Brighton, Cranford, Farray), training and development (Brighton), succession planning and exit interviews (Kelsall, Brighton). They were involved to a larger extent in
recruitment and selection (all schools except Cranford and Kelsall), remuneration (all schools), advocacy and conflict management and organisation development. Finance directors were all involved in the setting of remuneration (usually through EBAs).

In all five schools the HR practitioners employed were involved at the process level in job analysis and design, job descriptions, recruitment and selection, EBAs, induction, legal compliance to the extent of ensuring equity in opportunity (EEO) and safety and health, mentoring, training and advocacy. Only at Gregg did the HR practitioner get involved in coaching of heads of departments and admitted he had a fair amount of autonomy. At the time of interview, however, Gary was not involved in any strategic decisions regarding staff. At Kelsall the HR practitioner was investigating a performance management system and was gaining the respect of the school leaders, but he admitted progress was ‘slow’. Strategic activities like HR planning, job analysis, EBAs and remuneration, succession planning and OD remained in the domain of the school principals and executive teams, albeit marginally. At Eaton, the Deputy Principal was involved in induction, performance management (keeping a spreadsheet of due dates) and professional development.

While the ‘reigns’ continue to be held by school leaders over strategic HR activities, it is unlikely that HR practitioners will get the opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and potential. Similarly, while school leaders only get marginally involved in strategic HR, the likelihood of developing a coherent and consistent framework of practice is restricted. The implications of this are discussed in response the second research question.
Conclusion

In choosing the HRM framework to explore staff management in the independent school sector, one concern was that of transferability – from traditional school based ‘staff management’ to the business derived HRM. However, while the literature revealed that the definitions of staff management and HRM aligned, as did the operations and structures of independent schools and business, in this chapter it was confirmed by the respondents that their schools aligned with business on these grounds. It was therefore argued that the HRM function could be used in discussions about staff management in independent schools.

Nonetheless, school leaders were keen to highlight the differences between the sectors, in the sense that they believe that their schools are ‘human’, ‘emotional’ and ‘caring’ businesses in which ‘feelings matter’. To take account of the human side of schools, the dualistic notion of HRM referred to in the literature as ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ was used as an analytical tool and an assumption was made that the ‘soft’ aspects of HRM would be applied by school leaders to “release [the] untapped reserves of human resourcefulness [through] increasing employee commitment, participation and involvement” (Gill, 1999, p. 4). The implications of these findings are discussed in Chapter 6.

In respect to the activities adopted by participant schools for managing staff, the following table (Table 4) represents a summary of the HR activities implemented whether in full, or in part.
Table 4: Summary of extent to which HR activities are implemented in these schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HR activities implemented</th>
<th>HR activities implemented to a limited extent or not at all across schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job descriptions</td>
<td>HR planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and selection</td>
<td>Job analysis and design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay/remuneration</td>
<td>Staff induction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative compliance (OSH, EEO)</td>
<td>Coaching and mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling (EAPs)</td>
<td>Organisational development (OD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR planning</td>
<td>Performance management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job analysis and design</td>
<td>Training and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff induction</td>
<td>Rewards and recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance management</td>
<td>Succession planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and development</td>
<td>Advocacy and conflict management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD</td>
<td>Pastoral care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succession planning</td>
<td>Exit interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advocacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coaching and mentoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exit interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The activities found to be implemented in some form in the participant independent schools include job descriptions, recruitment and selection, remuneration and legislative compliance, which are deemed as those that are the minimum necessary once staff are employed in a school. In the areas of job analysis and design, staff induction, performance management, training and development, OD, succession and planning, advocacy, coaching and mentoring and exit interviews there is only partial, or no activity in the school. All school leaders interviewed ‘knew’ the terminology associated with the HR activities, and expressed some level of intentionality in regard to procedures on the right hand side of the table. However, for some activities there was no perception of need and they were not, therefore, given priority.

‘Humanism’ and softness can manifest in a number of ways, and at a number of levels in any organisation. In independent schools, ‘softness’ is most likely to be initiated and shaped by the principal and the executive team who, through knowledge of selves, the culture and contexts in which the school operates and knowledge of others working in the school, are the most appropriate to model and target a softened approach and so facilitate the building of trust between themselves and staff. The essential ‘softening’
elements are outlined in Appendix I, and the principles underpinning them are outlined in Chapter 2 (see Bogler, 2001; Jackson, 2000; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mulford & Johns, 2004).

In regard to the achievement and maintenance of the many ‘softening’ elements analysed, however, school leaders did not appear to consider the emotional, intellectual and physical demands of teaching roles, the time involved, nor the variety and stimulation of tasks in the design of jobs for professional staff (which is, albeit, limited at schools by the nature of the structure of lessons). HR practitioners revealed that the job descriptions themselves were formatted using consistent templates, and the tasks and responsibilities of teachers remain the same as they had always been.

In the next chapter, the perspectives of school leaders and HR practitioners about the emerging role of HR practitioner within independent schools are presented.
HR practitioners in independent schools: An emerging trend or tool?

Introduction
This chapter focuses on the ‘phenomenon’ of the HR practitioner in independent schools from three perspectives. The first perspective is that of school leaders in five participant schools who made decisions to appoint an HR practitioner to their schools. Why these appointments were made will be examined in this chapter, as will the expectations school leaders had of the role and the attributes sought.

The second perspective is gained from the HR practitioners who were appointed to the role in the five schools. Their troubled beginnings will be described in terms of their welcome to the school, their level of satisfaction with the role and the constraints they encountered. The five HR practitioners interviewed had been working in their role for periods ranging from 9 months to 2½ years at the time of interview.

Since the original interviews, HR practitioners have been appointed to three more independent schools. Even so, with only eight HR practitioners employed out of the 149 independent schools operating in Western Australia, this represents a small ratio. The possible reasons for not appointing an HR practitioner were canvassed with school leaders from the seven study schools, and this issue is also discussed.

Perspectives of school leaders
Catalysts for the appointment of Human Resource Practitioners in independent schools
This section outlines the reasons school leaders gave for the appointment of HR practitioners to their schools, which are classified into four main themes: inefficient processes and poor documentation; recruitment activities; policy development and legal
compliance, and undeveloped HR activities and management structures (See Appendices J & K for tabulated summaries).

**Inefficient processes and poor documentation**

There was only one school that attributed the decision to employ a human resource practitioner to council level advice. Council members, many of whom had “had experience in private enterprise where some sort of HR operative was working”, had presented Amanda at Ariana with the view that “an enterprise gains from having this person”. However, she also attributed her reasons to inefficiencies in handling HR procedures arising from two factors. One, because there was one person who was a “capture all in the management team for bits and pieces that didn’t fall into general school curriculum, pastoral care and anything else” and another whose role was “problematical in terms of load”. Amanda continued:

> It meant that quite a number of human resource issues were not being dealt with as expeditiously as you would hope and I’d recognised that how we were doing these things was inefficient and it was because the stuff was being shared with several people. They were the main ones doing the work and there was other work that was effectively not being done at all (Ariana).

Another school leader attributed the appointment to too few procedures in place, lack of planning and poor documentation:

> There are no key performance indicators, poor documentation of industrial practices and the total lack of an HR plan and forward thinking of what we are facing; for example, an ageing staff. We could get to a point where we have lost a huge amount of experience and knowledge in a very short time and so we need a succession plan and strategy to replace that (Grace, Gregg).

**Desire to recruit ‘quality’ staff**

An acknowledged issue being contemplated by education decision makers globally today is that of present and predicted teacher shortages. In Chapter 2 several reasons were given for this situation. However, in independent schools, which have standards
and reputations to maintain, particularly in respect to academic achievement, the shortage of effective or ‘quality’ teachers was considered particularly important. To address this, one school leader identified that a rigorous recruitment process would facilitate the attraction of quality teachers to her school based on her assumption that “the highest calibre teachers” would help to “solve a lot of problems” (Karen, Kelsall).

In conjunction with recruitment, Karen also identified the need to review and up-date her school’s job descriptions. Another principal put her view this way:

I guess the reality is that if people are the most important asset someone should be charged with the responsibility to ensure we have got the best people. For me the key driver in this is going to be teacher quality. We can have whatever buildings we want and facilities but if we don’t have good teachers then those facilities won’t be useful so I think this [appointing a HRP] is one link in the chain about getting better teachers in here and about getting teachers already in here better (Gerri, Gregg).

One explanation for this trend is outlined by a finance director:

Human Resource Practitioners are coming into schools now if they recognise that 60% of the budget goes on salaries and it should be intuitive that the people are the most important part of the educative process and that’s where you should pay most attention (Grace, Gregg).

Another factor in improving the recruitment process was the issue in three all-girls’ participant schools, Cranford, Eaton and Kelsall, of young, female teachers dominating the workforce, many of whom were applying for maternity leave in similar timeframes.

In terms of attracting staff to the school the area where we have difficulty is maternity leave and LSL, short term leave – for full time jobs we have no problem – we have tried to tighten up on this and build up a database of those who have been successful in the school. For limited term jobs there is a limited pool of top quality people. I think all schools have this problem (Karen, Kelsall).

Two other principals articulated the need for improved recruitment processes. One claimed that nepotism in replacing departmental teaching staff was the result of poor recruitment practices (Cathryn, Cranford), and another based her need on the opening of
a second campus, which required someone to coordinate the recruitment of large numbers of staff in a short time frame (Fiona, Farray).

**Policy development and legal compliance**

At one participant school another reason for the appointment of a human resource practitioner included the need to comply with the audit and registration process imposed by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and to assist with ensuring compliance with industrial law. In respect to DEST, policies that complied with legislation such as health and safety and equal opportunity needed to be written and put in place. This was highlighted by Karen (Kelsall):

> The policies we have in place are outdated, such as harassment, bullying and complaints procedures. These are needed to support best practice and what we do and to satisfy the DEST registration process.

Furthermore, other legislation associated with the employment relationship, such as employment contracts needed to be carefully examined and complied with, as indicated here; “I was conscious of litigation with eastern states’ colleagues and I wanted things to be squeaky-clean” (Karen, Kelsall).

