.

Educational leaders in New South Wales preschools: how are they leading the development and implementation of the educational program in their settings?

Kate Barnes

Macquarie University

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Research

School of Education

Faculty of Human Sciences

Macquarie University

November 2017

Table of Contents

Certification by the Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled "Educational Leaders in New South Wales Preschools: how are they leading the development and implementation of the educational program in their settings?" has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Committee (Human Research). Reference number: 5201700644 on 20th July 2017.

Kate Barnes
40735788
27th November 2017

Acknowledgements

I would like thank my supervisors, Dr Fay Hadley and Sandra Cheeseman for their help and guidance. I have learnt so much from both of you and your gentle, down-to-earth mentoring. I am so very grateful for your knowledge, patience and support.

I would also like to thank my family and friends for their tireless support, unpaid research assistance, formatting and editorial work. Thank you especially to Craig, Ella, Dan, Alice and Linda.

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Appendices

Abstract

The requirement for a specific educational leader is relatively new to Australian ECEC settings and complexities have been observed regarding the implementation and purpose of the educational leader role. Previous research on the educational leader role has been limited and rarely included the experiences of educational leaders in preschool services. This mixed method study used the theory of practice architecture as a theoretical and analytical framework to investigate who the educational leaders of NSW preschools are, what they do and what supports them. The findings indicated that preschool educational leaders were experienced and educated. They were rewarded by the professional growth of other educators and challenged by limited time and ambiguous information about the educational leader role. Participants' practices most frequently included casual talks and sharing research and resources and they found support for their role through training and their own research. Small differences were found in aspects of how directors and teacher educational leaders performed the role. Findings from this study show that if educational leaders are to be effective in improving practice in preschool settings more action is required to support educational leaders to lead and ECEC organisations and policy makers to champion educational leadership.

Chapter One. Introduction

1.1. Overview of the Chapter

The aim of this study is to explore how educational leaders in New South Wales preschools are leading the development and implementation of the educational program. It seeks to determine what educational leaders in preschool do and what supports them in the performance of their role. This chapter introduces and gives context to the study. The chapter begins by providing an overview of the recent changes in Australian early childhood education and care (ECEC) policy and legislation and the requirement for all services to have an educational leader. It also explains the shift in official terminology from pedagogical leader to educational leader. The final section of this chapter discusses the scope and aims of the study, the study research questions, the theoretical framework adopted and the organisation of the thesis.

1.2. Early Childhood Education and Care in New South Wales

In NSW, the ECEC sector includes preschools, long day care, family day care, occasional care, out of school hours care, mobile services and a small number of other related programs (Waniganayake, Cheeseman, Fenech, Hadley, & Shepherd, 2012). Preschools and long day care services are the main providers of early childhood education and care (ECEC) for children aged three to five years and both service types offer a 'structured play based preschool program' (O'Connor et al., 2016, p. 31) delivered by a degree qualified teacher. Long day care services have evolved primarily from the Commonwealth Government's responsibilities to support working parents (Tayler, 2016). Long day care services most often cater for children aged from birth to five years of age, are generally open for longer hours, for more weeks of the year and are funded predominantly by the Australian Government and parent

fees (Sims, Mulhearn, Grieshaber, & Sumsion, 2015). Preschools, on the other hand, are part of the constitutional responsibility for education of state and territory governments (Flottman & Page, 2012). Catering generally for children aged from three to five years of age, NSW preschools have operating hours aligned with public schools (Dowling & O'Malley, 2009). In New South Wales, preschools are funded by the New South Wales State Government, parent fees, and since 2009, the Australian Government's National Partnership Agreement for Universal Access to Early Childhood Education (Harrington, 2014).

All ECEC services in NSW have been subject to significant reforms over the past decade since the Rudd Labour Government established the *Early Childhood National Reform Agenda* in 2008. These reforms were, in part, a response to Australia's poor ranking in the Organisation of Economic Co-ordination and Development (OECD) measures of early childhood education participation and expenditure and growing international evidence on the importance of early childhood education for social and individual welfare (Waniganayake et al., 2012). Following this agenda, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed in 2009 to establish what Sims et al. (2015) describe as a "coherent and consistent" (p. 13) national approach to ECEC through the *National Early Childhood Development Strategy* (Council of Australian Governments, 2009).

This resulted in the development for the first-time of national legislation and policy and was followed by substantial reforms to the sector (Dowling & O'Malley, 2009). A summary of the major changes is presented here, in order of implementation:

- The adoption of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) (2009) - a national curriculum document that describes principles, practices and outcomes of Australian early childhood education;

- The enacting of National Law and Regulations to replace previously separate state and territory regulations (2011) (Commenced January 1, 2012);

- The development of a National Quality Standard (NQS) (2012) that outlines consistent quality benchmarks for services; and

- The creation of a national rating and assessment process that rates the quality of individual services against the National Regulations and the NQS (2012).

(Sims et al., 2015)

The reforms aimed to increase participation, to raise sector wide quality through a unified national system, to invest in future human capital, to improve early childhood outcomes and to redress social and economic disadvantage (Sims et al., 2015). The process also created what Nuttall, Thomas, and Wood (2014) described as an ongoing period of "widespread and dramatic change" (p.358). The focus of this study is one area of those reforms - the role of educational leader.

1.3.   The Educational Leader Role

The educational leader role was introduced in Australia at the beginning of 2012 with the implementation of the National Law and Regulations (2011). Regulation 118 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* requires each service to appoint a "suitably qualified and experienced educator, coordinator or other individual as educational leader at the service to lead the development and implementation of educational programs" (2011, p. 133). This section of the regulation was then expanded in Standard 7.1 of the NQS, where the purpose of educational leader role is described as the promotion of "leadership and organisational cultures of trust and professional enquiry" so that staff members "build professional knowledge, reflect on practice, and generate new ideas to seek continuous improvement" (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2013, p. 167). At the element level the role is further described in quality element 7.1.4. which requires that "provision is

made to ensure a suitably qualified and experienced educator or co-ordinator leads the development of the curriculum and ensures the establishment of clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning" (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2013, p. 173). Changes to both the NQS and the National Law and Regulations are expected in early 2018.

1.4.   Pedagogical Leadership and the Educational Leader Role

The past decade and a half has seen growing international recognition that an educational leader role is an important contributor to educational outcomes for young children. (Aubrey, Godfrey, & Harris, 2012; Carroll-Lind, Smorti, Ord, & Robinson, 2016; Hujala, Waniganayake, & Rodd, 2013; Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2004). Internationally, the term pedagogical leader is used more widely than educational leader when describing this type of role (for example, Bøe & Hognestad, 2017; Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011; Male & Palaiologou, 2015; Murray & Clark, 2013). In Norway for example, the Kindergarten Act requires all services to have a "pedagogical leader" (Hujala et al., 2013). Educators in this position are responsible for "ensuring that the aims and framework of a kindergarten are clear to the staff, that the staff develop a shared understanding of the aims, and that parents receive reliable and sufficient information about the activities of the kindergarten" (Norweigan Ministry for Education and Research, 2011, p. 11). Similarly, in England, recent reforms that aim to raise the quality of private, voluntary and independent early childhood services included the 2008 introduction of the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) for educators in child care services (Roberts-Holmes, 2013). Murray and Clark (2013) state that this qualification is designed to create pedagogical leader practitioners who are "leaders of practice" and "achieve high-quality provision through modelling skills in practice and by supporting or mentoring other practitioners" (p. 290). More recent research from New Zealand (Carroll-Lind et al.,

2016) and Saudi Arabia (Alameen, Male, & Palaiologou, 2015) has begun to examine ways that pedagogical leadership can be fostered in early childhood services in these countries.

This study acknowledges that while the nomenclature and formal recognition of the role of educational leader may be new to the Australian ECEC sector, the leadership of pedagogy has previously been undertaken in various ways. The move to a formal role was documented by Henderson (2016) who suggested that early versions of the NQS used the term "pedagogical leader" to describe someone whose "primary role was to foster the development of other staff in order to enhance program quality" (p. 2). The Educators' Guide to the National Curriculum Framework (Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2010b) which was released before the position of educational leader became part of national policy, encouraged all qualified educators to be pedagogical leaders. Further information about what this entailed is found on the CD Rom support resource to the Educators' Guide (Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2010a). This resource presents possible pedagogical leader contributions including modelling professional and ethical practice; mentoring others; committing to ongoing professional learning and enquiry; acting as an advocate; and building partnerships with colleagues, families, schools and support services to promote the best learning opportunities for all children. See Table 1 for more details.

Table 1 *Educators' Guide Possible Pedagogical Leader Roles*

Model professional and ethical practice	1. Promote the use of the ECA Code of Ethics as a guide for pedagogical decisions.
	2. Invite critical reflection and conversations that allow consideration of different perspectives and approaches.
	3. Use their knowledge of current research and practice to inform discussions and decision-making.
	4. Clearly articulate their learning and teaching intentions through documenting plans and evaluations of learning experiences.
	5. Justify their decisions about the theoretical perspectives and philosophical approaches they adopt.
Mentor others	1. Facilitate others' learning through professional conversations sharing resources and coaching.
	2. Actively contribute to the ongoing development of early childhood settings as learning communities.
	3. Establish networks with other professionals, including internet-based networks to connect professionals working in isolated settings.
Commit to ongoing professional learning and enquiry	1. Actively seek out a range of professional learning experiences
	2. Participate in practitioner inquiry.
Build partnerships with colleagues, families, schools, community workers and allied health professionals to promote the best learning opportunities for all children.	1. Create opportunities for exchanging ideas and sharing curriculum knowledge and for clarifying intentions and expectations.
	2. Communicate the importance of relationships, listening and play in children's learning.
Act as advocates	1. Advocate for children in their community contexts and in their transitions to other settings to ensure that their learning needs are well represented.
	2. Advocate for high quality early childhood settings by promoting greater understanding of the lifelong benefits to all children
	3. Advocate for the early childhood profession.

(Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2010a, pp. 1-2)

The name *educational leader* is a relatively new term in Australia. Henderson (2016) suggests that policy documents began using educational leader instead of *pedagogical leader* when the role was mandated by the National Regulations and Law in 2011 (p. 2). This study proposes that what has been understood as *pedagogical leadership* internationally and in Australia prior to the introduction of the National Law and Regulations (2011) is now

referred to as *educational leadership* in the Australian ECEC context. From this point, educational leadership will be used in this study to refer to both terms.

1.5. Scope and Aims of the Study

This study focuses on educational leaders in NSW preschools (known as kindergartens in some states/territories in Australia) although it is noted that the educational leader role encompasses most service types in the NSW ECEC sector. Preschools are an important and distinct part of the complex NSW ECEC sector where different service types provide education and care for children of the same age. Although the different parts of the ECEC sector have moved closer under the recent national reforms, structural and operational differences continue because of their previous parallel evolution and development (Tayler (2016).

Focussing, then, on the context of preschools, the aim of this study was to investigate the practices of educational leaders in NSW preschools and explore what supports them in the performance of their role. To achieve its aims, the study posed three research questions:

RQ1. Who are the educational leaders of NSW preschools?

RQ2. What do educational leaders do to lead the development and implementation of educational programs in preschool settings?

RQ3. What do educational leaders identify as factors that support them in the role?

The research questions, in turn, were answered using a mixed method design.

1.6. Practice Architecture: A Theoretical Framework for Understanding the Educational Leader Role

This study seeks to investigate and explore the practices of educational leaders. In contemporary usage the term 'practices' is often equated only with the activities that are required to perform a role (Edwards-Groves & Grootenboer, 2015). In contrast, practice theory

perceives practices, not just as descriptions of the ways human activities are performed but also as analysis of the role of human interactions and actions in making and changing societal systems (Nicolini, 2012). Practice theory seeks to understand how humans make and transform the world by analysing their practices (Mahon, Kemmis, Fancisco, & Lloyd, 2017). Nicolini argues that, in doing so, practice theories recognise the importance of human agency as well as organisational structures, systems and policies and proposes that behind all the enduring features of a society there is always the work and effort of humans.

A subset of practice theory, practice architecture, emphasises the importance of *praxis*, which Salamon, Sumsion, Press, and Harrison (2016) describe as the collective moral commitment amongst practitioners to work for the good of individuals and society. Practice architecture conceptualises professional practice as praxis and has been used to support investigation of how practices are formed, how they shape the site in which they operate and, in turn, how they are enabled and constrained by that site, a *site ontological* (Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2015) approach.

The theory of practice architecture considers a practice to be a socially established human action involving particular language and understandings (called *sayings*), models of action (called *doings*) and ways of interacting with other people and the world (called *relatings*) (Mahon et al., 2017). The architecture of those practices are the factors that prefigure, enable and constrain them. In other words, the discursive, physical and social arrangements of people, artefacts and things that can be seen in relation to what actually happens in an organisation (Mahon et al.). In the theory of practice architecture, these arrangements are identified as *cultural-discursive arrangements* (language and educational knowledge shared by educators), *material-economic arrangements* (physical and economic elements of a site or context and individuals) and *socio-political arrangements* (feelings of power and solidarity felt by practitioners) (Salamon et al., 2016).

This thesis uses the theory of practice architecture as a theoretical framework to identify and explore the practices educational leaders use as they work to lead the development and implementation of programs in preschool settings and the support they access for their practices. The theory of practice architecture is considered appropriate for this purpose because it provides a framework for understanding what practices look like (sayings, doings and relatings) and what constrains and enables practices (cultural-discursive, material-economic and socio-political arrangements).

Moreover, practice architecture provides a structure to investigate the role of the educational leader in preschools as it also recognises the strong interrelationship between individual and social conceptualisations of practice. Practice architecture acknowledges the agency of individuals and groups who use their praxis to contribute to the "collective whole" (Hardy, 2010, p. 393) and who seek to become agents of societal systems rather than just operatives of the systems (Salamon et al., 2016). This connection between the societal and the individual is considered particularly relevant for this study because in NSW preschools, the educational leader role was established and is now monitored through a national law, regulation and policy strategy but is conceptualised individually at a local level.

1.7.   Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is presented in six chapters. Chapter One introduces the context of the study and Chapter Two presents a critical review of the educational leadership literature base. Chapter Three describes the methods used in the study, including the collection and analysis of data. Chapter Four presents the key results of the study and incorporates presentation of participant demographic statistics, an analysis of participant educational leader practices and attitudes towards particular aspects and supports of the educational leader role. Chapter Five discusses the findings of the study in relation to the theoretical frame of practice architecture

and current literature on educational leadership. Chapter Six presents implications from the research for educational leaders, service leaders and policy makers and suggests directions for future research and notes the contributions of the research

1.8.   Chapter Summary

This chapter has explained the contextual background of the educational leader role in Australian ECEC services. The terms educational leadership and pedagogical leadership were clarified and the scope, aims and significance of the study were also discussed. Chapter Two reviews the literature on the educational leader role.

Chapter Two. Literature Review

2.1.   Overview of Chapter

Definitions of leadership and the importance of context in leadership understandings are discussed in this chapter. The literature on educational leadership, including the Australian educational leader role is reviewed and gaps are identified. This chapter also discusses other relevant research that has used practice architecture as a theoretical framework.