**Undeveloped HR activities**

Two school leaders articulated that the demands and complexity of the principal’s role were becoming untenable.

> I was aware that my own job had become a lot more demanding and I was conscious that I wasn’t doing certain things well, like paying attention to the many staff management processes (Karen, Kelsall).

Another principal stated:

> The job of a Head is so complex so while he or she can do a lot of that he or she can’t pay attention to the detail and so in terms of getting more consistency, more procedural and also more than that, for me the HR practitioner is going to do all that (Gerri, Gregg).
Karen and Gerri both acknowledged that developing and coordinating staff related activities took knowledge and time, which they were increasingly short of due to the demands of their jobs. This affected their capacity to look at the detail associated with staffing matters and to develop coherent, consistent procedures that drive the activities.

In the following section, the expectations and desired outcomes of the HR practitioner appointments by the participant school leaders are described, which correspond closely to the catalysts.

**Desired outcomes of the HR appointment**

The corollary to inconsistent and inefficient procedures, or having none in place at all, and poor associated documentation as reasons for appointing an HR practitioner is to have this person write procedures that have not been developed and to edit and re-align those that have in the participant independent schools.

Having an HR practitioner in place to undertake these tasks was seen as critical by all five respondents. In addition it was observed by the principal at Ariana that “this person could coordinate and administer compliance issues in this school as well as streamline job roles” (Amanda). The school leaders in the other four participant schools had similar views to Amanda and saw a role for their HR practitioner in the development of HR processes and related policies. In particular, it was articulated by Gerri (Gregg) that the processes related to induction would hopefully “have a flow on effect of committing to the school’s culture”. Other policies and procedures contemplated for development at Gregg by the HR practitioner included KPIs that would measure elements of the school’s success, an HR plan for teaching staff that would accommodate the changing needs of staff and students, and a succession plan and PD for non-teaching staff.

Karen (Kelsall) added a few other tasks to the HR practitioner repertoire. She stated that the creation of a performance management system slanted more towards a
development focus and away from one that ‘managed behaviour’ was an important role for the HR practitioner, who would also be on the spot to address staffing issues, create job statements and other HR procedures as required. Added to the role, Cathryn (Cranford) saw the HR practitioner undertaking middle management re-structuring, and improving professional development to assist teachers better cope with changes generated by external stakeholders. These were intended to reduce the “unacceptably high staff turnover” occurring at Cranford.

The principal at Kelsall also stated that improved recruitment processes, in particular would be seen by people as “fair, and transparent and equitable for all concerned”. Linked to improvement in the rigour of recruitment processes is an improvement in the capacity to select ‘quality’ of teachers, expressed by one school leaders in terms of “getting the right people on the right bus” as well as improving the timeliness of the process:

Previously we might have taken 3 or 4 weeks [to recruit] and we have lost people and they have gone elsewhere because schools tend to appoint teachers in particular at the same time (Gerri, Gregg).

The HR practitioner at Gregg was also employed to coach middle managers in order to assist school leaders to also “make the people better” and to assist the leaders to implement the strategic plan being developed at that time. One related goal was attracting and replacing the anticipated loss of an unacceptable number of staff within just a few years and the need to attract and appoint new and younger teachers. This was related to the ageing of the teaching profession, for example, in 2003, 48% of male teachers across Australia were 45 or older; 41% of female teachers were 45 years or older (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006).
In conclusion, the value of appointing an HR practitioner to independent schools is expressed by this respondent:

> We can clearly justify having an HR practitioner. First, for improved quality and policies. Also, the morale in respect to the staff has always been good at this school, but I think it’s been enhanced by having an HR practitioner. It’s not just the boss making the decision. Decisions are made in a fair and equitable way across the school (Karen, Kelsall).

Karen saw her HR practitioner as not only having a process-based role, but also providing an objective perspective based on ‘sitting on the fence’ in support of any staff member in the school who sought advice. This was just one more tool in the HR practitioner’s ‘box of tricks’ (Gary, Gregg) that justify such an appointment.

**Attributes and competencies of the HR practitioner**

This section describes the attributes independent school leaders valued and sought in the HR practitioner they had appointed to their schools. While it is argued that all line managers are HR managers at some level, this information clarifies and differentiates the attributes of a qualified practitioner as a source of competitive advantage to the schools that employ them. The main attributes are grouped here according to the knowledge, skills and abilities (KASOs) (see Appendix A) of the candidates sought by the different school leaders. KASOs are the characteristics of a person that are not directly observable but become observable when the individuals are carrying out the tasks, duties and responsibilities (JDRs) of a job, as outlined in the job description (DeCieri et al., 2005) (see Appendices M – O).

In respect to the workplace, knowledge is defined as the facts and information required by an employee to fulfil the requirements of their role (DeCieri et al., 2006). In order for an HR practitioner to fulfil the role in independent schools, all of the school leaders considered a good working knowledge of work place legislation important, as opposed
to qualifications. Only two school leaders mentioned the need for HRM qualifications, with one adding the following qualifier:

I am not rushing to include this aspect in the ‘list’ because I’m generally a skeptic about the sociological areas so I suppose a part of me would fit in with the old convention that if you know your basic facts, legislation and Awards and [you have] a bit of common sense, you can work your way through this stuff. Book learning is not the best means of giving you these skills (Amanda, Ariana).

Another principal mentioned a knowledge of performance management systems as important (Karen, Kelsall) while the principal at Gregg believed it important for the HR practitioner to have a “knowledge of everything related to the management of human resources”. Finally, for teachers to award credibility to the role, both these principals indicated that a good knowledge of schools and/or education was desirable. Gerri (Gregg) also mentioned that knowledge in strategic planning processes was important.

A skill is something done proficiently and well, usually acquired through experience and training. In two of the participant independent schools the skills mentioned as important for HR practitioners by Karen (Kelsall) and Gerri (Gregg) were communication skills, namely writing, speaking and listening. Linked to communication skills, Gerri also added the delivery of training, and coaching. In all of the schools school leaders mentioned interpersonal skills as necessary to build good relationships, develop an understanding of people and to get along with them.

Abilities refer to the enduring capabilities needed to perform particular tasks (DeCieri et al., 2006). The abilities mentioned as being required by HR practitioners include locating information and articulating clearly and well (Kelsall). Other desirable abilities mentioned were organisation and efficiency, assessing varying needs, looking at performance within context, modelling leadership and learning continuously (Grace, Gregg). A capacity to learn was also mentioned by Fiona (Farray).
Other characteristics mentioned by respondents that do not fall within any other categories include vitality, outgoing in temperament, warmth, friendliness and authenticity. These characteristics, according to Fiona (Farray) would enable the HR practitioner to fit the friendly and welcoming nature of their schools (Fiona, Farray). Fiona added that her HR practitioner should be committed to the school and what it stood for, and be accepting of the fact that in her school, as principal she would retain most of the HRM function. Common sense was mentioned as important by Amanda (Ariana), and Gerri (Gregg) wanted an HR practitioner who was reflective, trusting and able to build trust quickly (Gerri, Gregg).

After some time of contemplation and discussion about the HR practitioner’s role, Gerri concluded that:

> You have made me realise that they have a lot of things to do. If the HR practitioner is doing a good job then she makes my job easier by me being able to quickly make the right decision. All the other stuff will be looked after and I will just sign the paper.

In summary, the common characteristics were mentioned by respondents in respect to the attributes they saw as important for a school based HR practitioner to have were: a good working knowledge of workplace legislation; the ability to source information; being good at networking, building relationships and getting along with people; human resource qualifications; some education sector background; being well organised and being continuous learners.

**Attributes and competencies of the middle manager in ‘traditional’ structured independent schools**

In the two schools where a distributed model of staff management still pervades, Brighton and Eaton, there were both similarities and differences in the attributes they sought for staff management roles by their heads of department.
In terms of knowledge, all that was articulated as being expected from heads of department was in the area of workplace legislation and Awards. The skills considered important were excellent listening skills to help people through issues, getting along with people, talking to them, relating to them and gaining their confidence, counselling, and competence and excellence in teaching. This latter point was considered essential, “otherwise they don’t get the respect of their staff” (Emily, Eaton).

Other attributes, or qualities expected of department heads were the ability to organise themselves and their departmental staff, maintain high expectations of them and continuously learn. Finally, it was considered that the best heads of department would be empathetic, calm, dedicated, helpful, committed and that “they would have confidence in their own ability to lead and a desire to be the leader of their circle of influence - to be powerful and influential and a desire to do” (Belinda, Brighton). What these facilitate is the ability to relate, communicate and build trust with colleagues in the workplace, which are all vital to ensure a fully functional role.

**Summary**

The leaders of the five independent schools proposed a variety of reasons for the appointment of an HR practitioner. Primarily though, the appointments related to issues considered critical to the efficiency and effectiveness of the staff management function and the reduced capacity of school leaders to address them, given that their roles had become more complex and demanding. Linked to efficiency was the fact that school leaders lacked the time and expertise to devote to developing HR processes and policies and to complying with workplace legislation. The appointment of a dedicated HR practitioner freed up their time and enabled them to act on the strategic aspects of their roles and the many other, non-staff related matters that arise.
For example, at Gregg, school leaders are taking a more strategic and planned approach to staff management. This was in response to their desire to attract ‘quality’ teachers to the school to potentially improve student achievement, and to replace the ageing teacher workforce within an anticipated short time frame. They acknowledged that strategic planning takes considerable time and knowledge, so by having the HR practitioner involved at the process level meant that they were free to pursue these and other activities for the benefit of students in the school. This process is illustrated diagrammatically below.

Figure 6: Flow diagram of human resource practitioner intervention in a recruitment and retention strategy.

The outcomes expected of the HR practitioners include improvements in the consistency and efficiency of HR delivery, development of rigorous teacher recruitment processes to attract and retain quality teachers and their professional development once employed. HR processes and policies were needed to comply with school accreditation and legal requirements, and school leaders required assistance with the people side of strategic implementation.

The knowledge sought by school leaders of the HR practitioners appointed was related to work place legislation, the school system itself and qualifications which underpin the
HR processes. The skills considered important were communication and interpersonal skills, and some coaching. Where knowledge was perceived as lacking, HR practitioners were sought who had the ability to locate information and learn; to speak well and to organise, plan and identify problems. Other desirable characteristics tended to be the soft traits of tact, discretion, warmth and friendliness.

**Why the majority of independent schools are maintaining traditional structures**

In this section, the reasons why the majority of WA independent schools are not appointing HR practitioners are suggested. Participant school leaders indicated that a major inhibiting factor was the cost. With tight budgets and limited funding granted to schools by the Federal Government (DEST) based on a socio-economic (SES) index of family income for those who send their children to independent schools, the cost of employing an extra person to the administration team had been found difficult to justify (Fiona, Farray). Australia wide there is a trend to establish either high-fee paying, which are accessible by the few, or low-fee paying schools, which are accessible by many. It was found that only the high-fee paying participant independent schools employed an HR practitioner at the level of manager, whereas the one low-fee paying school in the study appointed at ‘officer’ level. A recent salary survey by Hays Management (2006) revealed that HR managers employed by business and government were paid in the range of $AU 90,000-$120,000, while HR officers are paid in the range of $AD 55,000-$70,000. Either way, such a cost represents a significant budget item that potentially detracts from allocations normally made for the betterment of students. Respondents from participant schools that retained traditional structures added their comments.
Emily from Eaton indicated that she retained this structure because she believed she had “terrific staff” and had few big issues arising. She also added:

The schools that have gone with an HR practitioner have had different issues to address whereas we haven’t been faced with problems to that degree. Farray, for example, has one because they have a large staff.

Emily provided further insights as to why schools such as hers might retain traditional structures. These included having confidence in her heads of departments to address the “daily stuff” that arose and her belief that it is the principal’s role to increase staff morale and address staffing issues. In her case, she wanted to retain involvement with staff and didn’t “want someone else to do it”. She thought that teaching staff would ask what was “wrong” if an HR practitioner was appointed and claimed that they would think that money was being “better spent if it was going into teaching”. She also opined that Kelsall had appointed an HR practitioner because the principal there had adopted a more corporate model. Perhaps quite revealingly, she concluded this section with the question, “what does an HR practitioner do anyway?” (Emily, Eaton). One further reason for not appointing an HR practitioner was provided by the finance director at Brighton. She said it was because “no crunch in here has happened, I guess”.

**Perspectives of the HR practitioners**

*The HR practitioner’s welcome to independent schools*

The appointment of an HR practitioner into independent schools is a relatively recent move across Australia. Such appointments represent not only a small shift in the organisational structure but also to the independent school culture, which Wagner describes as fundamentally “rich in relationships, nurturing and caring” (2004, p. 3). Despite these shifts, and evidence and literature that hint at the nurturing and caring nature of these schools, the participant HR practitioners employed indicated that they did not feel welcomed, nurtured or cared for as they settled into their roles. In fact, two
of the HR practitioners experienced either conflict with a superior or distrust from peers, which are both outcomes elicited as a result of organisational change (James & Connolly, 2000).

James and Connolly (2000) suggested that resistance to a new initiative in the workplace may be overcome by involving staff in its development and through leaders articulating the vision they have for the initiative, or role. The evidence again indicates that only at Kelsall, the principal invited comment from staff about introducing an HR practitioner into the school. At no other participant schools was there any collaboration with staff about this initiative, nor was a vision for the role communicated.

This lack of consultation was also reflected in the manner in which the HR practitioners were introduced into the participant schools. Some of the HR practitioners were quite accepting and philosophical about this, while others felt frustrated and unsupported. Anthony, at Ariana was one of the latter. He was well known in the school because he had been working in another role in the school for several years, but about his introduction he stated:

The principal will not tell the staff what the role of the HR practitioner is. I said to her (Amanda) that when you tell staff I’ve got the position they need to know I’ve got your support so she did word that email well and she told them that the role was for their welfare as well, but since then staff are asking, what do you do?

Perhaps it was assumed by Ariana’s principal that Anthony would not need introducing, nor his role explained, because he was known and could speak for himself? Anthony, quite clearly, disagreed. A similar situation had also occurred at Kelsall where the HR practitioner had more or less fallen into the role having ‘proven’ himself as a good administrator. At Farray meanwhile, the HR practitioner’s appointment was ‘sold’ by the principal telling staff that he was taking over the administrative function of payroll, while she, the principal retained responsibility for other HR activities. However,
Frederick, the HR practitioner at Farray still received no formal introduction. He elaborated:

Staff were a bit cautious about me when I first started because they weren’t sure what I was here to do. Initially they thought that I was ‘important’ because I was up near the principal but I am not a decision maker; I am told what to do generally. This office was spare and I needed to have one on my own for confidentiality reasons. I mix with staff when I can and am now seen positively by them. Teaching staff are now seeing me during their breaks.

The HR practitioner at Cranford, Chas, indicated that his position was announced by the principal but added that the announcement was merely “window dressing”. He noted that, since then, general staff dropped in on him but when he tried to connect with the heads of department he encountered resistance. Meanwhile at Gregg, the HR practitioner’s introduction was also fairly low key as indicated here by Gary.

The announcement to non-teaching staff was done by the finance director, to whom I report, through email and I know the principal spoke to the teachers briefly about what the role entailed at a staff meeting. I commenced on a staff day and was introduced, but not with, ‘this is what the role is’ so while I think the role was alluded to in a positive way, people don’t really know what my ‘box of tricks’ is. A number of people have asked and I try to make a physical presence. I have not met any resistance but curious confusion. This reflects a lack of understanding about what the role could be doing, should be doing and can do for staff.

The principal at Gregg, openly conceded that her announcement of Gary’s appointment was minimal but justified this on the basis of difficulties with staff created by her predecessor “making a whole lot of appointments and decisions and not necessarily enacting them well”. She added:

...decisions were made on the run without reflection and so I thought that staff would think ‘here we go again’ and I thought that by the time we had put a HR practitioner in place we would have planned for it well and there has actually been a lot less resistance than I thought. The biggest complaint is that he is located upstairs – not central.

In terms of where the HR practitioner fits into the independent school structure, Kevin and Anthony concurred that, “the HR person sits on the fence between the staff and
management”, while the principal at Gregg commented that “the HR practitioner is someone in the middle; not line management but he knows the rules” (Gerri, Gregg). In terms of reporting, Anthony reports to the director, staff and services; Kevin and Chas to the principals of their schools and Frederick and Gary to the finance directors.

The HR practitioner’s role
This section describes not only what the HR practitioners performed in their roles, but also how they felt about their roles. This is analysed against Hackman and Oldham’s (1976) job satisfaction framework because it has been found that employees whose job satisfaction and morale are high, are loyal and committed. The corollary is that employees who have low job satisfaction and morale will leave.

Hackman and Oldham (1976) found that jobs differed in the extent to which they involve five core dimensions: skill variety; task identity; task significance; autonomy and task feedback. They suggested that if jobs are designed in a way that increases the presence of these core characteristics employees may experience three critical psychological states including ‘meaningfulness of work’, ‘responsibility for work outcomes’ and ‘knowledge of results’. Hackman and Oldham (1980) added that when these critical psychological states are experienced, work motivation and job satisfaction will be high. Other factors that contribute to job satisfaction include the quality of relationships with colleagues and supervisors; recognition, reward, job design, security and achievement (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). On the other hand, Polong (1990) found that the best predictor of job satisfaction is when the employees’ personal values match those of the organisation in which they work.

Three of the HR practitioners interviewed expressed some frustration with their roles which translated into varying levels of job satisfaction. Each had ideas on how to improve staff management procedures in the school and expand their roles, but felt that
these were being ignored, or subsumed by other tasks that they were ‘told’ to do by superordinates.

The frustration felt by the Anthony at Ariana was palpable, demonstrated by this comment “in essence the HR role in schools is a struggle. It is going to be a long slog.” There was also some disagreement between Anthony and the principal, in regard to how each perceived the role. In the section on reasons for appointing the HR practitioner the principal had stated that she was primarily interested in getting the staff welfare and compliance issues bedded down, while Anthony saw his role as encompassing a far greater scope. Tension reigned even though during the selection interview Amanda had indicated that she was seeking someone who “was going to administer rather than initiate”. The principal acknowledged the tension, as demonstrated in her comment “Anthony has a more ambitious vision of what his role should be than I do so there is not a total accord in the way we see the role”. She added:

In essence I wanted to keep control of things myself for the time being. I believe that the educational processes are unique and that a person has to have a background in education to do justice to it and I believe that this should be the driving force to what is happening in a school. In the same sort of way in this position I didn’t want the incumbent to be going beyond my perspective of where the school needed to go so it needed to be either someone with education experience or someone who was going to administer rather than initiate.

Anthony’s vision of his role also included the up-skilling of heads of department in the areas of leadership, time management and delegation. He said,

I see heads of department and other middle management absolutely running themselves ragged because half the problem is they haven’t been taught how to lead and so they haven’t learned the time management or delegation skills and I feel that if we get them up to speed with the management side then this will help them with the stresses (Anthony, Ariana).

Anthony also wanted to provide a supportive staff environment in such areas as occupational health and safety because he saw staff comfort and productivity being
linked together; to develop an HR strategic plan; assist in career planning; to tie benefits
to performance management and development, and develop policies. To apply these
improvements the HR practitioner articulated that his role required a greater level of
freedom and autonomy, although it appeared that this too was the cause of tension
between himself and the principal.

Evidently, while Anthony was trying to make his work meaningful and endeavoured to
take responsibility for work outcomes, the fact that the principal saw his role very
differently lead to frustration and conflict. In addition, the quality of relationship with
the principal was quite tenuous and the recognition he received from her was mostly
negative. Analysed against Hackman and Oldham’s framework (1976), the potential for
Anthony’s dissatisfaction with his role is high which has been demonstrated here
through the considerable disparity in expectations.