2.2.   Leadership

Leadership and the role it plays in organisations has been widely researched and discussed in both mainstream and empirical literature, yet an accepted definition of leadership remains elusive (Bass & Bass, 2008; Gill, 2011; McDowall Clark & Murray, 2012). Rodd (2013) suggested that leadership is fundamentally concerned with "how a group of people is influenced using values and visions to achieve a common goal" (p. 18). In contrast Gill (2011) argued, that using "influence" to define leadership does not acknowledge the purposeful nature of those who lead as a profession. Instead Gill stated that leadership should be thought of as "showing the way and helping or inducing others to pursue it" (p.1). Alternatively, Sims, Forrest, Semann, and Slattery (2014) suggested that conceptualising leadership as "influence" is inappropriate because it suggests passive followers who are motivated only by leaders' power and authority. These varied definitions illustrate the complexity researchers face when looking for an accepted definition for leadership (Waniganayake et al., 2012).

Some researchers have questioned the relevance of a fixed definition of leadership. Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2007) argued that leadership definitions suggest there is a 'recipe' for good leadership and asserted that the idea that one type of leadership could then be applied in any context is unrealistic. Similarly, Stamopoulos (2012) maintained that looking for one key definition of leadership is counterproductive and proposed that it would be more

worthwhile to support early childhood leaders to "create a space in which professional identity can be crafted" (p. 46). McDowall Clark and Murray (2012) also actively avoided a generic definition for leadership. They proposed a more complex view, suggesting that leadership is broad, socially constructed and constantly changing.

Other researchers including Waniganyake et al (2012) and Hujula (2013) have argued that early childhood leadership is best viewed as contextual. They have both suggested that in early childhood services, leadership is rooted in the environment in which it operates, inseparable from the context and dependent on the context for success. Nicholson and Maniates (2016) similarly emphasised the diversity of early childhood contexts, highlighting that services, educators and daily experiences are significantly different from setting to setting. They stated that to put leaders and their work into "siloed categories" (p. 71) risks silencing important facets of their role.

No accepted definition does however have drawbacks according to some. Rodd (2013), has argued that the absence of a common conceptualisation of early childhood leadership has been an impediment to the sector's understanding and the development of professional identities of early childhood leaders has suffered as a result. Thornton, Wansbrough, Clarkin-Phillips, Aiiken, and Tamati (2009) suggested that while context is important, to facilitate the construction of authentic and meaningful opportunities for leadership development, leadership should be broken down into "component parts" (p.7) to assist practitioners. Both Thornton et al. (2009) and Mujis, Aubrey, Harris, and Briggs (2004) have referred to Kagan and Hallmark (2001) components of early childhood leadership as an example of this. Kagan and Hallmark hypothesised that early childhood leadership could take five forms[1]. While this early work has

---

[1] These were *community leadership* (creating links with families, support services and the public and private sector); *educational leadership* (creating links between research and practice); *administrative leadership* (managing and leading finances and personnel); *advocacy leadership* (creating a long-term vision for the sector and leading communication with government and the media) and *conceptual leadership* (leading early childhood education within social movement and change).

been important in conceptualising leadership within the ECEC sector, it is acknowledged that this took place prior to significant sector changes such as commercialisation and recognises that on-going theorising to capture contemporary contexts is needed.

As part of the influential Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) project Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2007) have contributed further to this theorising in their findings from the Effective Leadership in the Early Years Sector (ELEYS) project. The ELEYS project sought to identify contributions of effective leadership to successful ECEC. Siraj-Blatchford and Manni argued that contextual literacy (understanding the context) and a commitment to collaboration and the improvement of children's learning outcomes are the central requirements for effective early childhood leadership. Within this paradigm they identified the following 'categories of effective leadership practice':

- Identifying and articulating a collective vision: especially with regard to pedagogy and curriculum;

- Building common purposes by ensuring shared understandings, meanings and goals;

- Creating transparent expectations, practices and processes using effective communication;

- Encouraging reflection as an impetus for change and motivation of learning and development;

- Using collaboration to monitor and assess practice.

These categories are less prescriptive than traditional trait or characteristic views of leadership and provide opportunities for the inclusion of contextual differences.

2.3. Educational Leadership

In one of the earliest discussions on ECEC educational leadership, developed in the United States, Katz (1997) argued that educational leadership was an essential part of the early childhood field. Katz's theorising arose from of her own work as a national and international

leader of pedagogy although she suggested that directors and teachers working on innovative practices should also become educational leaders in their own contexts. Katz proposed that educational leaders should lead others in the development of the pedagogical functions of the program including the examination of the relationship between ideological assumptions, values and practices; the interpretation of research and practice for both practitioners and researchers; and the setting of directions for developments in pedagogy.

More recently, other researchers (Carroll-Lind et al., 2016; Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011; McDowall Clark & Murray, 2012; Waniganayake et al., 2012) have also highlighted the importance of early childhood educational leadership and the impact it has on development of curriculum and pedagogy in a service. Waniganayake et al. (2012) argued that educational leadership creates a culture of professionalism in services as it involves communicating with other educators, families and the broader community about the importance of high quality learning experiences. Heikka and Waniganayake (2011) conceptualised educational leadership from within the service and suggested that it involved "taking responsibility for the shared understanding of the aims and methods of learning and teaching in young children" (p. 510). Murray and Clark (2013) suggested that an educational leader role should be thought of, as a way to help develop the sector's voice, asserting that this role is not only to improve children's learning but also to increase "capacity building in the profession and pursuing the educational values of the community and wider society" (p. 290). Carroll-Lind et al. (2016) further supported Heikka and Waniganayake's characterisation and described educational leadership as "leadership for learning," stating that the learning of teaching teams is as important in this definition as the learning of children (p. 28). These researchers suggest that while educational leaders have a role to play in the development of individual services they also have a role to play in the development of the ECEC sector.

2.3.1. The Educational Leader Role

In Australia, official language about the role of educational leader has been noticeably broad since its introduction (Henderson, 2016). Documents from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), the body that oversees the implementation and administration of the NQF, describe the educational leader role as concerned with inspiring, motivating, mentoring, challenging and extending the pedagogy of others (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, No date). This broad language suggests an understanding of the importance of context on leadership. It acknowledges that the Australian ECEC sector includes a range of service types that employ variously qualified staff with different ways of enacting the role across the different service types (Waniganayake et al., 2012). The National Educational Leader, Rhonda Livingstone (2014), advocated for the broadness of the role description and contended that, with flexibility around qualifications, experience, skills and role descriptions of educational leaders, the NQS acknowledge that services, educators and communities are unique and require different approaches to develop their pedagogy.

Other researchers, including Loo and Agbenyaga (2015) and Rouse and Spradbury (2015), have argued that having a more detailed description of the role of educational leader would minimise misinterpretation of the intention and goals of Australia's national reforms. Loo and Agbenyaga stated that more clarity would inform practitioners of the empirical research that underlies the decision to make the educational leader role mandatory and to increase the status of the educational leader role in the sector. Rouse and Spradbury suggested that a more detailed role description would improve the sector's understanding of how the educational leader differs from other leadership roles. However, this continues to be a subject of contention, with a range of views expressed as those working in preschool, long day care,

family day care and school-aged settings seek ways to make the educational leader role relevant to the work and workforce of their services.

2.3.2. Implementation of the Educational Leader Role

Given the relative newness of the educational leader role, it is not surprising that most of the limited research available took place around the time of, or not long after the commencement of the new national policy reforms. As a result, many of the understandings about the role were inevitably associated with the sector's response to those changes. In 2012, early childhood leaders were required to ensure their services were compliant with the new and wide-ranging National Quality Regulations and Standards and prepare for the new assessment and rating process (Krieg, Davis, & Smith, 2014). Stamopoulos (2012) argued that the rapid changes of this time intensified leaders' roles, demanding new concepts of pedagogy and a reframing of old styles of educational leadership. Support documents produced by Australian Children's Education Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) acknowledged that "narrow and limiting" (No date, p. 1) myths about the educational leader position emerged during this time. The reasons for these complexities remain unclear but some have speculated that poor sector wide knowledge of educational leadership and no national or state consensus of the contents of role descriptions may have been a factor (Sims, Waniganayake, & Hadley, 2017).

Initial but very small-scale research identified confusion about the role and a lack of support for practitioners or services trying to craft what the educational leader does in their service. For instance, Grarock and Morrissey (2013) observed that the idea of an educational leader role was new to Australia and found that for early childhood teachers in their study, the absence of robust models of practice was problematic. Grarock and Morrissey's qualitative study of 11 early childhood teachers in Victorian long day care services was conducted before the regulatory requirements to have an educational leader were in place. Teachers in this study felt that part of their role was to lead the pedagogy in the small teams of their individual

classrooms but lacked time and confidence in their own authority to transfer this action centre-wide. Findings from this study need to be considered in light of the small sample size and timing. As one of the first studies to consider the role of educational leaders in the ECEC context, it does, however, provide some preliminary insights into how the role was initially understood.

In another small scale study conducted not long after the implementation of the role, Rouse and Spradbury (2015) interviewed five newly appointed Victorian educational leaders working for the same management company, none of whom were directors. These educational leaders reported that they had not actively sought their additional role, had no written job descriptions, and felt poorly prepared and unsupported. They wanted to use their role to empower other educators and share their knowledge but felt outside the hierarchical leadership of the organisation with little authority to drive change. While the size of this study and its concentration on only one employer makes it difficult to generalise the findings, it too acts as an introduction to understandings of the ECEC sector's implementation of the educational leader role.

Research by Nuttall et al. (2014) which took place between 2011 and 2012, found confusion about which type of position in an ECEC service is best for the educational leader role. In this study directors and educators from 19 long day care services reported ambivalence about the worthiness of the role and were unsure of how it would fit within already established systems of leadership. Some directors did not want to hold the educational leader role themselves but were unwilling to share authority with others. Nuttal et al. interpreted their comments as "the tension between management and leadership in early childhood education and care" (p. 365) and concluded by questioning the potential for the role to make an impact on service quality given the lack of tailored professional education and research in the area.

The largest study on the educational leader role to date, surveyed 206 educational leaders and others interested in educational leadership (Fleet, Soper, Semann, & Madden, 2015). The majority of respondents indicated there were no job descriptions, budgets or supplementary pay for educational leaders in their service. Furthermore, those who were also directors reported difficulties balancing what they saw as an extra role in their already crowded regulatory and positional requirements. Participants in this study felt that in general, educational leaders should and did support educators to develop their teaching, engagement with the EYLF and the NQS and use of documentation and theory (Fleet et al.).

As part of a study on the impacts of action research projects, Henderson (2016) interviewed 18 teachers in child care and primary in three independent Victorian schools. These projects were part of a larger professional development program exploring pedagogy and educational leadership. Participants in this study overwhelmingly noted that educational leadership happened when colleagues were able to build relationships, establish a shared vision and have conversations that shifted identities and ideas. Henderson found that exclusive educational leader time was necessary for this "relational and distributed" style of leadership to occur (p. 3).

More recently, Sims et al. (2017) used a mixed method design to study 154 educational leaders across Australia, from a variety of service types (42% long day care services, 30% preschools, 7% family day care services and 21% other service types). Quantitative data from the Sims et al. study suggested participants were more likely to see the role of building and maintaining relationships with staff as the most important and monitoring staff compliance against the NQS as the least important. Analysis of qualitative data in this study did, however, also find that the practices of educational leaders tended more towards monitoring compliance than the quantitative data indicated, suggesting that the impacts of the new regulations and quality standards were still being felt by services. Sims et al. argued that educational leaders

were in a good position to advocate for the sector and develop understandings of high quality pedagogical practice.

Other insights into exactly what educational leaders do to perform their role were found in practitioner-oriented literature, commentary and personal stories in professional publications. These articles were generally opinion pieces or small-scale case studies and mostly from long day care services. They described the backgrounds of educational leaders, documented their ideas about the importance of the educational leader role and gave insights into their practices.

In a discussion of their own experiences Lopez, Lawson, Bennett, and Semann (2014) described the conscious process of reflection they undertook to unpack the important practices of the educational leader role for their service. They developed five role headings of "reflective practice and professional learning, teaching and learning, curriculum planning, documentation and relationships" (p.5). Brown, Barclay, Brown, and Gallacher (2012) briefly documented the experiences of seven educational leaders who described their practices when setting up the educational leader role in the service. These were unpacking the EYLF for other educators, establishing learning communities, redesigning documentation and planning formats, guiding and monitoring the application of theory and running meetings to encourage educators to share their programming methods, approaches to planning and challenges. Similarly, Cheeseman's (2012a, 2012b) articles as part of the National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program, documented interviews with educational leaders who discussed how they enacted their role. These educational leaders stated that they met with individual educators to support their planning, guided small groups of educators to reflect on documenting children's learning, refined formats for children's documentation and set up ways for that information to be shared.

The review of literature presented in this chapter shows that understandings of leadership in general, leadership in early childhood services and educational leadership are

complex and contested. The literature has highlighted the difficulty that services, researchers and educational leaders have had finding clarity on the structure and place of the educational leader role immediately after the extensive reforms to Australian ECEC. Educational leadership has also been presented as context bound, suggesting that for those interested in how the educational leader role functions in preschools, it is important to examine the role in the context where it operates.

2.4.   Gaps in the Research

Throughout this literature review, research on the educational leader role has been limited to a small number of studies. These studies have predominantly been focused on long day care and family day care services and conducted not long after the implementation of the position (Colmer, Waniganayake, & Field, 2014; Fleet et al., 2015; Grarock & Morrissey, 2013; Henderson, 2016; Nuttall et al., 2014; Rouse & Spradbury, 2015; Sims et al., 2017). Many of these studies also had very small sample sizes (Grarock & Morrissey, 2013; Henderson, 2016; Nuttall et al., 2014; Rouse & Spradbury, 2015). So, while the studies reviewed here offer some insight into the educational leader role, they are not able to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role across a range of contexts. There are, therefore, gaps in the literature regarding how educational leaders are leading the educational program in preschools and what they are now doing, five years after the reforms were introduced. Research focused specifically on preschools will add to the emerging body of work about the role of educational leader and assist in better understandings of the role within this context.

2.5.   Relevant Practice Architecture Literature

The theory of practice architecture examines the role of context on the ways that practices function. Practice architecture has previously been used as a theoretical framework

for research in a range of educational settings. This has included analysis of particular elements

of and influences on practice in tertiary education (Hardy, 2010; Mahon, 2016), secondary

education (Goodyear, Casey, & Kirk, 2017; Henning Loeb, 2016) and primary education

(Edwards-Groves & Grootenboer, 2015; Grootenboer, Edwards-Groves, & Ronnerman, 2015;

Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2015). Looking more explicitly at research relevant to this topic; two

studies in ECEC and one study of educational leadership in primary settings were identified

for this review.

In ECEC, Ronnerman, Edwards-Groves, and Grootenboer (2015) used the theory of

practice architecture to study the leadership practices of 14 Swedish early childhood teachers.

Participants facilitated professional learning communities of their peers during the introduction

of the new Swedish early childhood curriculum. Ronnerman et al. (2015) argued that

participants in their study used practices of *middle leaders,* a term initially used by Grootenboer

et al. (2015) to describe those with some leadership responsibilities who were not holders of

official senior leadership positions. Ronnerman et al. (2015) suggested that the practices of

these middle leaders showed they led in collaboration with and alongside their peers creating

spaces that enabled shared discourse and facilitated relationships of agency and solidarity. In

their study, practice architecture provided a framework for focusing on the practices of these

leaders (the sayings, doings and relatings they used when leading) rather than the personal traits

and characteristics (Grootenboer et al., 2015).

Salamon et al. (2016) also used the theory of practice architecture to deconstruct early

childhood educators' views of child care and infant development and explore how educators'

beliefs and experiences constrained and enabled their practice. In this study, Salamon et al.

determined the cultural-discursive arrangements (early childhood education as 'maternal

instinct' and very young children as 'vulnerable' and 'innocent'), material-economic

arrangements (mandated practices, low wages and poor working conditions) and social-

political arrangements (relationships with children and families) of infant and toddler educators in Australia in general and more specifically at the child care service research sites. Salamon et al. suggested that examination of the practice architectures of early childhood settings was a powerful way of understanding the sector as it helped researchers and educators to uncover beliefs and experiences that were hidden or taken for granted.

In the study of educational leaders in the primary school context, practice architecture has been used by Wilkinson and Kemmis (2015). Wilkinson and Kemmis found that changes in the leadership practices of their case study participants required both a change in leaders' professional knowledge and also changes to the practice architecture arrangements of their positions. They maintained that educational leadership practices were shaped by both the action and knowledge of participants and the circumstances and conditions that surround them. In their analysis, Wilkinson and Kemmis argued that practice architecture provides a theoretical framework for researchers wishing to examine the 'actual work of leadership' (p. 343), rather than looking for ideal traits, behaviour or characteristics. For these reasons, the theoretical frame of practice architecture was considered valuable and appropriate for this study.

2.6.   Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a review of the relevant literature from Australian and overseas in order to position this study within the existing body of research. It has proposed that practice architecture offers a sound theoretical framework for understanding the practices of educational leaders in complex workplaces. The chapter has also highlighted the limited research base that currently exists, particularly in relation to the preschool context.

Chapter Three. Method

3.1.   Overview of the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology of the study. The research approach and design of the study are discussed followed by a description of the recruitment and demographics of participants. The procedures for collecting data, sharing results and ethical considerations are then explained.

3.2.   Approach to the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate the practices of educational leaders in NSW preschools and explore the resources they use to support their practices. Based on these aims the research questions (RQ) were:

RQ1. Who are the educational leaders of NSW preschools?

RQ2. What do educational leaders do to lead the development and implementation of educational programs in preschool settings?

RQ3. What do educational leaders identify as factors that support them in the role?

A mixed method explanatory sequential design, including both quantitative and qualitative research approaches was chosen (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2014). This approach was decided upon because mixed method designs allow researchers to use the complementary strengths of both research paradigms in order to understand a complicated problem (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Data were collected in two phases running sequentially, with inferences from the first informing the design and analysis of the second (Creswell, 2009) A sequential design enabled the gathering of qualitative data to elaborate on the quantitative phase and add

richness, corroboration of results and internal validity (Creswell). Prior to the main study, a pilot study was also conducted to provide feedback about the validity, fluency and operation of the online survey (Tuckman & Harper, 2012).

Phase 1 of the study followed a quantitative design, using a survey on the online research platform Qualtrics to measure objective aspects of the educational leader role (Ponce & Pagán-Maldonado, 2015).   This included demographic information, employment characteristics, descriptions of roles and practices, attitudes about the role and support provisions.   Given there is limited research on the educational leader role, an online survey instrument was chosen to facilitate the collection of data for statistical comparison from a large number of participants (Krathwohl, 2009). Phase 2 of the study followed a qualitative design and used semi-structured interviews to understand subjective elements of how a small number of educational leaders think, feel and enact their role (Ponce & Pagán-Maldonado, 2015).

3.3.   Ethical Considerations of the Study

The ethical aspects of this study were considered and approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research) (Approval number: 5201700644) and the New South Wales Education Department under the State Education Research Approvals Process (Approval number: 2017431) (See Appendix A and B for copies of these approval letters). During this process procedures for participant recruitment, participant consent, data gathering and the protection of participant privacy were defined and approved.

3.3.1.   Representing educational leader views and practices

It was the intention of this research to accurately and respectfully represent the views and practices of participants in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, & Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, 2015). Creswell (2009) argues that researchers must

examine their methods and conclusions for the influence of their own personal bias from views about the topic that consciously or subconsciously affect their behaviour and the validity and reliability of their results. The researcher is an experienced early childhood teacher who has been a director but not an educational leader in a NSW preschool for five years.

These experiences of educational leadership may have influenced the collection and analysis of data in this study. A selection of strategies was therefor implemented to minimise the impact of researcher bias including a mixed method design, collaboration with supervisors, presentation of the research proposal to three independent readers and piloting of the Phase 1 survey. The same interview prompts were also used during Phase 2 of data collection and interview transcripts were returned to participants for content verification and confirmation of accurate representation of ideas prior to their analysis.

3.3.2. Confidentiality.

Respect for the privacy of participants and the confidentiality of their personal information and data is central to conducting ethical research (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). This study aimed to keep data anonymous and ensure that all personal information collected during the study remained confidential. The collection of data during Phase 1 did not require participants to divulge any personal or identifying information as part of their involvement. Some participants did, however, choose to submit their name and contact details either to be placed in a thank you draw, receive a copy of the summary results and/or indicate their interest in being involved in Phase 2 of the study. This personal information will be destroyed at the completion of the study. Phase 2 interview recordings were immediately transferred onto a password locked computer and participant names were number coded in a confidential system. The recordings were transcribed by a third-party transcription service who require employees to observe strict confidentiality of data with only the researcher code to identify them. All recordings were destroyed after transcription. Data from these transcripts were also edited so

as not to reveal the identity of participants or their workplace and pseudonyms were used in the writing up of the findings.

3.3.3. Consent

The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research states that participant consent should always be considered in the design of ethically good human research (National Health and Medical Research Council et al., 2015). The study aimed to ensure all participants gave informed consent and were aware that they had the right to withdraw their participation at any time. Participants in Phase 1 of the study gave their consent online immediately prior to starting the survey (See Appendix C). Those participants who were selected after indicating their willingness to contribute to Phase 2 were emailed a description of the study and a copy of the participant consent form informing them of their right to withdraw. Participants who agreed to continue, signed the written consent form prior to the interview (See Appendix D).

3.4. Methods of Data Collection

The following section outlines the methods through which data was gathered for this study. This includes explanations of the procedures and tools for collecting data for each phase of the research.

3.4.1. Phase One - Online survey

The online survey (Appendix C) was constructed using Qualtrics online survey platform and disseminated through the Macquarie University Qualtrics account. An online survey was chosen to facilitate easy distribution and access for a large number of participants in a cost effective and timely manner (Tuckman & Harper, 2012). Participant information and the survey link were emailed directly to 895 preschools identified through the MyChild website, a government resource for the public containing a database of early childhood services that is filterable by service type (See Appendix E). The email was addressed to NSW

preschools and asked the reader to forward it to the service's educational leader. Advertisements were also placed on two informal social network sites used by educational leaders and preschool directors (New South Wales Educational Leader Facebook page and the NSW Preschool Yahoo group) (See Appendix F). The online survey was available for one month and a reminder email was sent to preschools 10 days before the survey closed. 205 surveys were started and 156 participants continued after the first two eligibility questions.

The online survey was divided into six parts and contained 25 questions. This included eligibility questions, demographic questions and questions informed by the literature and research questions. A variety of question types were presented including single and multiple option response questions, a small number of rating scales and open response questions (Creswell, 2009). The multiple option response questions also provided an open response *other* category for those participants who did not find any of the responses provided applicable. Table 2 outlines the justification of the survey questions, including how they were informed by the literature, which practice architecture they explored and how they were aligned with each research question.

Table 2 *Survey Questions, Links to the Literature and Research Questions.*

Survey Part and Questions	Data Collected	Informed by	Practice Architecture	Research Question
Part 1	*Determine Participant Eligibility*			
Question 1-2	NSW preschool/Nominated educational leader			
Part 2	*Demographic Information*	Sims et al. 2017	Sayings, Doings, Relatings	Research Question 1[2]
Question 3-10				
Part 3	*Educational Leader Employment*			Research Question 1
Question 11-17	*Characteristics*			
	Remuneration, job description, time, budget.	Fleet et al., 2015	Doings	
	Informally share role	Rouse & Spradbury, 2015	Relatings	
	Appointment to educational leader role	Fleet et al. 2017	Doings	
Part 4	*Educational Leader Roles and Practices*			Research Question 2[3]
Question 18-20	Importance of possible roles	Sims et al. 2017	Doings	
	Practices to perform role	Sims et al. 2017	Doings	
Part 5	*Attitudes Towards Educational Leader Role*			Research Question 2
Question 22	How important?	Nuttall et al., 2014	Sayings	
Question 23	Qualities of educational leader?	Currently a gap in the literature	Sayings	Research Question 1
Questions 24	How is the educational leader role rewarding?		Sayings	
Part 6	*Supports for Educational Leader Role*	Currently a gap in the literature		Research Question 3[4]
Question 21	What supports used?		Doings	
Question 25	How is it challenging?		Relatings	

---

[2] RQ1. Who are the educational leaders of NSW preschools?

[3] RQ2. What do educational leaders do to lead the development and implementation of educational programs in preschool settings?

[4] RQ3. What do educational leaders identify as factors that support them in the role?

3.4.2. Phase Two - Interviews.

More than half of the Phase One survey participants indicated their interest in being involved in Phase 2 of the study (n=81). Volunteers who met the criteria of being the educational leader of a preschool that had been rated as meeting or exceeding in all areas of the NQS for their most recent quality assessment (as determined from the MyChild website) were eligible to participate in Phase 2[5]. Early analysis of Phase 1 data suggested that there were differences in how participants enacted the role of educational leader depending on their position in the preschool. In order to explore this difference further, Phase 2 volunteers were placed into two groups depending on their position. Those volunteers who indicated they were educational leaders and directors (some of whom had teaching responsibilities as well) were categorised as *directors* and those educational leaders who indicated that they had only teaching responsibilities (including early childhood teachers, special needs teachers and early childhood educators) were categorised as *teachers*.

Despite their initial interest to participate in Phase 2, many volunteers did not reply to the invitation to participate email or were no longer available due to other commitments. This was particularly true for *director* participants. Eight invitations were initially sent out, if participants either did not respond or were not able to participate, additional offers were made to other Phase 1 participants with the goal of locating eight Phase 2 participants. In total, four rounds of Phase 2 participant invitations were sent out to 24 *directors* (37 indicated interest) and 19 *teacher*s (44 indicated interest) (Creswell, 2009). Each interview was completed in approximately 45-75 minutes. Participants gave permission for the interviews to be digitally recorded and transcribed by a third party.

---

[5]   This criterion was chosen to ensure the study captured educational leaders whose practices met the National Quality Standards.

Interview prompts for the Phase 2 semi-structured interviews were designed to further explore how educational leaders in NSW preschools were leading the development and implementation of the educational program. Open ended questions were developed from the literature and themes that emerged from the survey results. (See Appendix G for Phase 2 interview questions and Table 3 for more detail). A semi structured approach allowed for prior preparation of prompts and an informal tone to put participants at ease (Creswell, 2009). Table 3 outlines the justification for the interview questions, including how they were informed by the literature and/or preliminary Phase 1 findings, which practice architecture they explored and how they were aligned with each research question.

Table 3 *Interview Prompts, Links to The Literature and Research Questions*

Interview Questions	Data Collected	Informed by	Practice Architecture	Research Question
Question 1	*Demographic information*	Sims et al, 2017		Research Question 1[6]
Question 2, 3	*Educational Leader Employment Characteristics*			Research Question 1
	Organisational structure			
	Remuneration, hours, training	Fleet et al., 2015	Relatings	
		Fleet et al., 2015	Doings	
Question 4, 5	*Educational Leader Roles and Practices*			Research Question 2[7]
	Describe role	Sims et al, 2017	Doings	
	How to be an educational leader	Fleet et al., 2015	Doings	
Question 6, 9, 10	*Attitudes Towards Educational Leader Role*			Research Question 2
	Something achieved	Rouse & Spradbury, 2015	Sayings	
	How important?	Rouse & Spradbury, 2015	Sayings	
	Qualities of educational leader	Phase 1 findings	Sayings	
	How is it rewarding and challenging?	Phase 1 findings	Sayings	
	What would you change?	Phase 1 findings	Doings/Relatings	
Question 7, 8	*Supports for Educational Leader Role*			Research Question 3[8]
	What supports you in role?	Phase 1 findings	Relatings	
	Do you know any educational leaders?	Phase 1 findings	Relatings	

---

[6] RQ1. Who are the educational leaders of NSW preschools?

[7] RQ2. What do educational leaders do to lead the development and implementation of educational programs in preschool settings?

[8] RQ3. What do educational leaders identify as factors that support them in the role?

3.5.   Data Analysis

The following section outlines the methods that were used to analyse the research data for both phases of the study. It identifies data analysis software, statistical tests and content analysis techniques of the study.

3.5.1.   Phase One – Online survey.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 24 (SPSS for Mac) (IBM Corp, 2016) was used to analyse the survey data. Descriptive statistics were created to organise and describe noteworthy features of the data (L. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Heiman, 2014). Non-parametric inferential statistics were also performed to analyse relationships within the data, specifically chi-square test of independence and Friedman's ANOVA(Lynch, 2013). As this study was exploratory in nature, to minimise the chance of type I error, inferential statistics were applied only to comparisons where descriptive statistics were suggestive of a relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Chi-square tests of independence were used to investigate relationships between demographic variables and data on educational leaders' practices (question 19), supports (question 21), qualities (question 23), rewards of the role (question 24) and challenges of the role (question 25). The chi-square test of independence is used to determine if there is an association between two or more categorical variables (Heiman, 2014). This test compares the observed frequencies in the data to the frequencies that would be expected if there was no association between the two nominal variables (Turner, 2014). In cases where the expected cell size was less than five, chi-square results were not reported (Heiman). Where a significant association was detected ($p < .05,$) Phi (for 2x2 chi-squares) and Cramers V (for larger chi-squares) were used post-test to measure the effect size. A small effect size or greater was considered significant in this study (J. Cohen, 1988).

Possible differences in the importance ratings of the educational leader roles (question 18) were investigated using Friedman's ANOVA. Friedman's ANOVA is used to examine significant differences between three or more related groups where the dependent variables are ordinal (Heiman, 2014). It is the non-parametric alternative to the ANOVA for repeated measures and establishes if the rank totals for each group are significantly different to the values that would be likely by chance (Pereira, Afonso, & Medeiros, 2014). Where significant differences were detected ($p < .05$), the Wilcoxon signed rank test was run for pairwise comparisons between groups (Heiman, 2014).