The HR practitioner at Kelsall had no tertiary level qualifications but was brough into
the role to initially “tidy up a few processes”. Over time he was also becoming actively
involved in the processes of recruitment and selection and made the comment that “even
the principal is starting to take on board my advice”. He added:

…the finance director is learning to trust me and will come to me from
time to time to seek advice. The (professional staff) are also realising that
I am actually helping them and they are joining in with focus groups, etc.
I think they are beginning to see that I am here to save them work and
assist them rather than it just being a gimmick.

These comments indicated that in addition to the recognition he received from the
principal, Kevin was taking on more responsibility of meaningful tasks and achieving
well, which contributed to his job satisfaction.

From Farray the HR practitioner gave another perspective:

I was given a job description of my position and most of it was payroll
type functions (60-70%) and that’s cut and dried in that there is a
beginning and end so that was a definite expectation. However, the HR side was a bit greyer because the position has evolved and has depended on what I wanted to pick up and what people handed to me. (Frederick).

In regard to the autonomy he experienced, Frederick said:

I do have quite a bit of autonomy in one sense but I want to be seen as taking on responsibility but then it is squashed because it is a new role so I am trying to find where I fit and other school HR people are finding the same.

He concluded with his view of the importance of the person in the role having an education background.

Having an education background is very helpful because teachers are different and the profession is so different and they don’t like administrative tasks. Being a [qualified] teacher myself I know that if I hand them a form I shall have to remind them about it. If you provide workshops they ask why they should have to come because it has nothing to do with teaching and I know because I used to be like that. Now, more is expected of them and teachers don’t want to have to do anything other than teach. There is a different mindset even though it was only four years ago that I left [teaching].

Analysed against Hackman and Oldham’s framework (1976), Frederick’s role had a lot of responsibility but it lacked meaning, recognition, reward and diversity as far as he was concerned. He experienced frustration because the principal maintained much of the responsible and challenging aspects of HR and he did not see a lot of potential for development because he had no HRM qualifications (although he was a qualified teacher). This was confirmed by the principal who stated, “Fred is at the level of HR officer and is unlikely to progress to the role of HR manager because he has no qualifications in the area. There is also the cost issue associated with this”. Frederick’s job satisfaction was thus perceived as moderate. I understand that less than a year after this interview, Frederick departed his position at the school.

At Cranford, the HR practitioner, Chas saw his role as predominantly recruiting new staff, facilitating the principal’s vision to overcome teacher resistance to change, to
overcome the antipathy and barriers existing between the teaching and non teaching
staff and to train heads of department to use the developed staff policies and procedures.
Each of these tasks is regarded as heavy in terms of responsibility both singly and as a
collective.

Chas’s role had grown significantly, in breadth and depth, since he was first employed
as registrar. He was putting in 60 hours a week at work, and was also studying part-
time to gain HRM qualifications. A number of significant and controversial issues had
recently surfaced about staff in the school. However, Chas had not involved the school
Principal because she had only been in the role for a few months and Chas believed he
needed to ‘protect’ her from the seriousness of these issues. Chas was thus ‘burdened’
with a level of responsibility that should have been on the shoulders of the principal, or
at least shared with her.

While Chas’s role provided him with meaning, responsibility, reward, job diversity and
a sense of achievement, he did not have the recognition from and relationship with
middle managers. In addition he was experiencing stress from being over worked and
over tired. Chas experienced job satisfaction but was totally out of balance between
work and home life. Less than a year after this interview, Chas resigned.

Finally, the HR practitioner at Gregg discussed his role in two parts. The first part
outlined how he determined priorities and issues that needed to be addressed when he
first commenced the role.

Priorities in the role were determined initially by discussion with my
boss, the finance director, and the principal. They said, ‘we know we
don’t have policies and the infrastructure so you have a look at it’, so I
have just reviewed what was there and I have started with job
descriptions and recruitment and selection. We determined there was no
consistency in those structures.

In the second part he discussed his role in terms of reactive and proactive processes.
My role is proactive in terms of policy development but reactive in recruitment and selection because suddenly jobs are required and I had to get things in place. Proactive in respect to reviewing some positions that are casual and have been for some 20 years and that’s ticking along but I am looking at various areas and thinking that needs fixing, etc so I am working on things a bit at a time so they are more proactive. The reactive stuff is the ad hoc staffing issues. EBA negotiation is also way overdue but reactive because people haven’t been agitating for it.

Gary, who was HRM qualified and with experience gained in business, appeared to have a lot of autonomy in his role with the senior executive leaving it to him to determine priorities and make the job work. In fact he stated “I have very high autonomy in this school. I am trusted to do my job”. As a result he was gaining in confidence and authority, having been trusted to get on with things in his own way. Against Hackman and Oldham’s (1976) criteria, Gary’s job satisfaction was classified as high, although two years after interview, Gary also resigned from his role in the school.

**Attributes and competencies of the HR practitioner**

The attributes and competencies mentioned by the participant HR practitioners as being required for their role are not dissimilar to those mentioned by school leaders. In terms of knowledge, however, they indicated that HR qualifications were essential as was experience, or an understanding of the education sector. Knowledge of budgeting principles and business administration were also mentioned. The skills considered important were interpersonal, as well as negotiation skills. They considered it important to be able to organise and prioritise, and other characteristics they attributed to HR practitioners included trust, calm, efficiency, resourcefulness, flexibility, tact, credibility, confidence and a willingness to compromise.

**Challenges and constraints**

A previous section outlined the troubled beginnings of the HR practitioners’ role in participant schools in terms of their introduction and expectations. This section, which
is summarised in tabular form in Appendix Q describes the challenges and constraints
faced by the HR practitioners, commencing with Anthony’s.

The (challenges) vary. They are the unexpected cropping up and resolving of problems. You can’t afford to lose your cool. The frustrations I feel are the biggest challenge. People not understanding my role - what the job is really about. There are things in the corporate world that are the norm. But it’s not how it is in the education sector.

The HR practitioner at Kelsall also found ‘problem solving’ a challenge and, as with Ariana, at both Farray and Gregg it was alleged that the HR practitioner’s role was not understood by staff. Gary thought that this lack of understanding derived from the fact that “no one has told them what the role could be doing, should be doing and can do for staff” (Gregg). Kevin concurred with Gary, but added,

Initially HR was regarded with suspicion because the staff thought ‘here we go again, something new’. Sometimes it’s quite exasperating and I feel like I am battling to win people over but then I think, ‘just let them do their own thing’, however I then think this is not helping them or me. I see the teachers as clever academic people who have been doing it for a long time and they might be thinking, ‘who do you think you are’. The finance director likes to hang on to the HR role with the non-teaching staff without handing much over to the HR department.

A significant challenge related to the attitudes and values of teachers. They were considered as “different from professionals in other organisations” (Ariana), as having a narrow mindset (Farray) and entrenched (Gregg), inflexible and rigid (Brighton). Other HR practitioners said of them:

…they can became quite defensive. There are people out there who do things their way and have no intention of changing regardless of who is in the role. And that’s one of the difficulties – people being set in their ways (Kevin, Kelsall).

I experienced a culture shock when I came here because of the ‘narrowness’ of timetabling and teachers’ views. In a corporate culture you have professional respect between the disciplines. Teachers tend to only know the profession of teaching and they can be narrow in accepting the advice from other areas and this is because of their limited exposure to other disciplines (Gary, Gregg).
There are far too many people on the teaching side who are happy to accept a salary of a HOD but run a mile when asked to do any managing of staff. But I think we get what we deserve there because we actually spend no time and no money helping people understand human behaviours and being better managers of people. Problems occur because we don’t follow a formal process (Barry, Brighton).

To overcome this, it was suggested that:

We need to take [teaching] staff outside their comfort zones and help them spread their wings. So it’s really changing the culture and I can tell you now that it’s going to be a real up hill battle (Anthony, Ariana).

We need to change their mindset and tell them there is more to education than just teaching the kids (Frederick, Farray).

It’s a building of trust and gaining a few wins. I need to make sure we have covered every aspect (Kevin, Kelsall).

All of the HR practitioners felt unsupported, and therefore constrained by staff at some level in their schools, whether by the principal (Ariana), deans or heads of department (Farray, Cranford). It was Frederick’s view that:

The deans and heads of department need to take more on; it is frustrating because they don’t understand what HR is all about. They know I coordinate and offer advice but that’s all. Also, the deans don’t push their staff to go to workshops I organise, like for example on discrimination, which legally they need to know about. I know what we need to be telling people and legally what they should know but the deans don’t encourage their staff to attend. (Farray).

A further constraint articulated by Kevin was where the principal challenged him about HR activities in which he considered himself very experienced. He felt he needed to research the facts and convince her.

The HR practitioners at Ariana and Kelsall indicated that there had been no discussion with school leaders about the outcomes and expectations of the role, causing some consternation. However, Anthony explained that a likely reason was “it is a new job and school leaders want to see how things evolve. They don’t know the expectations either”.

152
Lack of time and resources to address all that needed to be done were seen as challenges at Kelsall and Gregg, and Frederick added:

…pigeon holing me in payroll makes it hard to get into HR type things. I have so many ideas that I never get to. Sometimes people aren’t ready to change. I have [actually] made a list that I came up with together with the external consultant but then this recruiting came up and this is taking all of my time (Frederick, Farray)

Gary at Gregg held similar views as his superordinates about the constraints of his role.

Getting a complete understanding of the history associated with various aspects of the school, ie context and who does what and where. Communicating my role to the staff and getting about. Vulnerability and resistance by heads of department. Most heads of department don’t see themselves as having a human resources role. They see themselves as content managers and that’s probably the biggest constraint on an HR manager because the expectation then is that it becomes his role. A human resource manager is seen as a practitioner, not consultant who skills up everyone else in the role.

Other constraints mentioned by HR practitioners include a lack of formal HR qualifications that inhibited potential expansion of the role (Frederick, Farray), not being taken seriously (Gary, Gregg), having to remain calm (Anthony, Ariana) and the administration load (Kelsall). The constraints were succinctly summarised here by Frederick:

Maybe, to drop what I am doing and then having to find answers to complex problems. Keeping teachers happy as such! You have to tread with care. Getting management to understand exactly what I am doing. The principal knows the HR side and the finance director the payroll side so neither knows the other side and it is difficult getting them to understand the other, and me, and how different the two work functions can be (Farray).