Open-ended survey results to question 23 (personal qualities), question 24 (most rewarding) and question 25 (most challenging) were analysed using *NVivo qualitative data analysis software,* Version 11 (QSR International, 2015). Similar responses were grouped into categories and these were used to provide further understanding of who educational leaders are and how they lead the development and implementation of the educational program in preschools (Tuckman & Harper, 2012). A summary of Phase 1 data analysis is illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4 Phase 1 Data Analysis

Research Question	Data Gathered	Data Analysis
Research Question 1 Who are the educational leaders of NSW preschools?	- Demographic Characteristics - Appointment - How is it rewarding? - How important?	Descriptive Statistics and Chi-Square test of Independence
Research Question 2 What do educational leaders do to lead the development and implementation of educational program in preschool settings?	- Remuneration - Job description - Time - Budget - Collaborate on role - Importance of possible roles - Educational leader practices - Educational leader qualities	Descriptive Statistics and Chi-Square test of Independence Friedman's ANOVA
Research Question 3 What do educational leaders identify as factors that support them in the role?	- How is it challenging? - What supports used?	Descriptive Statistics and Chi-Square test of Independence

3.5.2. Phase Two - Interviews.

Interview data was transcribed and imported into *NVivo Qualitative data analysis software,* Version 11 (QSR International, 2015).   As part of initial open coding, these transcripts were read to develop a general understanding of the whole data. Each interview transcript was then re-read and, with the use of NVivo, the content was sorted into three nodes based on the research questions. These were (1) personal characteristics (research question 1), (2) practices (research question 2) and (3) supports (research question 3). Second level coding was undertaken and similar content for each participant was coded into smaller sub nodes. Like concepts, attitudes, experiences and perceptions across participants within these sub nodes were then categorised as patterns became apparent in the data (L. Cohen et al., 2007). Through a process of analysis and reflection the most commonly occurring sub nodes were organised into two themes and six sub themes. The results of this process were then written into a narrative using interview extracts to illustrate the findings (Granheim, Lindgren, & Lundman, 2017). As far as possible, participants' actual speech was included in the narrative. Where inclusions were needed to clarify meaning, square brackets were used to indicate included words and phrases. A summary of the coding process is presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Phase 2 Coding Process

Open Coding	Second level coding	Categories	Themes
Personal Characteristics	Experience Qualifications		

Practices	Important role
	Fit with director
	Practice examples
	Share role
	Lead by example
	Avoid direction
	Need more time
	Role unclear
	Lack of support
		Practices – What
		    Casual conversations
		        Share research
		        Other examples
		
		Practices - How
		    Change
		        By example
			Theme 1:
			Want to help others improve practice and pedagogy through improving knowledge
			        Leading change
			        Sharing research
			        Leading as part of the team

		Avoid direction	
		Slowly	
		Practices – Challenges	
		- Time	
		- Lack of information	
		- Recognition	
Supports	Meeting with other educators Training	Supports - Friends - Formal groups	Theme 2 Challenged by lack of time and unclear role find support in others. Lack of time Limited official guidance Informal and personal supports

3.6.   Study Sample

3.6.1.   Phase One – Online Survey.

When the online survey portal was closed, 156 online surveys had been received. Three survey responses were removed from the data as respondents were not the nominated educational leader of a NSW preschool. Therefore, 153 educational leaders were included in Phase 1 of the study. The survey allowed participants flexibility to choose to not answer specific questions or to exit without completing, as a result there were small numbers of missing data and denominators vary slightly across some survey questions.

3.6.2.   Phase Two - Interviews.

Eight educational leaders participated in Phase 2 of the study. As discussed in section 3.4.2., Phase 2 participants were placed in one of two groups, *director* or *teacher* and participants were randomly chosen from these groups to ensure equal representation from both groups in the sample. Demographic information about Phase 2 participants is presented in Table 6.

Table 6 *Interview Participant Information*

Pseudonym	Position	Qualification	Early Childhood Experience	Length of time at preschool	Size of preschool (Number of children per day)
Lorraine	Director	Bachelor	30 years	0.5 year	27
Magda	Director	Bachelor	23 years	2 years	24
Sylvia	Director	Bachelor	29 years	12 years	40
Kirsten	Director	Bachelor	25 years	4 years	20
Xanthe	ECT	Bachelor	25 years	14 years	58
Nora	ECT	Bachelor	21 years	7 years	50
Frances	ECT	Bachelor	6 years	6 years	40
Elanora	ECE	Diploma	11 years	7 years	50

3.7. Limitations of the Study

The research design of this study meant that findings were limited to the population it covered. A non-probability sample and issues of potential bias from self-selection and recruitment through other participants associated with convenience and snowball sampling have influenced the generalisability of the results (Gay et al., 2014). It is also important to note that this is a small masters research study and there were therefore limitations related to the amount of time that data can be collected and analysed. Researcher bias may also be a limitation of the study. As an early childhood teacher with experience in preschool settings the researcher may bring her own bias to the gathering and analysis of data. Despite these limitations, there is still potential for this study to contribute to the literature about Educational Leaders in preschools.

3.8.   Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the mixed method research approach used in the study. It presented the ethical considerations, data collection and data analysis methods that were employed. The study sample was discussed and an analysis of the limitations of these methods was provided. The following chapter presents the results of the collected data with the aim of addressing the study's research questions.

Chapter Four. Findings

4.1.   Overview of the Chapter

This chapter presents the key findings of the study. The first section of the chapter reports the findings of the Phase 1 online survey data as they relate to the three research questions and the second section reports the findings from the Phase 2 interview data under the main themes revealed during analysis.

4.2.   Phase One Findings – Online Survey

In Phase 1 data from the online survey were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. This process was described in Section 3.5.1.

4.2.1.   Personal Characteristics

This section addresses Research Question One: 'Who are the educational leaders of NSW preschools?' Descriptive statistics were used to report participant demographics and background characteristics (survey questions 5-10) and participant experiences in the role (survey questions 11, 12 and 22). Relationships of demographic features (qualification level, position, and time in sector) with (1) the qualities educational leaders identify as important in an educational leader (survey question 23) and (2) what educational leaders find rewarding about the role (survey question 24) were also examined. Patterns in the data were explored descriptively and comparisons of greater magnitude were analysed with inferential statistics (chi-squares).

4.2.1.1 Participant demographics.

All educational leaders who indicated their gender in the survey were female ($n = 150$). The distribution of participant ages is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. *Distribution of Ages of Survey Participants*

Age Bracket	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Frequency	2 (1%)	24 (16%)	36 (24%)	61 (40%)	29 (19%)	1 (1%)

The majority of respondents to the online survey were both educational leaders and directors although educational leader teachers were also well represented. Those who identified as early childhood educators were holders of vocational diplomas. The *other* position category was used by one participant (0.6%) who indicated that she was a 'special needs teacher'. Most respondents indicated that the highest qualification they held was a bachelor degree (or equivalent). Table 8 presents the distribution of participant positions according to their highest qualifications, including totals for both variables. For comparison with other variables, respondents' positions were collapsed to two categories of *director (*51%) and *teacher* (48%) following the procedure described in section 3.4.2.

Table 8 *Distribution of Position of Survey Participants According to Highest Qualification*

Position	Directors		Teachers			Total
	Non-teaching	Teaching	Early Childhood Teacher	Early Childhood Educator	Other	
Masters	4 (3%)	2 (1%)	2 (1%)	0	1 (1%)	9 (6%)
Graduate Diploma	2 (1%)	2 (1%)	3 (2%)	0	0	8 (5%)
4-year degree (or equivalent)	1 (1%)	29 (19%)	41 (27%)	0	0	51 (33%)
3-year degree (or equivalent)	5 (3%)	28 (18%)	15 (10%)	0	0	74 (48%)
Vocational Diploma	1 (1%)	2 (1%)	0	11 (7%)	0	11 (7%)
Certificate III	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total *n* (%)	13 (9%)	63 (42%)	61 (40%)	11 (7%)	1 (1%)	153 (100%)

The length of time participants had been working in the early childhood education sector ranged from 1 to 39 years with a mean of 20.33 years ($SD = 10.10$). In this study, the mean length of tenure at the participant's current preschool was 10.21 years ($SD = 9.02$) with a range of less than one year to 39 years. Respondents' age was closely aligned to their length of time working in the sector, so only the latter was used in exploring relationships with other variables.

4.2.1.2 Length of time as educational leader.

Figure 1 presents a graphic summary of the length of time participants had been the educational leader of their preschool. The mean length of time was 4.15 years ($SD = 3.88$), with a minimum of one month and a maximum of 26 years. Nearly one quarter of participants reported that they had been the educational leader of their service since the position had become part of the regulations (approximately 5 years) and approximately one-fifth of respondents reported they had been the educational leader for longer than the five years that the regulations had been in place. For comparison, all responses over six years were collapsed into one category.
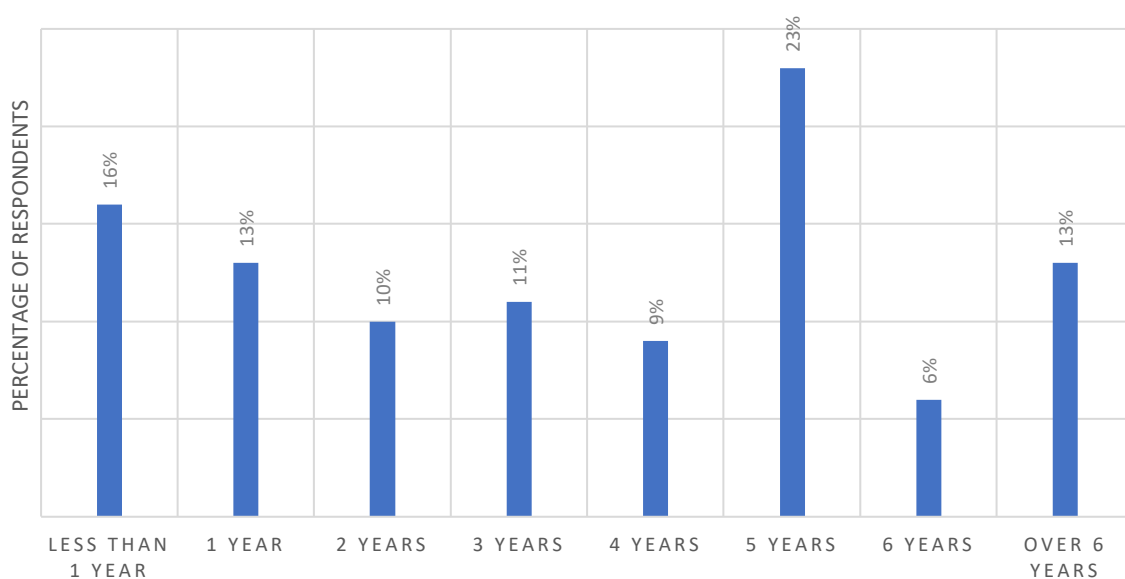
Figure 1. Length of time as educational leader of current preschool across all participants.

4.2.1.3 Appointment.

Most participants in the study reported that they became the service's educational leader either because it was an assumed part of their position or because they were asked to do so by their supervisor. Of the small number who indicated *other* as the reason for their appointment, the majority ($n = 5$) were directors who reported that they had assumed the role because no-one else in the preschool wanted to hold it. Figure 2 presents total response frequencies for the way participants were appointed.

Patterns of responses according to demographic features (qualification level, position, and time in sector) were explored descriptively (See Appendix H and Figure 2). A noteworthy difference was observed between the way educational leaders were appointed and the designated position they held. Figure 2 presents a graphic summary of appointment methods from those educational leaders who were directors and those who were teachers. More director educational leaders were appointed as an assumed part of their position ($n = 48$) while more teacher educational leaders were appointed because they were asked to by their supervisor ($n = 46$). There were no other obvious associations between demographic factors and how participants were appointed.
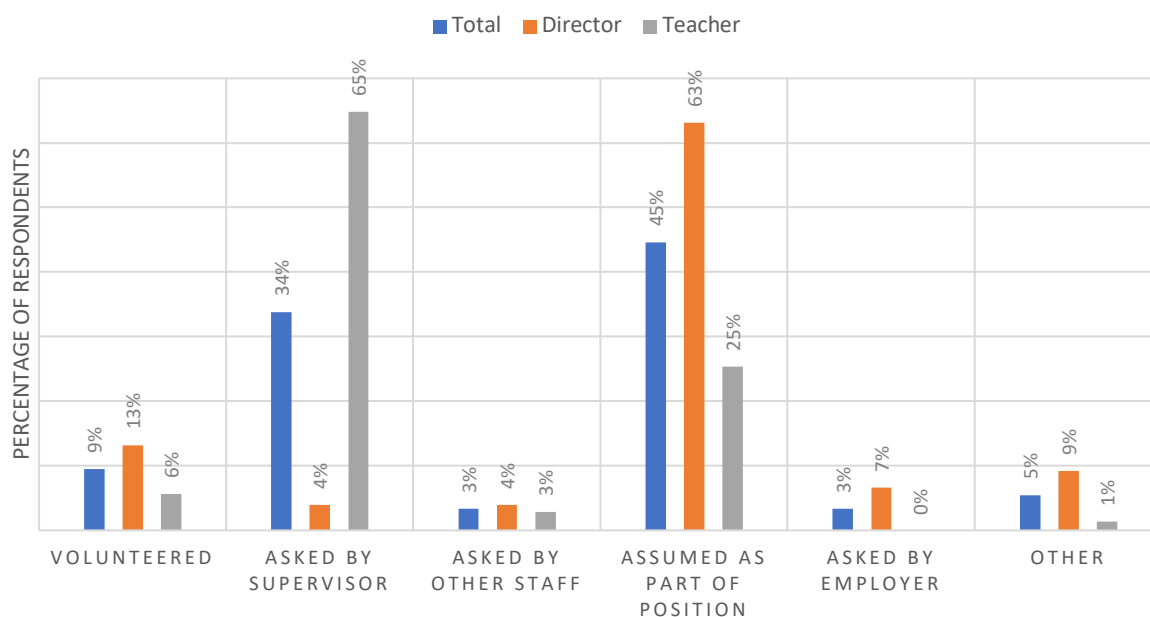
Figure 2. Appointment to educational leader position according to position.

4.2.1.1 Importance

Participants were asked to rate the importance of the educational leader role in preschools. These were measured on a 5-point scale from *extremely important (1)* to *not at all important (5)*. Participants overwhelmingly thought the educational leader role was important. Table 9 presents frequencies of participants' ratings on the importance of the educational leader role.

Table 9 Distribution of Level of Importance Rating

Level of Importance	Extremely Important	Very Important	Moderately Important	Slightly Important	Not at all Important
Frequency	84 (68%)	45 (31%)	15 (10%)	0	1 (1%)

4.2.1.2 Qualities of an Educational Leader.

Question 23 of the survey asked educational leaders to provide three qualities that they thought educational leaders should have. Content analysis was used on these open-ended responses to reveal ten categories of responses. Figure 3 presents a graphic summary of

participants' choice of educational leader qualities in the ten categories that emerged from the data. Patterns of responses according to demographic factors (qualification level, position, and time in sector) were explored and there were no noticeable differences among these variables.