Finally, from Kelsall, Kevin identified another constraint that links to the issue of quality staff mentioned in the previous chapter,

…there is the issue of retaining really good staff. There are no incentives to keep them – we can’t pay them any more. There is also problem solving, the administration load; the pastoral element; time management and breaking into the role.
Conclusion

This chapter described the introduction of the HR practitioner into five independent schools in Western Australia. The comments by school leaders indicated that they expected the HR practitioners appointed to increase efficiencies and effectiveness in the performance of staff management activities. This was to be done by developing procedures; ensuring workplace legislation was complied with and putting in place rigorous recruitment systems that enabled the appointment of quality teaching staff.

The comments expressed by participant HR practitioners in respect to their introduction into independent schools indicated that they knew they were breaking new ground, which generated a number of problems to be overcome. In addition, various stakeholders in each of the schools were still feeling their way in respect to the role, causing uncertainty. Nonetheless, in four of the five schools, the appointment was well received by staff, albeit with ‘curious confusion’.

In terms of how the five HR practitioners perceived their roles once settled into them, the evidence suggests that only two experienced genuine job satisfaction as analysed against Hackman and Oldham’s (1976) framework (Kelsall, Gregg). This indicated an unsatisfactory start to an emergent role in which two of the school principals (Ariana, Farray) were not yet ready to loosen the reins of control over the HRM function. Interestingly, it was the HR practitioners at these two schools who were perhaps the least satisfied with their jobs.

The many challenges and constraints articulated by the HR practitioners include: breaking into the role and gaining acceptance by staff; people not understanding the role, and therefore being resistant; being unsure of what is expected of them because no one had told them; lack of time to implement all that they wanted to achieve; administration overload; the ‘entrenched’ and ‘narrow’ attitudes of teachers and the
issue of line managers deflecting the staff related responsibilities they were expected to perform, back on to the HR practitioners. The implications of these findings are elaborated in the final chapter, which follows. A number of suggestions are also made for independent school leaders to consider.
Introduction

In an interpretive study designed to elicit the perspectives of the leaders of seven independent schools, and the HR practitioners working in five of the participant schools, this chapter addresses the implications and findings in relation to two research questions:

How is the staff management function understood and enacted in independent schools?
How is the role of the HR practitioner perceived and understood in the independent schools sector?

A research design was created that enabled examination of three main issues that derived from the overall context - relentless change. These were: one, the HR activities conducted in each of the seven schools, including the reasons for their introduction; two, the similarities and differences between independent schools and business; and three, the emergent roles of HR practitioners in this sector. In addition, analysis against a hard/soft HRM framework revealed the extent of softening in line with the ‘human’ side of each school’s operations, and ‘realism’ was introduced through explanation of the contextual factors that mitigate against the ‘ideal’ of softening being enacted. In the sections following, the implications of findings are discussed in turn.

Responses by school leaders

Taking into account both stakeholder and situational factors (see Figure 4) the first research question is discussed in this section in three parts. The first part relates to the influence of principal leadership on the introduction of HR activities and the potential for their softening; second, the mediating factors that constrain the softening of HR
activities are discussed. Third, the introduction of HR practitioners as a response is also outlined.

**Principal leadership**

In line with the finding that leadership has a significant influence over school success (Mortimore, 1999) it follows that school leaders will also influence and direct the introduction of new systems and processes that will potentially enhance the likelihood of success. However, complexity is added to their role through them having to consider a number of stakeholder and situational factors. For example, a significant constraint on the implementation of effective staff management practices is the level of funding provided to independent schools by DEST, which assesses them according to a number of socio-economic factors. Funding also depends upon the satisfying by independent schools of a number of other criteria. Such imperatives enable a level of control by the Commonwealth to be maintained over the States’ administration of education.

Parental expectations are generally considered greater today than in previous decades, in line with the school fees parents pay for the education of their children (which range between AUD$14,000 and $25,000 across Australia for the ‘high fee paying’ schools). With a link found between student achievement and quality teaching (Darling-Hammond, 1999) the meeting of this parental expectation, in particular, is likely to be a significant driver for school leaders to adopt HR activities that will attract and retain quality teaching staff to their schools, for example, developing accurate job descriptions and person specifications, recruitment and selection strategies, induction and socialisation. However, while some of these activities were adopted in attempts to achieve this, and other outcomes, many other ‘important’ HR activities were yet to be adopted.
The evidence suggests that the extent to which HR activities in the HRM domain were adopted, and softened by school leaders tied in with the literature about the different leadership styles (Bogler, 2001; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003) and their underlying values (Mulford & Johns, 2004). This study also revealed that limits to the knowledge and understanding of school leaders about the efficacy of each activity, and the links that exist between them to effect holistic improvements in the management of staff, tended to constrain their implementation. Other constraints included the role complexity and lack of time experienced by school leaders, plus a number of tensions, such as the sometimes unrealistic expectations of parents and the capacity of themselves and their teachers to meet them; the individual abilities of students and their level of academic achievements; individual staff needs and accountability processes (from within, and external to schools), and the pressures upon them to maintain a viable school operation while also retaining its ‘heart’. A further hindrance to implementation and softening lay in the limitations to both knowledge and understanding about staff management by heads of departments who had not been provided with appropriate training.

Thus, although a variety of HR activities have been introduced (see Appendix I) into participant independent schools, the coherence and consistency with which they are applied has been limited, although school leaders’ awareness has been enhanced in recent years through their own reading and information received by independent school associations. This thesis will also add to their knowledge and understanding of this important area.

**HR activities**

In the seven participant schools, staff management occurred at some level with the implementation of a number of HR activities (see Appendix I). All schools conducted the following HR activities: job descriptions, recruitment and selection, remuneration
and legal compliance activities such as occupational health and safety. However, the inference is that these HR activities were introduced into each of the schools to address the essential staffing requirements associated with recruiting, selecting and remunerating staff and complying with workplace legislation. The evidence suggests that because HR planning was partially performed in four schools, and no planning occurred in three, there was therefore little or no planning in the introduction of these activities, nor was there evidence of planning in the introduction of the other HR activities. For most participant schools then, HR activities were implemented on an ‘as-needed’ and in an ‘ad hoc’ manner.

As previously indicated, however, in reality decision-making about the implementation of HR activities was a lot more complex, with practice being constrained by external and internal factors that combine imperative and choice. Referred to in this study as ‘mediating factors’, the constraints are outlined for each activity below (see Appendix C).

**HR planning**

Softening of this process, where it was conducted in participant schools, was not done for a number of reasons. School leaders, in some cases expressed a desire to ‘plan’ but they found that financial limitations and lack of manpower constrained them. Another constraint was, and continues to be, the on-going shortage of teachers to fill positions advertised and therefore to satisfy their planned objectives, including softening.

While independent schools are perceived as ‘better’ work places than government schools because they are generally better resourced and there are perceived to be fewer behaviour management issues, fewer teachers are applying to positions, coupled with a talent ‘pool’ that is more limited than previously. In Western Australia, particularly, fewer school leavers are applying to undergraduate teaching courses, for reasons
associated with remuneration, status and behaviour management issues. And many more are resigning from teaching to chase the much bigger incomes being offered in the north of the state, generated by a mining boom that looks to continue for many years to come.

An independent report by international recruitment firm Gerard Daniels revealed that the Western Australian education department ignored warnings of an imminent teacher shortage and that its recruitment strategies have been woefully inadequate. The report added:

…we argue that some of the changes to the workforce could and should have been predicted by the department. Anything short of a proper investment in workforce planning and human resource and staffing systems will be a waste of time and energy (Hiatt, 2007, p. 7).

It is unlikely that, in view of this shortfall, independent schools will meet their targets in terms of recruiting and retaining the quality teaching staff mentioned by leaders at Kelsall and Gregg. With fewer ‘quality’ staff, student achievements may not improve, even in these ‘privileged’ schools, unless creative means are devised to address this shortage. For independent schools that operate in competitive environments this is of some concern in terms of future viability.

**Job analysis and design**

The issue of emotional labour remains ever present and is a drain on teachers. The extent to which it taxes them emotionally and physically over time, depends very much on the particular “lifestyle, disposition, socio-cultural and biological traits” of individual teachers (Liu & Meyer, 2005, p. 989). Such individual differences thus make generalisations about job demands difficult and limit attempts to soften them. In addition there are difficulties associated with quantifying the emotional and intellectual expenditure by individuals. Constraints that apply to creating the ideal job design relate to the curriculum prescribed in the Curriculum Framework, developed by the
Curriculum Council (in Western Australia) which is a legislated body, the pedagogical approaches implied in the Framework, university entry exams, the year levels taught by teachers as well as the duty of care expected of teachers in the execution of their roles.

**Job descriptions and person specifications**

With job descriptions written mechanistically and in isolation of a job analysis, limitations may apply to their usefulness. Identifying the factors that characterise a ‘quality’ teacher are not difficult, but ensuring an applicant’s honesty in addressing each of the knowledge, skills and abilities outlined in a job description may be more difficult. This is especially so with a limited pool of applicants. One may be forced to offer a position to second best simply because there is a position to fill and limited talent with which to fill it. The achievement of academic ‘success’ for a whole cohort of students may thus be constrained.

**Recruitment and selection**

Although at least two school leaders in this study indicated the desire to attract and retain quality, teaching staff, the rigour with which they were applied in the participant schools was mixed. Recruitment processes were conducted in all schools, but softening in respect to the development of well-defined job descriptions and person specifications or realistic interviews was limited. Only one school mentioned that it had undertaken a ‘cultural audit’ of the school (Gregg), but this was not linked to the selection of people who would be most likely to match either the job, or the school culture. It is suggested therefore that recruitment and selection processes be better developed that link all related elements - job analysis and design, job descriptions, person specifications, school culture - together with accuracy and rigour.

It has been acknowledged by school leaders in this study, and others, that teaching can be a difficult and demanding job. In respect to adopting realistic interviewing as a
softening process, it represents an honourable ideal, but if too many of the negatives and too much ‘realism’ about the role are presented at interview, especially about the increased accountability requirements found in independent schools, are teachers likely to accept offers? Alternatively, if the culture and values of these schools are presented as their ‘badge of honour’ and an applicant, to secure a role, misrepresents their own, what processes are in place to address this?

**Remuneration**
In regard to remuneration, while there was extensive consultation prior to signing off on ‘collective’ EBAs in six of the seven schools, the unions still retain a significant influence. This diminishes the potential to soften this activity at the individual level, where performance is perceived as excellent and reward is considered appropriate.

Topical in the media at the time of writing is a proposal by the Commonwealth Government’s Minister for Education to introduce merit pay for teachers. However the issues surrounding the evaluation criteria for measuring teacher quality and performance remain problematic. With limited scope to differentiate between exceptional and average teachers with merit pay, up until now this factor has provided the rationale for remaining with traditional pay structures in schools.

With staff salaries comprising upward of 70% of independent school budgets, limitations also apply to the salaries that can be paid to teachers despite the application of procedural and distributive justice. Generally speaking, if salaries are increased 5%, then fees are also increased to this level.

**Induction**
With induction, there seemed to be an awareness that processes in place could be improved and softened further, to welcome and integrate new staff into schools. However, while school leaders felt comfortable with starters early in the New Year,
there was less comfort about those who commenced later in the year, and also about how to address this particular issue. Softening of the process for these ‘late comers’, therefore, remains problematic.

Legal framework
With respect to compliance staff handbooks have been written or posted on-line to school intranets with varying degrees of complexity and depth. Few staff are inclined to read through lengthy tomes however, unless directed to do so. If orientation to a school is missed, for whatever reason, it is likely that attention will not be drawn to compliance matters.

Coaching and mentoring
The absence of formalised coaching and mentoring programs in many of the participant schools were associated with the time taken to develop and maintain processes that are agreed upon by staff following consultation and the lack of a dedicated individual to coordinate them. Coaching is also seen as expensive, particularly because it is not usually a one-off session. Several may be prescribed to facilitate some change in the behaviour of individuals. Cost may also explain why no training was provided for heads of departments and teachers to enable them to coach or mentor effectively and why only at Gregg was there a deliberate effort to include coaching in a formal way.

Performance management
Valid and reliable performance management systems require knowledge, understanding, time and training to set up, apart from other factors. They are time consuming to develop, deliver and analyse; hence they are undertaken three-yearly in most independent schools. Existing systems in schools are reluctant to identify the elements of teacher ‘performance’, let alone measure it. Such failures reduce the efficacy of performance appraisals, leading to watered down systems of little value.
Training and development
Directors of teaching and learning are given the task in independent schools of sourcing and allocating appropriate training for teachers. Many of the people in these roles are trained teachers with experience in teaching. Their understanding of training as it links to gaps in skills, post training reporting, performance reviews, and training need rather than desire, is generally limited as is training in a strategically based framework.

Organisation development
The school improvement movement has enhanced collaboration between staff, but consultant between staff and school executives about strategic or bigger picture issues remains the prerogative of leaders. Capable, confident leaders tend to be transparent and open about proposed changes but others want to protect their busy staff from the intricacies of major developments.

Succession planning
Privacy laws to some extent prevent the accumulation of biodata and other data on staff that could be used for decision making about succession. On the other hand, gathering data ‘below the surface’ of demographics and its analysis requires time and understanding, which are rarely available to already busy administrators. In addition, skeleton staff within, and labour shortages external to independent schools limit the succession planning that can be conducted.

Staff advocacy and conflict resolution
Ideally, grievance procedures are in place to inform staff about their rights and responsibilities; and how to handle conflict. Mediation occurs as a last resort and few schools are geared up for this. The independent schools associations in each state have industrial relations advocates who provide advice and in the worst-case scenario, industrial relations advocates or lawyers may be engaged. In a sector that is viewed as
having ‘heart’, such measures are adopted reluctantly. Costs may mount too, at the expense of resources being used for the benefit of students.

**Workplace counselling and pastoral care**

Not all schools are aware of the availability and process involved in engaging an employee assistance practitioner or program. Unclear policies and lack of people in the school to provide pastoral support to staff in need are also potentially problematic.

**Exit interviews**

School leaders and middle managers may be reluctant to discover why staff are leaving the school, fearing criticism. Attitudes may, therefore, need to be altered to view exit interviews as a fact-finding and improvement process for the staff remaining and to facilitate staff retention

**Overcoming the constraints**

Notwithstanding the constraints or mediating factors that may prevent softening of activities to occur, it is suggested that one means of improving the morale of teachers in independent schools, including those with a significant child care role in the home, or ageing teachers whose enthusiasm and ‘spark’ are fading, or those who just feel drained from the daily input of emotional labour, is through offering greater flexibility in workplace hours both on and off school campuses. While not undermining the physical presence of a teacher in classrooms, a lateral and innovative approach to teaching in K-12 schools to maintain the commitment and involvement of teachers is recommended. Two approaches could include the expanded use of computer technology and also flexible learning approaches, both of which are becoming more and more sophisticated, and involve off campus teaching components. Such flexibility may encourage women back into the workforce after the birth of children more quickly than has previously
been the case; it may encourage the retention of burnt out teachers and ultimately it may also assist in alleviating predicted and existing teacher shortages.

In respect to remuneration setting, while it was based on a collaborative process in all of the participant schools, greater laterality may need to be applied in the fixing of pay and rewards for teaching excellence (although defining ‘excellence’ remains problematic). One approach might involve loosening the ‘shackles’ that bind independent schools to unions, such as the Independent Education Union. Another may involve ‘flexing’ the autonomy that differentiates these schools from other schools. If this means removal of EBAs and replacement with individual workplace contracts, this option could be explored further well before EBAs are due for renewal.

To effect suggested changes, the over-arching independent schools representative body could be canvassed (in WA, this is AISWA) to approach Commonwealth and State governments and unions to put forward their views on behalf of members. The collation of relevant research, and collection of ‘hard’ evidence to support their case, such as a determination of workloads, both at work and at home, would assist.

In respect to other HR activities, particularly in the areas of induction and performance management, there was room for improvement in content, process and training requirements. It was noted that school leaders recognised these as areas of weakness and they expressed a desire to improve upon them. However, knowledge about the extent to which one HR activity affected another and the linkages between them was found to be negligible. Such linkages and people issues that arise are too important to ignore, especially as they relate to job satisfaction and retention of teachers in independent schools.
To learn and understand more about the theories that underpin HR activities, their fit with one another and the position of each activity within a holistic application of HRM, the following suggestions are made. One, school leaders engage in further study on educational leadership and HRM; two, school leaders provide suitable staff management training to executive team members and heads of departments; three, a qualified HR practitioner is engaged on either a consulting or full-time basis to independent schools to coach and train school leaders and staff managers, or be involved in the strategic implementation of HRM themselves. In respect to heads of departments it cannot be assumed that a person who is awarded the position of head of department on the basis of subject matter expertise or teaching excellence will also have good people management skills in their repertoire. The tensions experienced in this regard were evident at many of the participant schools (see Chapters 4 & 5).

In terms of the level of softening by communication and collaboration about HR issues in the participant independent schools, it was found to be high at the level of negotiations on EBAs and compliance with workplace legislation, but in terms of decision making in areas outside of these, collaboration with staff was limited. School leaders tended to make the operational and strategic decisions, with input on strategic plans only being sought from staff as they were due for renewal. Organisational development, which is initiated to improve productivity, efficiency and human performance was given little credence by school leaders and, if it occurred at all, initial planning was again done at the level of school leaders, executive teams and school councils, with minimal staff input being sought.

In the areas of staff development, many of the participant schools employed directors of teaching and learning. While the directors identified training needs on behalf of staff and matched them up with appropriate courses, this was done in isolation of
performance management, equitable allocation and accountability. The benefits of training and the sharing of outcomes were therefore minimal. Mentoring programmes in some form were in place in many of the schools, though not always successfully, as were pastoral care structures. Career paths were available in all schools but the responsibility lay on the shoulders of teachers as to whether they put in the required effort and development to be considered for positions of heads of department, head of house or head of school. Career planning on behalf of staff, which is typically done through the performance review process, was not done.

On the positive side, all participant independent schools provided a safe environment, with secure employment, occasional opportunities to switch off and have fun and some recognised ‘special’ achievements, although rarely in monetary terms. As previously suggested, it is proposed that performance management systems are developed that assess the extent to which teachers contribute to their schools, recognise their achievements through merit pay, or through means selected by the staff member and link development to identified career plans and paths. Whether this is done by an HR practitioner or a knowledgeable other is not important, as long as a structure is put in place to effect improvements in these significant HR activities and thus enhance job satisfaction and staff morale.

**The introduction of HR practitioners**

In addressing the second research question for this study – how are HR practitioners perceived and understood in independent schools – it was found that their entrée into this sector has not been without struggle. While a couple commenced their roles with vast HR experience and confidence (at Gregg & Cranford) all five HR practitioners, nevertheless, experienced frustrations with the role and felt constrained in various ways in their environments.
Before I expand on this, however, there are several implications attached to the appointment of HR practitioners into independent schools. First, it would appear that school leaders at these schools viewed the HR appointment as ‘an investment’ in the people of their schools rather than an expense. Given the cost of employing a qualified HR practitioner (at around $90,000 p.a. in one school) this seems a reasonable assumption. Such an approach is viewed as ‘soft’ because the evidence suggests that school principals have directed their finance directors to plan for the appointments in advance and adjust already crowded budgets as a means of looking after their people. Second, the appointments indicate that respondent school leaders understood enough about the HRM function and the knowledge of HR practitioners to take a risk, and break with their traditional staff management structures to appoint one. This move cleared the way for HR practitioners to develop HR activities in a more coordinated, coherent, procedurally fair, documented, timely and transparent manner than school leaders could, themselves, previously. Third, giving a ‘face’ to HRM potentially demonstrated that five independent school leaders were serious about effecting change and improvement in their schools and were accepting of both the role and the person by staff.