Figure 3. Qualities of educational leaders across all participants.

4.2.1.3 What is rewarding.

Question 24 of the survey asked participants what they found rewarding about the educational leader role. Content analysis was used on these open-ended responses to reveal nine categories of responses. A small number of participants indicated that they did not find anything rewarding about the educational leader position and these responses were coded into a category named *not rewarding*. Figure 4 presents a graphic summary of total participant responses to what they find rewarding about the educational leader role.

Patterns of responses according to demographic features (qualification level, position, and time in sector) were explored descriptively. A noticeable difference was observed for those who identified *seeing others grow* as a reward across the director and teacher roles, with more directors identifying *seeing others* grow as something they found rewarding about the role (*n*

= 45) than teachers (*n*= 28). The frequencies of response for the director and teacher roles are

presented in Figure 4. There were no other obvious associations between demographic factors

and how participants were appointed.

Figure 4. What is rewarding according to position.

A chi-square test of independence was conducted in SPSS to determine if there was an association between what educational leaders found rewarding and their position. This analysis showed that whether respondents endorsed *seeing others grow* varied according to their position [χ^2(1) = 4.387, p = .036]. This association was further explored through application of Cramer's *V* (*V* = -.179) which indicated that the association was small (J. Cohen, 1988).

4.2.2. Practices

This section addresses Research Question Two: 'What do educational leaders do to lead the development and implementation of educational program in preschool settings?' Descriptive statistics were used to report service specific information about the educational leader role (survey questions 13-17) and practices and roles of the participants (survey questions 18, 19 and 20). Patterns in the data were explored descriptively and comparisons of greater magnitude were explored with inferential statistics (Friedman's ANOVA and chi-square tests).

4.2.2.1 Remuneration.

The majority of educational leaders in the study did not receive extra remuneration for their educational leader work. Figure 5 presents total response frequencies for educational leaders' extra remuneration.

Patterns of responses according to demographic features (qualification level, position, and time in sector) were explored descriptively (See Appendix I & Figure 5). A noticeable difference was observed across the director and teacher roles with slightly more teacher educational leaders (*n* = 13) receiving extra hours at their normal rate of pay than directors (*n* = 4). Figure 5 presents a graphic summary of respondents' educational leader remuneration across the director and teacher roles. There were no other obvious associations between demographic factors and how participants were appointed (See Appendix I).

*Figure 5* Extra remuneration for educational leader role according to position.

A chi-square test of independence was conducted in SPSS to see if there was an association between the remuneration educational leaders received and their position. This analysis showed that how educational leaders were remunerated did not vary according to their position [$\chi^2(1) = 5.9894$, p = .050].

4.2.2.2 *Job description.*

Just over half of respondents reported that they had a job description for their education leader role (*n* = 83, 56%). Patterns of responses according to demographic factors (qualification level, position, and time in sector) were explored descriptively and there were no noticeable differences (See Appendix J).
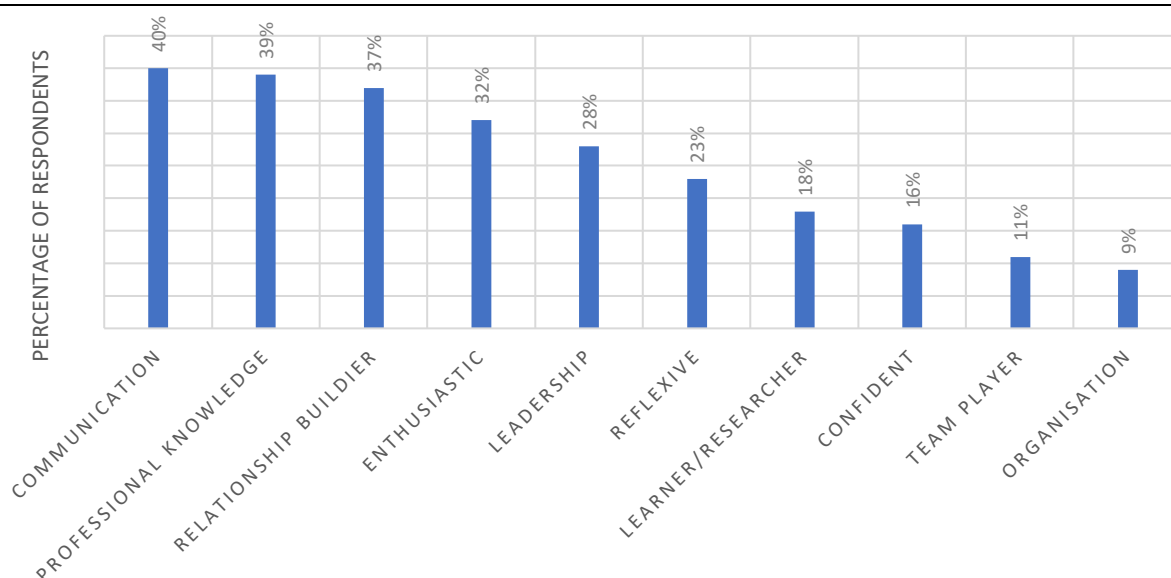
4.2.2.3 *Budget.*

Only a very small number of educational leaders indicated that they had a budget for their educational leader role (*n* = 10, 7%). Patterns of responses according to demographic features (qualification level, position, and time in sector) were explored descriptively and there were no noticeable differences (See Appendix K).

4.2.2.4 Time away from other duties.

Slightly more than half of the total survey respondents reported that they received regular time away from their other duties for their educational leader role (*n* = 84). Figure 6 presents total response frequencies for educational leaders' time away from other duties.

Patterns of responses according to demographic features (qualification level, position, and time in sector) were explored descriptively. A noticeable difference was observed across the director and teacher roles, with more educational leaders who were teachers reporting that they received release time from their other duties (*n* = 48) than those who were directors (*n* = 36). Figure 6 presents a graphic summary of respondents' release time across the director and teacher roles. There were no other obvious associations between demographic factors and how participants were appointed (See Appendix L).
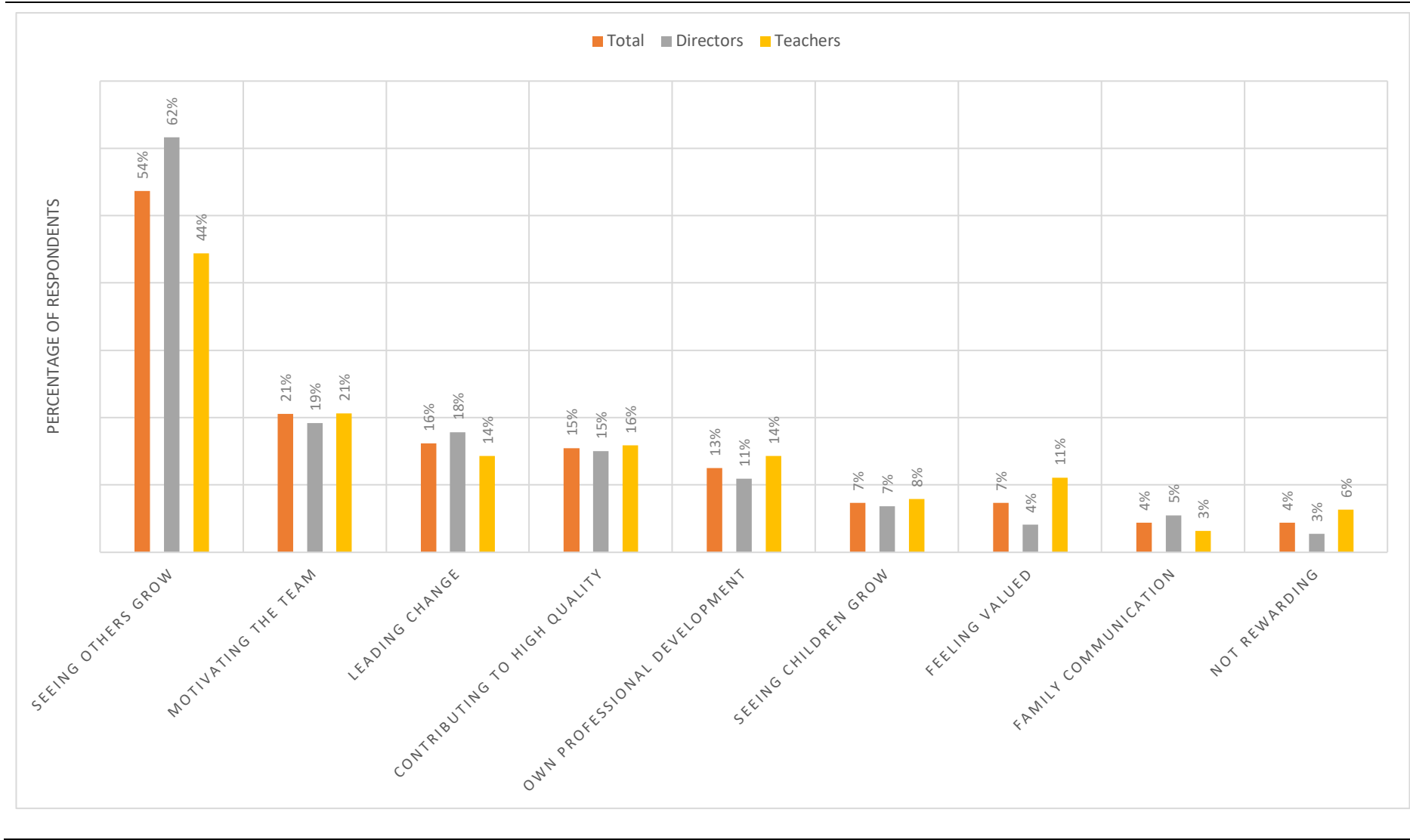

Figure 6. Receive educational leader release time according to position

A chi-square test of independence was conducted in SPSS to determine if there was an association between the release time educational leaders received and their position. This analysis showed whether respondents received time away from other duties varied according to their role [$\chi^2(1) = 6.1386, p = .013$]. This association was further explored through

application of Phi ($\varphi = 0.204$, *p* = .013) which indicated that the association was small (J. Cohen, 1988).

Figure 8 presents a graphic summary of the amount of time educational leaders receive away from their other duties. Participants who indicated that their director's release time included an expectation to also complete educational leader work did not provide a specific length of time for their educational leader work and so were not included in the calculation of central tendency for this question. One participant reported performing her educational leader role fulltime and this resulted in skewed data. The median was therefore chosen as the appropriate measure of central tendency as it is less affected by skewed data than the mean (Heiman, 2014). The median amount of time that applicable respondents received away from other duties to perform their educational leader role was 3 hours per week (IQR = 1-6).
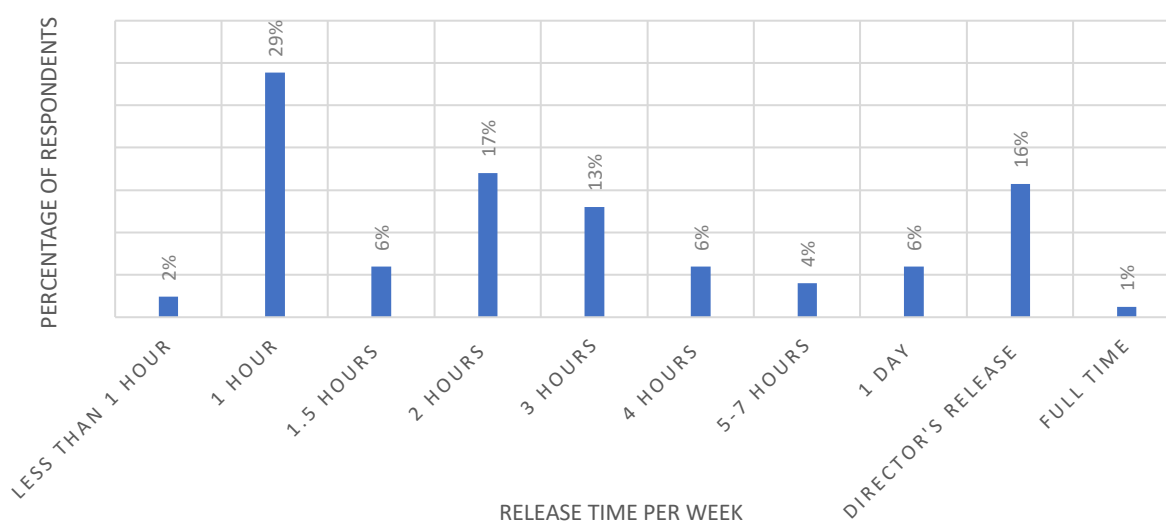
Figure 5. Time received away from other duties across all respondents.

4.2.2.5 Collaborating.

While the law requires only one person to be nominated as the educational leader for the service, almost half of all respondents in this study reported that they collaborated on some facets of the educational leader role (*n* = 71, 48%). Patterns of responses according to

demographic factors (qualification level, position, and time in sector) were explored and there were no noticeable differences (See Appendix M).