Finally, the appointments of HR practitioners indicated that school leaders knew they were reaching the limits of their capacity to lead and effectively manage their large staff resource (of more than 200 staff in all cases), and to develop creative means of attracting and retaining quality teachers to these ‘elite’ schools in an increasingly tight labour market. A couple viewed the HR practitioner as the person with the experience and capacity to address the people issues raised, including the development of more rigorous recruitment and selection procedures, the targeting of professional development to assist staff assimilate change, and the creation of effective performance management systems that link to this ‘development’. Others discussed the idea of
utilising the skills of their HR practitioners to up-skill their heads of departments through professional development and coaching; to assist with linking HR and succession plans to school strategic plans; to utilise staff management information systems more effectively and even to help ‘embed’ Christian values into the school culture.

Unfortunately, while school leaders expressed admirable ideals, and the roles outlined looked varied and stimulating the reality for the HR practitioners appointed to these positions was very different. The many constraints and challenges they experienced were outlined in Chapter 5 and, having now illustrated that the HR practitioners in these schools were not well introduced, nor were their roles well explained or supported by the principals, it would now seem incumbent on the HR practitioners themselves to challenge and change entrenched views that exist in schools. To do this it is suggested that they mingle closely with the staff to educate them and ‘sell’ the array of services they provide and the benefits that their roles accrue at all staff levels. The significance of good interpersonal skills is highlighted here as an important part of the process of ‘self-marketing’.

It is also proposed that HR incumbents model and portray the attributes described in Chapter 5, which include tact, empathy, calmness and helping people. As with any new role in an organisation “quick wins” (Gary, Gregg) need cementing to gain the trust and credibility of professional colleagues, and to overcome potential challenges. Where promotion is desired and qualifications are lacking, they must be acquired. Finally, where support is perceived as not being provided, some serious reflection may be required by the HR practitioners as to how this situation might be addressed.
Finally, it is suggested that independent school leaders who currently employ, or are contemplating the appointment of an HR practitioner take the time to explore potential pitfalls so that they can more smoothly, and softly, pave the way for this person. The employment of HR practitioners is no different from that of any other staff member and processes need to be in place to facilitate a solid start. Ideally then, school leaders will ensure that they are clearer about what they expect of the HR role, the attributes of the person wanted for the role, and about the division of ‘labour’ between themselves and the HR practitioner. This clarification would assist on a number of fronts. It would facilitate the selection of the right person for the school who could address identified needs. In terms of introducing the new HR practitioner to a school, the leader could clearly articulate their responsibilities to other staff with genuine warmth and support and so facilitate their entry into the school. Finally it would assist in the organisation of time and prioritising of tasks. Once into the role, in which expectations have been clearly articulated, trust is more likely to be engendered towards the HR practitioner from both teachers and heads of departments. With trust developed and a few quick wins to ‘cement’ their credibility, the HR practitioner will quickly become an effective and integral part of the staff management operative in the school.

**Methodological issues**

In this section, I examine my research approach. Initial reflection reveals that the strength of this research lay in my experience and knowledge in the two disciplines embraced by this study: school education, and human resource management, and my understanding of the issues explored helped to maintain my focus. Notwithstanding this, however, I acknowledge that my interpretations were perhaps restricted by the strength and conviction of my ideology in respect to HRM’s efficacy to produce positive outcomes in the work place. I therefore had to continually monitor my
interpretations to take account of my biases and, at times, I struggled to maintain objectivity.

As with any study, this one too was bound by time. Nevertheless, it is regarded as being completed in a reasonable time frame, although, such compression meant that some aspects of the research were left unstudied, for example from the perspectives of teachers working in these schools. Notwithstanding the limit in the number of schools studied, and the people interviewed, the breadth and depth of data revealed valuable insights.

With the context of this study being located in a time of significant change within schools, and the ‘privilege’ attributed to independent schools, a further limitation of this study was not being able to expand it to include both the state and catholic school sectors. Staff management occurs in all sectors, albeit with greater pressures on funding in these sectors. It would have been revealing to have gained the perspectives of school leaders in state and catholic schools on the extent to which procedures and policies had been implemented to deal with the staffing issues that inevitably arise within them. Perhaps, future research can explore them.

**Future research**

The findings of this study provided important insights into the perspectives of school leaders and HR practitioners in respect to staff management. However, future research from the perspectives of the teachers in schools would also be invaluable. In those schools where HR practitioners are employed teachers could be asked about the level of support they received now and in the past. In independent schools that retain traditional structures and in which school leaders claim there are few staff issues, again an exploration of the teacher’s perspectives would be valuable in terms of planning and
development of HR activities. A broader range of perspectives would also be gained from increasing the sample of independent schools in a similar study.

Since my data collection, the majority of HR practitioners have left their positions in the schools. A follow up study of these professionals and their reasons for leaving might reveal issues that have not emerged from this study. Several more independent schools have since appointed HR practitioners. An examination of their entry and roles in schools as the basis of comparison would be useful, if only to gauge the extent to which any ‘sharing of experiences’ might have occurred between leaders of schools that had employed HR practitioners for a number of years, and then ‘lost’ them.

**Conclusion**

In the title of this thesis, there is an implied question asking school leaders in independent schools to re-think the staff management activities performed in their schools using an HRM approach. While my ideal of appointing a qualified HR practitioner to every independent school is considered a logical means of developing and embedding HRM practice into their operations, this was clearly not going to be a viable option for two main reasons. One, is the recurrent cost of appointing a non-core professional to the school and two, many independent schools simply do not see the need for one in their operating environments at this time. In fact, in the schools that have appointed HR practitioners, both school leaders and practitioners have struggled with just where and how they fit within these sorts of cultures.

It would seem that much education is still needed then about what HRM can do for staff and the benefits that accrue to anyone in a staff management role if they know and understand how the varied HR activities operate and connect to maximise effectiveness. So, I temper my ideal by suggesting instead that a ‘soft’ HRM framework of practice, specific to the needs of each independent school, be established and implemented by
committed and interested school leaders. In conclusion I assert that staff are a school’s most valuable asset, particularly for achieving the goals of improving student achievements, and enhancing school outcomes. Putting in place a more coherent staff management paradigm, and therefore adding value to the support and development provided to teachers whose role in effecting student achievements has been demonstrated in the literature cannot, therefore, be underestimated.
References


Deece, A. (2003). The decision making capabilities and decision making of the
secondary head of department. *Leading and Managing, 9*(1), 38-52.


school culture and climate on teacher morale. Retrieved 31/03/05, from http://eric.uoregon.edu/.


Falmer Press.


Effectiveness and School Improvement, 4(2), 111-130.


### Appendices

**Appendix A**

**Glossary of Terms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AEU</td>
<td>Australian Education Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHISA</td>
<td>Association of Heads of independent schools’ Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AISWA</td>
<td>Association of Independent Schools, Western Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCA</td>
<td>Business Council of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCI</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce and Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEST</td>
<td>Department of Education, Science and Training (Commonwealth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEU</td>
<td>Independent Education Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KASOCs</td>
<td>Knowledge, Abilities, Skills and Other Characteristics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line managers</td>
<td>Also called middle managers and heads of departments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD</td>
<td>Organisational Development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation (an)</td>
<td>Is a basic structure comprising people and operations that are brought together for a purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Personal Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School leaders</td>
<td>Principals and finance directors, or bursars, or administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEE</td>
<td>Tertiary Entrance Examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALNA</td>
<td>WA literacy and numeracy assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia
(Adelaide Declaration for Schooling, 1999).

Schooling should develop fully the talents and capacities of all students. In particular, when students leave schools they should:

- have the capacity for, and skills in, analysis and problem solving and the ability to communicate ideas and information, to plan and organise activities and to collaborate with others
- have qualities of self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, and a commitment to personal excellence as a basis for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members
- have the capacity to exercise judgment and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and the capacity to make sense of their world, to think about how things got to be the way they are, to make rational and informed decisions about their own lives and to accept responsibility for their own actions
- be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life
- have employment related skills and an understanding of the work environment, career options and pathways as a foundation for, and positive attitudes towards, vocational education and training, further education, employment and life-long learning
- be confident, creative and productive users of new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies, and understand the impact of those technologies on society
• have an understanding of, and concern for, stewardship of the natural environment, and the knowledge and skills to contribute to ecologically sustainable development
• have the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to establish and maintain a healthy lifestyle, and for the creative and satisfying use of leisure time

In terms of curriculum, students should have:

• attained high standards of knowledge, skills and understanding through a comprehensive and balanced curriculum in the compulsory years of schooling encompassing the agreed eight key learning areas:
  • the arts;
  • English;
  • health and physical education;
  • languages other than English;
  • mathematics;
  • science;
  • studies of society and environment;
  • technology;
  • and the interrelationships between them
• attained the skills of numeracy and English literacy; such that, every student should be numerate, able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level
• participated in programs of vocational learning during the compulsory years and have had access to vocational education and training programs as part of their senior secondary studies

2.4 participated in programs and activities which foster and develop enterprise skills, including those skills which will allow them maximum flexibility and adaptability in the future.
Schooling should be socially just, so that:

- students' outcomes from schooling are free from the effects of negative forms of discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion or disability; and of differences arising from students' socio-economic background or geographic location
- the learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students improve and, over time, match those of other students
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have equitable access to, and opportunities in, schooling so that their learning outcomes improve and, over time, match those of other students
- all students understand and acknowledge the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to Australian society and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
- all students understand and acknowledge the value of cultural and linguistic diversity, and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, such diversity in the Australian community and internationally
- all students have access to the high quality education necessary to enable the completion of school education to Year 12 or its vocational equivalent and that provides clear and recognised pathways to employment and further education and training.
Appendix C