Participants' open-ended explanations of how they shared the role were grouped into three categories (See appendix M). Approximately half of all respondents who collaborated on the role ($n = 35$) indicated that they had a collaborative whole team approach. Figure 6 presents total response frequencies for how educational leaders collaborated on their role. Patterns of responses according to demographic features (qualification level, position, and time in sector) were explored descriptively. A noticeable difference was observed across the director and teacher roles with more directors ($n = 14$) than teachers ($n = 4$) indicating that they work with an unofficial educational leader colleague. More teachers ($n = 12$) than directors ($n = 6$) also indicated that they work with the director or leadership team to lead the educational program. There were no other obvious associations between demographic factors and how participants were appointed (See appendix M).
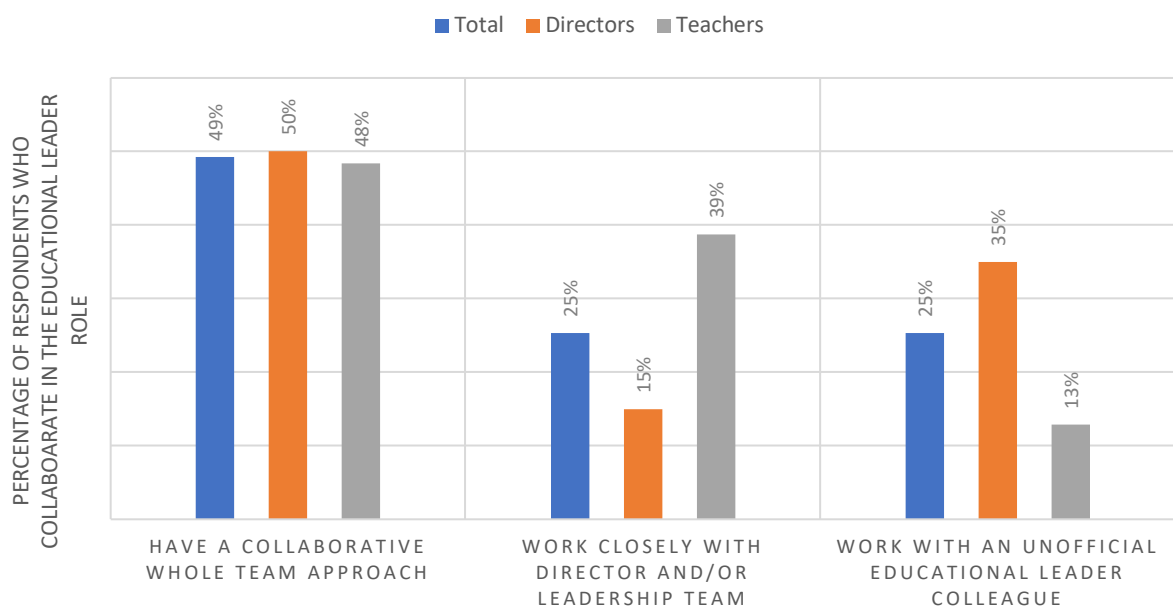
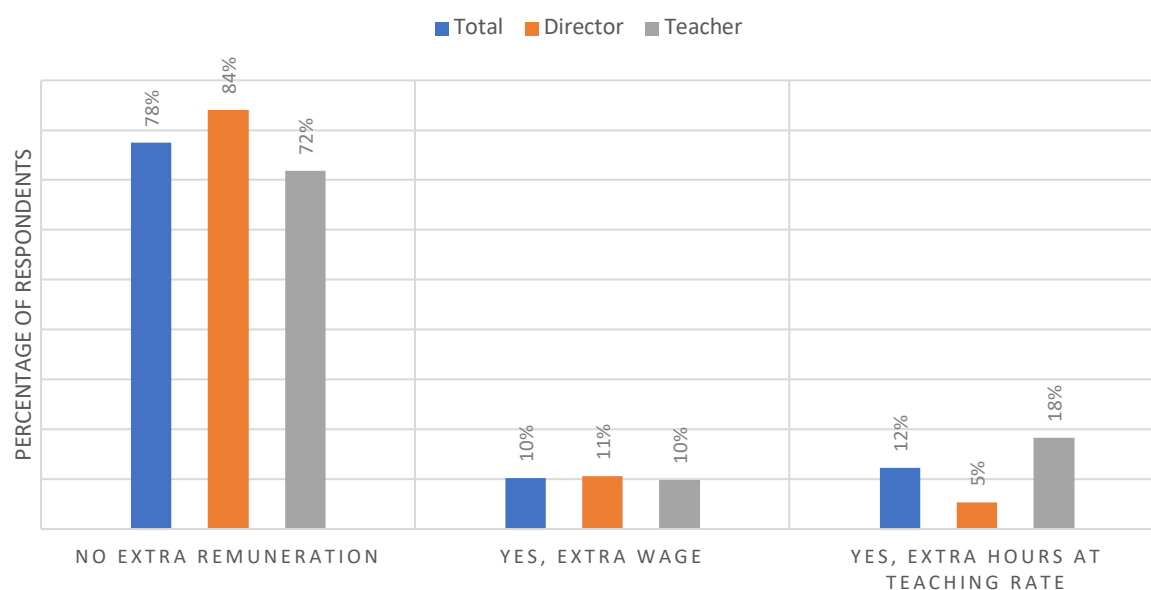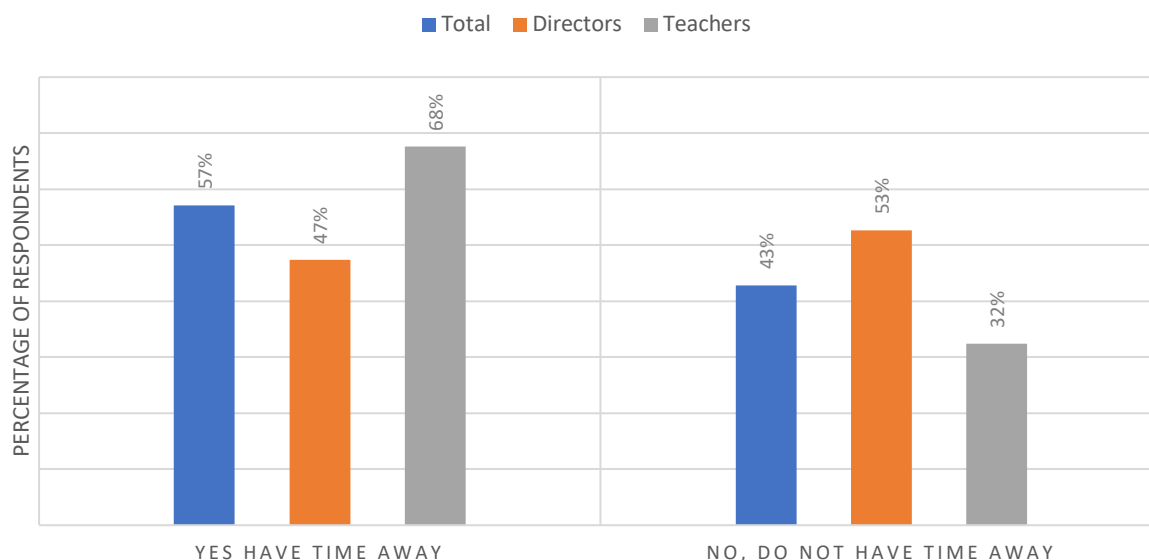*Figure 6. Collaborate* according to position.

A chi-square test of independence was conducted in SPSS to determine if there was an association between the method of collaboration and educational leaders' position. This analysis showed how respondents collaborated as educational leader varied according to their position [$\chi^2(1) = 7.245$, p = .027]. This association was further explored through application of Cramer's V ($V = .319$) which indicated that the association was moderate (J. Cohen, 1988).

4.2.2.6 Roles of the educational leader.

Education leaders were asked to rate the importance of eight roles described in the literature relating to their educational leader practice. These were abbreviated for analysis as follows:

- Leading other staff in the development of the QIP (QIP);

- Ensuring staff compliance with the NQS and National Law and Regulations (Compliance);

- Mentoring other staff with their teaching decisions (Mentoring teaching);

- Mentoring other staff with their documentation (Mentoring documentation);

- Mentoring other staff with other issues (Other mentoring);

- Leading staff in critical reflection of the preschool program (Program reflection);

- Leading the development of staff knowledge about the preschool program (Program knowledge); and

- Sharing the preschool's educational direction with families and other community members (Families and communities).

The importance of each of these roles was measured on a 5-point scale from *extremely important (1)* to *not at all important (5)*. The majority of these roles were rated by respondents as either *extremely important* or *very important.* Figure 7 summarises the frequencies of ratings for each educational leader practice featured.
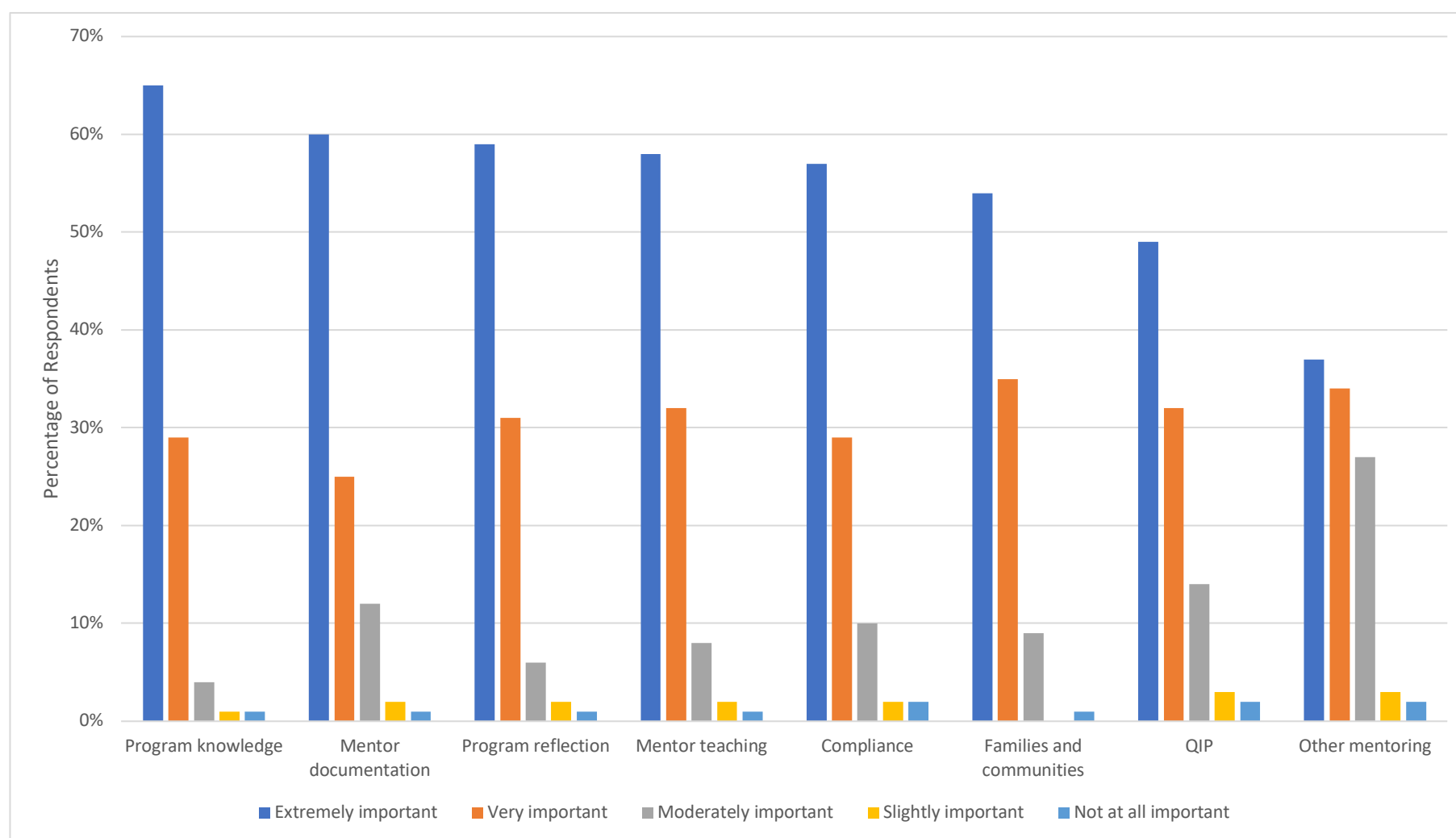
Figure 7. Ratings of importance for educational leader practices according to position.

Friedman's Two-Way Analysis of Variance by Ranks tests were conducted in SPSS to determine if there were differences in importance ratings between the eight educational leader practices. Results of that analysis indicated that there was a significant differential rank ordered difference [$\chi 2(7) = 72.20$, $p < .05$]. Post hoc pairwise comparisons of the rank preferences for the practices were therefore performed and revealed that other mentoring (Mean rank = 1.97) was generally rated as less important than all the other practices (program knowledge (Mean = 1.44), critical reflection (Mean = 1.53), mentoring teaching (Mean = 1.56), mentoring documentation (Mean 1.59), families and communities (Mean 1.57) and compliance (Mean = 1.64)). QIP development (Mean = 1.78) was also generally ranked lower than program knowledge (Mean = 1.44).

4.2.2.7 *Enactment of educational leader role.*

Educational leaders were asked to indicate if they enacted their role in any of the ten ways offered and an open-ended *other* option. Figure 8 summarises the total frequency of response for each method. Most educational leaders endorsed a variety of methods of enacting their educational leader role, choosing a mean number of practices of 7.98 (*SD* = 2.69) from a minimum of one to a maximum of 12. The practices of *casual talks, sharing research and resources* and *contributing to the QIP* were the three most frequently chosen responses, provided by over 90% of participants. The least frequently chosen responses were *spending time in other classrooms* and *'other.'* The open-ended responses in *other* were analysed and included *contribute to the program (n = 4), lead whole team guided reflection* (*n = 3*) and *have a regular item on the staff meeting agenda (n =* 4).

Patterns of responses according to demographic features (qualification level, position, and time in sector) were explored descriptively. Noticeable differences were observed across the director and teacher roles, with more educational leaders who were directors reporting some

methods of enactment than those who were teachers. This included *develop training* (directors *n* = 67 teachers *n* = 31), *run meetings* (directors *n* = 61, teachers *n* = 35), *meet formally* (directors *n* = 56, teachers *n* = 33) and *review performance* (directors *n* = 65, teachers *n* = 24). Figure 8 presents a graphic summary of the educational leader practices across the director and teacher roles. There were no other obvious associations between demographic factors and how participants were appointed (See Figure 8 & Appendix N).
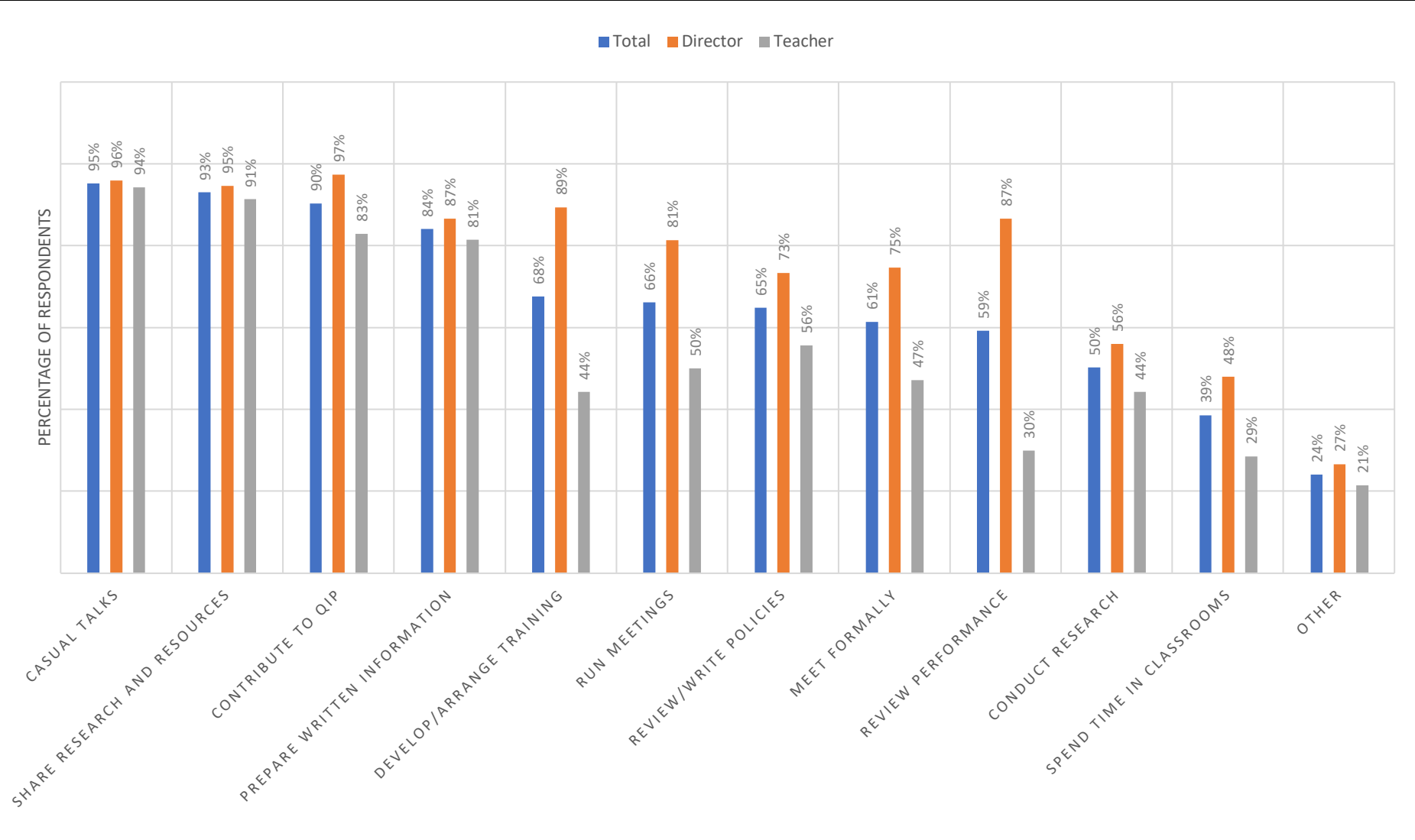
Figure 8. Practices used to perform educational leader role according to position.

Educational leaders were also asked to indicate which of the presented practices they found most effective in the role as educational leader. Some respondents chose more than one option. Figure 9 summarises the total frequency with which each practice was chosen as the most effective. Patterns of responses according to demographic features (qualification level, position, and time in sector) were explored descriptively. Noticeable differences were observed across the director and teacher roles, with more educational leaders who were teachers ($n = 29$) than directors ($n = 20$) reporting that they found casual talks the most effective and more educational leaders who were directors ($n = 13$) than teachers ($n = 3$) reporting that they found all roles effective. Figure 9 presents a graphic summary of most effective practice across the director and teacher roles. There were no other obvious associations between demographic factors and how participants were appointed (See Figure 9 & Appendix N).

Figure 9. Most effective practice for enacting the educational leader role according to position.

A chi-square test of independence was conducted in SPSS to determine if there was an association between participants' most effective practices and their position. This analysis showed whether respondents chose *all* practices varied according to their role [$\chi2(1) = 7.235$, p = 0.007]. Figure 12 shows more directors ($n = 13$) endorsed the category all than teachers ($n = 3$). This association was further explore through application of Cramer's *V* (*V* = .22) which indicated that the association was small (J. Cohen, 1988).

4.2.3. Supports

This section addresses Research Question Three: 'What do educational leaders identify as factors that support them in the role?' Descriptive statistics were used to report participant responses to questions that asked about their challenges (survey question 25) and their supports (survey question 21) in the educational leader role. Patterns in the data were explored descriptively and comparisons of greater magnitude were explored with inferential statistics (chi-square tests).

4.2.3.1 Challenges of the educational leader role.

Question 25 of the survey asked educational leaders what they found most challenging about their role. These open-ended responses were analysed to reveal eight categories of responses. These results show that the majority of respondents were challenged by a *lack of time* ($n = 80$). Figure 13 summarises the total frequencies of responses in these categories.

Patterns of responses according to demographic features (qualification level, position, and time in sector) were explored descriptively (See Appendix O). A noticeable difference was observed across the director and teacher roles with more directors ($n = 51$) indicating that they were challenged by a lack of time than teachers ($n = 29$). Figure 13 presents a graphic

summary of participants' challenges across the director and teacher roles. There were no other

obvious associations between demographic factors and what challenged educational leaders.
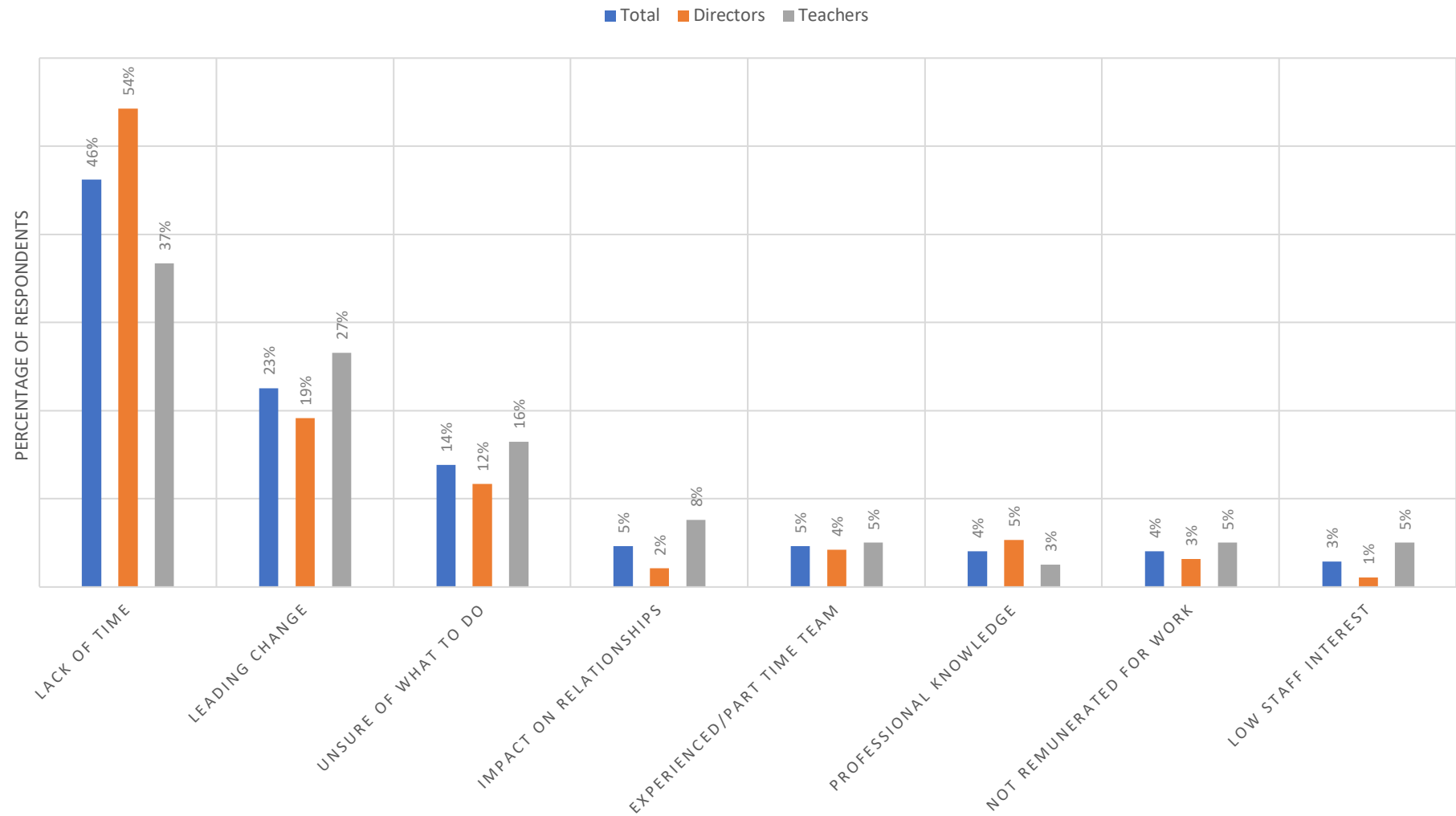
Figure 10. Challenges of Educational Leaders according to position.

A chi-square test of independence was conducted in SPSS to determine if there was an association between challenges of the role and educational leaders' position. This analysis showed participants who indicated that lack of time was a challenge varied according to position [$\chi^2(1)$ = 10.208, p = .001]. This association was further explored through application of Cramer's V (Cramer's V = -.274) which indicated that the association was small (J. Cohen, 1988).

4.2.3.2 Supports for the Educational Leader Role.

Educational leaders were asked to indicate if they were supported in their role in any of the nine supports offered and an open-ended other option. The mean number of supports chosen by educational leaders was 4.75 (*SD* = 1.897), from a minimum of one to a maximum of nine. The practices of *researching current literature, meeting with other educational leaders and other members of the preschool team and online* and *'ace to face professional learning* were chosen by a majority of participants. Figure 14 summarises the total frequency of response for each support method. Patterns of responses according to demographic features (qualification level, position, and time in sector) were explored descriptively.

Patterns of responses according to demographic features (qualification level, position, and time in sector) were explored descriptively. A noticeable difference was observed across the director and teacher roles. More educational leaders who were teachers reported that they used *mentoring from supervisor or other* for a support (*n* = 40) and educational leader *online social networks* (*n* = 30) than those who were directors (*n* = 15). Figure 14 presents a graphic summary of respondents' educational leader supports across the director and teacher roles. There were no other obvious associations between demographic factors and how participants were appointed (See Figure 14 & Appendix P).
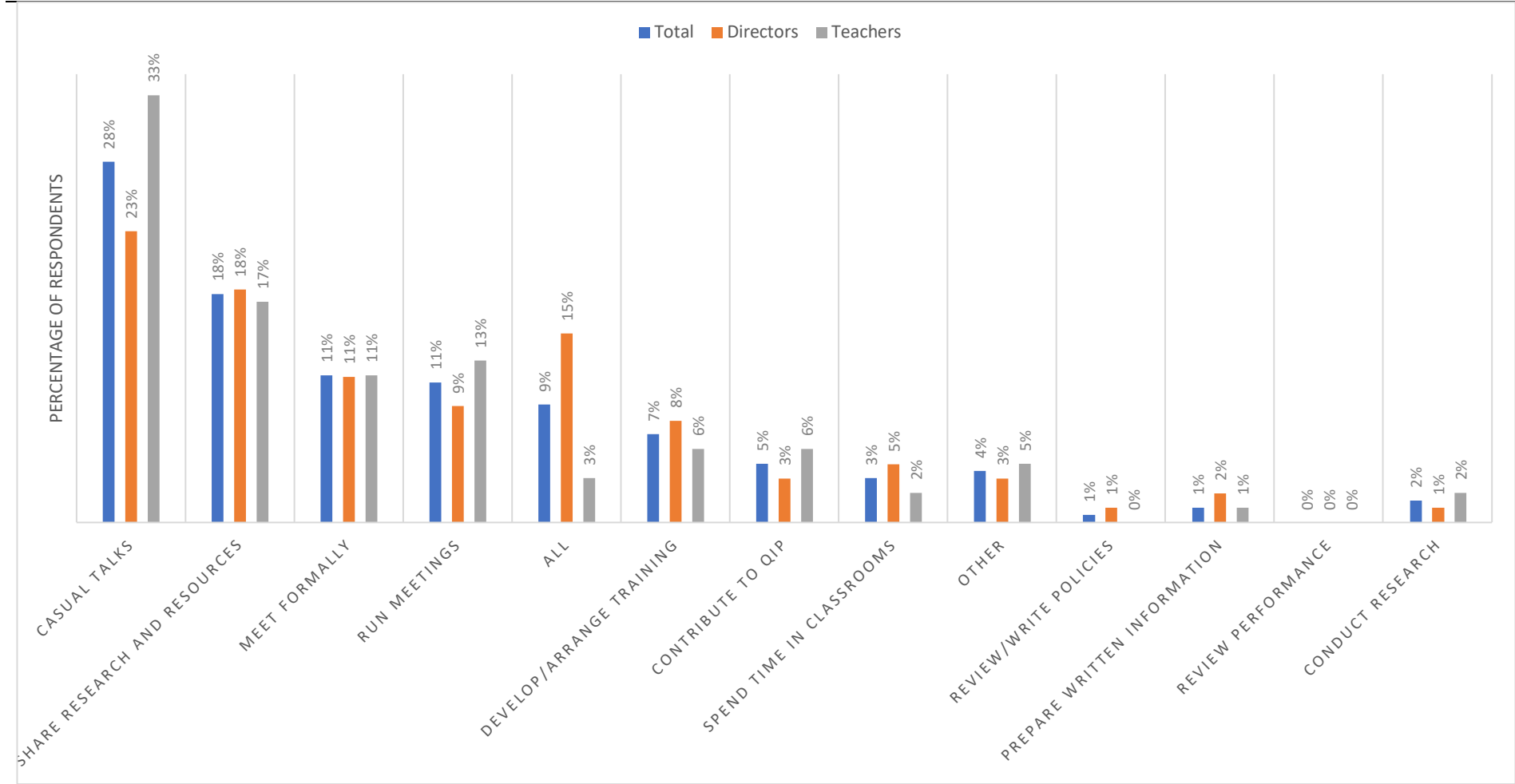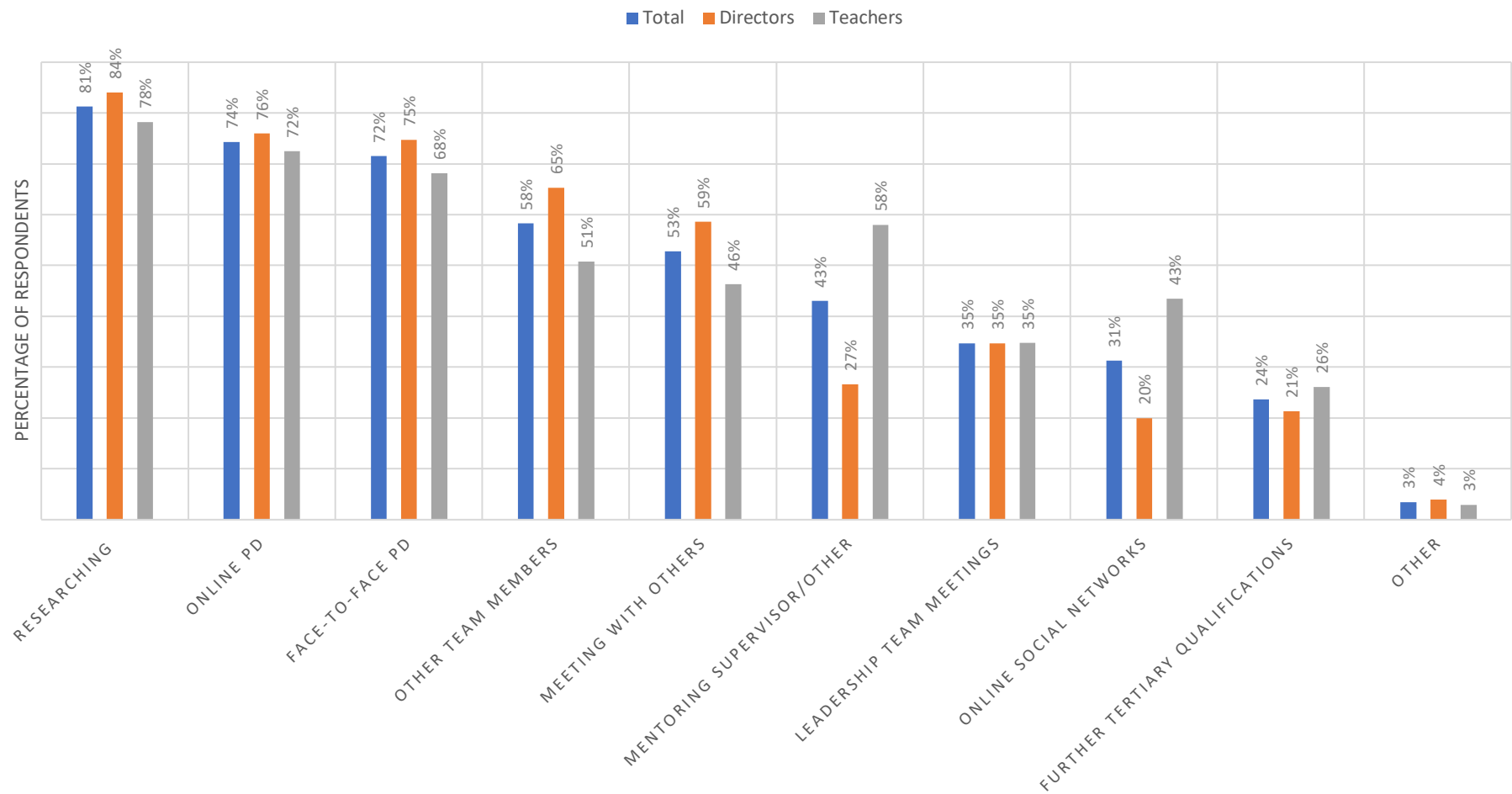
Figure 14. Supports for educational leaders according to position.