Hard and ‘softening’ of HRM activities and the mediating factors that might constrain the softening ‘ideal’ (see also Appendix C).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Hard’ HRM processes defined</th>
<th>‘Softening’ of HRM activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HR planning</strong> – translates organisation goals into HR goals through forecasting (DeCieri et al. 2005)</td>
<td>Ensure sufficient numbers of employees are employed (or dispensed) to cover anticipated work loads. The right balance is critical so employees are not under, or over occupied and work/life balance is maintained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job analysis</strong> – details the tasks, functions and responsibilities of a job and the KSA’s required to perform it (Clark &amp; Seward, 2000)</td>
<td>Analyse jobs ‘realistically’ in terms of the emotional, intellectual and physical demands of the job, not only in terms of the tasks undertaken, the responsibilities and the anticipated time expended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job design</strong> – defines the way work will be performed and the tasks required to perform it (DeCieri et al. 2005)</td>
<td>Design jobs that facilitate work flow, provide variety, autonomy and stimulation, with appropriate provision of equipment and technology and a pleasant work environment. Consider work/life balance, emotional labour and allow for flexibility during job structuring. Provide a path to higher level positions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job description and person specification</strong> - reports both the job content or position and the knowledge, skills and abilities required for a person to do the job (Clark &amp; Seward, 2000)</td>
<td>Ensure responsibilities and tasks are aligned appropriately to the knowledge, skills and abilities of the incumbent, and are achievable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruitment</strong> – attracts and identifies potential employees to an organisation (DeCieri et al. 2005)</td>
<td>Adopt ‘realistic’ interview practices that provide candidates with an accurate ‘picture’ of the job being applied for. Honesty reduces disenchantment with the job, and therefore turnover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selection</strong> – selects applicants to a role with the KSAs that will help an organisation achieve its goals (DeCieri et al. 2005)</td>
<td>Undertake a values and cultural audit of the organisation and align the person’s characteristics with those of the organisation to ensure a ‘fit’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Remuneration</strong> – the financial returns and tangible services and benefits employees receive as part of an employment relationship (Milkovich &amp; Newman, 1999)</td>
<td>Adopt procedural and distributive justice principles in the design of pay. Develop a fair reward ‘system’ and/or KPIs that motivate good performers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Induction</strong> – orients and socialises new employees when they first join an organisation (Molner-Kelly, 2004)</td>
<td>Encourage commitment to an organisation by providing detailed and early induction and socialisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The legal framework</strong> - outline the legislative and compliance regulations associated with the employment relationship (Wheelright, 1999).</td>
<td>Ensure all employees are aware of the compliance frameworks that apply to the workplace and implement policies with guidelines that enable ‘breaches’ to be reported and rectified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coaching</strong> – on-the-job one on one training by a subject matter expert (Stone, 2005)</td>
<td>Ensure high quality, targeted coaching that links directly to the job of an employee is provided to enhance their performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentoring</strong> – involves senior colleagues advising, role modelling, sharing contacts and giving general support to junior colleagues (Stone, 2005)</td>
<td>Set up a mentoring and/or buddy system that pairs new employees, or employees in new roles, with experienced employees who will ‘look out for’ and encourage them as they settle in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance management</strong> – determines how well employees are doing their jobs through communication and feedback (Stone, 2005)</td>
<td>Design a system around performance improvement and development. Ensure that the review system aligns with the job description so that mutual expectations of the job by supervisor and worker are clearly set out. Ensure the process has built-in opportunities to provide and receive feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training &amp; development</strong> – teaches employees knowledge and skills to enable them to better perform their jobs (Stone, 2005)</td>
<td>Link to the performance management system – to identify professional goals and the training needed to achieve them. Ensure that training also contains a ‘development’ aspect; that expands and improves on an individual’s personal skill and knowledge repertoire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisational development</strong> – systemic change and improvement to an organisation’s productivity, efficiency and human performance (Brown &amp; Harvey, 2006)</td>
<td>Communicate with and involve all employees in developments that may affect their job and role. Provide frequent opportunities for collaboration and input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Succession planning</strong> – identifies and prepares high potential employees to fill key professional and management positions to enable an organisation to achieve its strategic objectives (Stone, 2005)</td>
<td>Using computer technology, adapt an information system (database) to gather, store, analyse and retrieve not only contact, remuneration, knowledge, skills, abilities, training and leave data of employees, but also their goals and aspirations so that when opportunities arise, individuals can be appropriately identified. Ensure that appropriate career paths are provided to motivate employees to higher performance levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff advocacy</strong> – Involves active representation or support by one party on behalf of a cause or positions put by another party (Gordon, 2004).</td>
<td>Ensure an empathetic, non-judgmental person is selected for any situation requiring advocacy and mediation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict resolution</strong> – involves any of mediation, conciliation, negotiation and arbitration between parties in a dispute (Gordon, 2004).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workplace counselling &amp; pastoral care</strong> – policies and procedures that are put in place to help solve problems and improve working relationships (Summerfield &amp; Oudtshoorn, 1995)</td>
<td>Ensure that available assistance to staff is well publicised and people seeking the assistance can do so in confidence and without judgment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exit interviews</strong> – interviews that take place with a departing employee to explore the reasons for leaving, identify consistent trends and to reduce further turnover (Levin, 2007).</td>
<td>Invite departing employees to an interview and ensure non-judgmental listening and receiving of information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Guide questions asked of principals and finance directors in independent schools that employ an HR practitioner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guide questions asked in independent schools that employ an HR practitioner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In terms of structure, culture and behaviour, what major similarities and/or differences do you perceive between the business sector and independent schools?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What was the stimulus for, or history behind the appointment of a Human Resource Practitioner to your school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What student, staff and school outcomes did you expect from such an appointment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What were the defining qualifications, experiences and/or attributes of [Human Resource Practitioner’s name] that led to his/her appointment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Where does the Human Resource Practitioner role ‘fit’ in regard to the school’s structure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What knowledge, ability and/or competencies do you consider that an Human Resource Practitioner requires to be most valuable to all levels of staff in schools?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Do you see any constraints impacting on the effective performance of the Human Resource Practitioner’s role? If so, what are they?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. In business and industry the following HR functions are practiced (check list). Which of these are practiced in your school and, using the person’s job title only, who practices the particular function?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How are these functions monitored and evaluated for effectiveness?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Using [these] cards, can you prioritise the HR functions according to the value that you place on each and explain your reasoning for this placement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. On a different theme, as a leader, who do you turn to when you need to discuss issues that are of concern to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. What support structures are in place for other managers and members of staff?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Do you consider that the Human resources role in this school has a pastoral element that could be accessed by all levels of staff?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. What do you see as the most significant staff related issues facing staff managers in independent schools in the next five years?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Do you consider the Human Resource Practitioner’s roles as the appropriate one to address these? Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Guide questions asked of principals and finance directors in independent schools with traditional staff management structures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guide questions asked in independent schools in which HR functions are dispersed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In terms of structure, culture and behaviour, what major similarities and/or differences do you perceive between the business sector and independent schools?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is the structure of your school in terms of the practice of HR functions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Other independent schools are appointing HR practitioners; why have you decided to maintain your current structure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What HR functions are performed in this school and by whom? (participant is handed a sheet that outlines generic HR functions and asked to notate each function and procedure according to what is performed and by whom.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How are these functions evaluated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do you see any constraints impacting on the effective performance of the staff manager’s role? If so, what are they?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What are the HR functions performed in the school that you value the most, and why? (Distribute cards to participant and ask for each to be placed in order of priority in terms of value before explaining his/her reasoning).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. What do you see as the most significant issues facing people managers in the next five years in independent schools?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F

Guide questions asked of HR practitioners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guide Questions asked in interview with HR practitioner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What HR functions do you carry out in an average week/month? (participant is handed a sheet that contains data relevant to questions 1-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Can you allocate an approximate percentage of time spent on each?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How are these evaluated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What attributes and experience do you see as valuable for an HR role in the school environment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What challenges do you face day by day?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What are the constraints that you see impacting on the successful performance of your role?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What support would you see as being the most helpful in facilitating your role?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Describe how you have tried implementing new practices?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How successful were you in implementing new practices and how were they received by staff?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. How do you perceive your role?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. How do you think others perceive your role?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. How has your role changed since you first commenced in the school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. What, in your opinion, contributes most to job satisfaction in schools?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G

Letter sent to independent school principals seeking permission to interview them for the study.

Date

Dear _______________

Project Title: Human resource management practice in Australian independent schools

I am a second year doctoral student at Murdoch University investigating HRM practices in independent schools under the supervision of Dr Judy MacCallum. Although HRM in schools is a relatively new concept, its practice is growing in significance as complex people management issues take precedence in the roles of school executive teams. In order to enhance the understanding and application of the many facets of this role within the context of schools, this study will explore, describe and document and perspectives of independent school principals and other managers of staff within the sector, as well as their particular approaches to the practice of HRM in their schools.

This letter is asking for your participation in an interview with me. The interview should take no more than one hour and you can decide to withdraw your consent at any time. All information given during the interview is confidential and no names or other information that might identify you, or your colleagues, will be used in any publication arising from the research. A summary report will be provided to you in due course.

If you are willing to participate in this study, could you please complete the details below and either forward to me or retain until we meet? If you have any questions about the project, please feel free to contact either myself on phone number, or my supervisor, Dr Judy MacCallum on phone number.

My supervisor and I would be happy to discuss with you any concerns you may have on how this study may have been conducted, or alternatively you can contact Murdoch University’s Human Research Ethics committee on phone number.

I, ___________________________________ (the participant) of ____________________ (school) have read the information above. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in this activity, however, I know that I may change my mind and stop at any time.

I understand that all information provided is treated as confidential and will not be released by the investigator unless required to do so by law.

I agree for the interview to be taped.

I agree that research data gathered for this study may be published provided my name or other information which might identify me, is not used.

Signature of participant/authorised representative: __________________ Date: __________
Signature of Chief Investigator: __________________________ Date: _______________

Susan Roberts EdD Candidate
### Appendix H

*(Table 2) Schools and participants’ pseudonyms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School name</th>
<th>Principal’s name</th>
<th>Finance director’s name</th>
<th>HR practitioner’s name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ariana</td>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>Anthony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelsall</td>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Kevin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farray</td>
<td>Fiona</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Frederick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranford</td>
<td>Cathryn</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Chas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregg</td>
<td>Gerri</td>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>Gary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighton</td>
<td>Belinda</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Barry (Dir. T &amp; L)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eaton</td>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>