A chi-square test of independence was conducted in SPSS to determine if there was an association between participants' supports and their position. This analysis showed whether respondents chose mentoring and guidance from a supervisor or another as a support varied according to their role [$\chi2(1) = 17.147, p < .001$]. This association was further explored through application of Cramer's V ($V = .345$) which indicated that the association was moderate (J. Cohen, 1988). The analysis also showed that whether respondents chose educational leader online social networks as a support also varied according to their role, [$\chi2(1) = 9.221, p = .002$]. This association was further explored through application of Cramer's V (Cramer's $V = 0.253$) which indicated that the association was small (J. Cohen, 1988).

4.2.4.   Phase One Summary

Findings from the Phase One data identified educational leaders who responded to the survey were female, generally over 45 and with substantial experience in the sector. There was an approximately even split between director educational leaders and teacher educational leaders, and most participants had been in the role for approximately 4 years. Educational leaders in this study were usually appointed because they were asked by their supervisors (teachers) or because it was an assumed part of their position (directors). They thought educational leaders should have good communication and professional knowledge and be skilled at building relationships and they were rewarded by seeing professional growth in others; this was particularly the case for directors.

Few educational leaders received extra remuneration for their educational leader work and even fewer had a budget for their role. Just over half of all participants had a job description for their educational leader role and received time away from their other duties to perform it. Those who did have time away generally received just over two and a half hours a week with teacher educational leaders more likely to have time away than those who were directors.

Almost half of all respondents collaborated with others to lead the preschool's educational program: working in a whole team approach; with a leadership team; or with an unofficial educational leader colleague. Participants rated almost all of the presented educational leader roles as important except for mentoring on topics other than teaching or documentation. They enacted their role in many ways, favouring casual talks and sharing research and resources particularly.

Educational leaders in this study were challenged by a lack of time to perform their role (particularly director educational leaders) and the difficulties of leading others to change. They found their support in a number of places especially in their own research and online and face to face professional development. Teacher educational leaders were more likely to find support in online social networks and the mentoring of others than director educational leaders.

4.3.   Phase Two Findings – Interviews

In Phase Two data from the eight interviews were analysed for similar content in order to answer the research questions.[9]

This process, described Section 3.5.2 involved a first level analysis of the data through open coding where all content related to the three research questions were captured and sorted into 1) personal characteristics (RQ1), (2) practices (RQ2) and (3) supports (RQ 3). Through secondary analysis like concepts, attitudes, experiences and perceptions for each participant were then coded into smaller sub nodes. Patterns began to emerge within these codes and the most commonly occurring codes were arranged into categories (L. Cohen et al., 2007).

---

[9] [9] RQ1. Who are the educational leaders of NSW preschools?
[9] RQ2. What do educational leaders do to lead the development and implementation of educational program in preschool settings?
[9] RQ3. What do educational leaders identify as factors that support them in the role?

Through a process of analysis and reflection the sub nodes were organised into two themes and six sub themes.

Two main themes and six subthemes were uncovered as outlined below:

1. Educational leaders in this study work to make changes in practice and pedagogy and lead by improving the professional knowledge of staff at their preschool and working alongside the rest of the team (RQ2).

   This included educational leaders;

   a. Leading change in practice and pedagogy;

   b. Sharing research with the team; and

   c. Leading as part of the team.

2. Educational leaders challenged by not having enough time or guidance to perform their role and use their own personal supports to assist them (RQ 2 and 3).

   This included;

   a. Lack of time;

   b. Performing a role with little official guidance and recognition; and

   c. Informal and personal supports.

4.3.1. Educational leaders' role in preschool: The practices.

The following section discusses the findings of the interviews that relate to theme one. It discusses each of the three sub themes in a narrative that includes the voices of participants. This analysis suggests that participants saw their role as related to change and that they endeavoured to lead as part of the team, using research and resources to improve the

professional knowledge of their team. Participant names (pseudonyms) and their position are included for clarity.

4.3.1.1 Educational leaders' role: Leading changes in practice and pedagogy.

During the interviews, individual participants described a diverse range of practices as part of their educational leader role. These included:

- Presenting at staff meetings (Nora, teacher);

- Organising training (Lorraine, director);

- Proof reading other educators' documentation (Sylvia, director);

- Contributing to the families' newsletter, assisting teaching staff with program decisions (Magda, director);

- Creating service wide programing and documentation formats (Xanthe, teacher);

- Making information booklets for staff (about the EYLF, educational theorists, learning through play, sustainability), making signs to explain pedagogy to families (Elanora, teacher);

- Communicating with local primary schools, family orientation talks, updating the preschool's vision (Frances, teacher); and

- Changing the documentation style of the preschool (Kirsten, director).

Descriptions of these practices and other facets of the educational leader role were frequently framed around a sense of responsibility to lead other educators to change and update their pedagogical knowledge and practice. For example, Elanora (teacher) defined her educational leader role as 'to try and get them thinking, not just doing the same thing, in and

out like robots every day' (Elanora, teacher). Kirsten, (director) saw this less explicitly as part
of her role but noted that change generally came from her ideas, saying 'I do tend to be the one
that sort of goes, how about we try this?' One educational leader felt that the experienced and
long tenure of her workforce meant that leading pedagogical and practice towards best practice
was a particularly important part of the educational leader role. Sylvia (director) discusses
below how the educational leader role functions with her team:

> Our staff here are very stable, we've been here for a long time, which
>
> is great, but it can also be quite hard to implement change. So, I see
>
> that as my role, is, you know, making sure that we're talking and
>
> reflecting and working out what's best practice…I see that as a really
>
> crucial part of the ed [educational] leader role.

These educational leaders saw their role as encouraging others to view their practice
and pedagogy differently.

4.3.1.2 Educational leaders' role: Sharing research.

All educational leaders highlighted that they thought it was important to share current
research and literature with the rest of their team as part of their educational leader role. Nora
(teacher) noted that she provided other staff with current research and literature to endorse her
ideas:

> I put the time and the effort into those suggestions and the research, so
>
> I'm putting forward a pretty good case. I'm not just going and saying,
>
> let's do this and not given any thought, because that's just not my style.

Similarly, Xanthe (teacher) observed that when staff were working together as a group,
it was often her role to gather and share the literature and research. She explained, 'it's good
to be able to sort of guide things like this, okay, well we need a statement now, okay, well I'll
find some stuff, let's read it, let's work it out. Because somebody's got to do that'.

Two other educational leaders used research and literature to start and support conversations about practice. Magda (director) suggested that the sharing of new information was everyday practice for early childhood education professionals and so she felt that sharing it as part of the educational leader role was a continuation of this practice. She noted: 'I think it's part of our innate nature of being teachers, is we're all researchers and we're always looking for a different way or an idea and want to share it with each other'. Sylvia (director), saw the sharing of literature and research more formally, as a way to ensure that the team had access to the most up to date information. She explains this view below:

> The educational leader's role has been the person who is responsible for
>
> disseminating information, current information. So, I tend to read all
>
> our journals, etc, and then I'll pull out and say to the girls: look, I know
>
> you are not going to read everything but this is the one…I think that is
>
> one of the biggest roles, it's you know filtering the information and
>
> sharing it.

This identification that the educational leader's role is to help team members' professional knowledge current through the thoughtful sharing of literature and research was repeated by two other educational leaders. One of these, Elanora (teacher) also noted that sharing information required thoughtful choices about the type and amount of literature she shared and the way she shared it. Elanora (teacher) observed that she had changed the way she shared literature over time, stating:

> I've got to think about, you know, like staff don't want to spend so
>
> much time reading all these things I'm sending through, whatever. So,
>
> we came to the agreement that just at staff meetings that's when we'll
>
> do a little reflection or, you know, if I've got an article or something.

Because I was putting things up and I think people weren't really

wanting to do the extra work.

4.3.1.3 Educational leaders' role: Leading as part of the team.

There was a strong feeling among all the educational leaders that although they held

the formal title of educational leader, other members of their team also lead the development

and implementation of the educational program. For example, Kirsten (director) observed 'I

think being an educational leader, I think we all are here, because we all have our strengths'.

Similarly, Magda (director) noted

I think also, when you have got a lot of experienced staff, that are really

passionate, I wonder how much an educational leader can drive it,

because I feel like everyone is contributing in their own way, to inspire,

mentor, do their best for families, children and each other.

The impact of everyone as an educational leader translated into specific leadership

strategies for the official educational leaders who were interviewed. There was a common

outlook that they worked to lead by: leading from within the team; approaching change slowly

and modelling good practice. Frances (teacher) explained her experience of finding this

balance with a skilled team:

Like we're going to be a much more functional team when I'm part of

the team, rather than when I am putting myself in the position of sitting

up high. And that was something I learnt early on in the role.

She discussed the impact that this realisation had on her leadership practice and noted:

And I think, well, I'm better off to just take my time, go about it in a

more subtle long-term way and be okay…Sometime what I'll do is

find…You know, like I'll find something and slip it in [to

conversation].

Casual conversations were a strategy that two other educational leaders also described as useful to their practice. They described them as a sensitive and measured way to lead the development of the program. Lorraine (director) noted '[Change happens] very slowly…we have informal conversations all the time'. Similarly, Nora (teacher) described how she used casual conversations, saying 'so I really try and guide conversations, and I think that's a really good start, asking the questions, being the devil's advocate'.

Five of the eight educational leaders spoke of the importance of modelling good practice. Xanthe (teacher) discussed the importance of this strategy to her practice saying, 'I probably think in my situation, it's like I always believe you lead by just doing it. You know, you lead by doing it or by trying to...' Frances (teacher) provided a concrete example of how she leads by example, stating:

> So, I'm much more likely to lead by example. So, if I notice the teachers aren't wearing their hats and it's the time of year when we should be wearing hats, I'll get my hat, and get the other hats and be like, oh I just realised we weren't wearing our hats, you know? So, I just really try to be the person who does the right thing, and hope that people sort of follow on along with that.

Two educational leaders commented that by leading as part of the team, and through modelling they were able to find ways to share their own professional knowledge. Xanthe (teacher) describes this: 'It's the shoulder to shoulder, what are you doing in your room? How can I help you think about that? How can I help you extend on that?' Using similar strategies Magda (director) suggested that leading as part of the team helped her to guide experienced co-workers. She commented:

> And I think because the ECTs, they're quite – very experienced, like myself, and I often say to them: what do you want from me that I can

help, work, what are you doing in your curriculum and things like that,

where can I help you?

4.3.2. Educational leaders' challenges and supports.

The following section discusses the findings of the interviews that relate to theme two - educational leaders are challenged by not having enough time or guidance to perform their role and use their own personal supports to assist them.   It discusses each of the three sub themes in a narrative that includes the voices of participants. This analysis suggests that participants are challenged by a lack of time and limited official guidance on their role and that the most useful supports to them come from their personal relationships.

4.3.2.1 Educational leaders' challenges: A lack of time.

Seven out of the eight educational leaders noted the limited amount of time they had to perform their role. They spoke of the difficulties of juggling their teaching and/or directing duties against what they wanted to do as the educational leader. Frances, a full time early childhood teacher, described the impact of not having enough time:

You don't have the time. And to be proud of the role…And I think this

is something that I struggle with as well, I get quite anxious at times

because I think, well I'm not doing a good job as a teacher, I'm not

doing a good job as an educational leader.

All four of the director educational leaders also spoke of a lack of time to perform their educational leader role. Magda (teacher) had previously been an ECT educational leader with a set time each week to work on the role but was now a teaching director educational leader with no set educational leader time. She explained the differences she noticed in how she was

able to enact the educational leader role now that she had to balance it with her teaching and directing responsibilities.

> Whereas I feel like in my previous preschool I was able to, because I
>
> was – got that more, this is the time for you to be an educational leader.
>
> Whereas sometimes now, if I'm having a really busy day in the office,
>
> it'll be the part that will get put to the side.

This feeling of having to put the educational leader role last in a busy day was a common comment from all four of these director educational leaders. Sylvia (director) noted that she did not have a set time for educational leader work and she often did it at home saying, 'I just make it all, kind of, fit in…I don't like giving up the classroom, so I do things outside of hours'

4.3.2.2 Educational leaders' challenges: A lack of guidance and recognition.

All of the educational leaders observed that they found knowing how to be an educational leader difficult. Five suggested that they had developed their educational leader practices themselves and noted that, as professionals they felt uncomfortable with this and unsure if they were doing the right thing. They used phrases such as 'I'm only ever doing what I feel is right' (Nora, teacher), 'I don't know what I do is truly what you should do' (Frances, teacher) and 'I think that's such a blur' (Xanthe, teacher). One educational leader suggested that this uncertainty made performing the role difficult. She said:

> Just not knowing what to do when and how, it's a bit like, daunting isn't
>
> it, but it's just like not having a clearly defined knowledge of what
>
> people expect and what I can offer and which road to go (Magda,
>
> director).

Five of the eight educational leaders also noted the limited amount of official direction on practices and responsibilities of the educational leader role. Lorraine (director) argued:

> It's just been thrown out there as a: 'oh, and guess what, you need this
>
> position but we don't tell you [how to do it] or mandate how much time
>
> that person gets or if they get any extra money. And that's ridiculous!

Alternatively, Sylvia (director) suggested that more information about practices of the educational leader role did not have to involve prescriptive expectations. She noted:

> I don't want to be told: Oh, you have to have, you know, three meetings
>
> a year on this, or five meetings, and you must check this box, and…I
>
> don't want any of that. I want to be able to say: as educational leader,
>
> I am going to…

The five educational leaders who discussed this issue, also expressed a belief that not having a clear understanding of educational leader role, took agency away from those who held it and created conditions that made it unattractive to prospective candidates. Sylvia (director) argued 'I think in some centres, if that was a written down thing, staff would feel powerful enough to do so [lead the program]'. While Lorraine (director) maintained 'There's no incentive to want to be that person…and take that on, that responsibility and then get hauled over the coals when you don't reach full accreditation'. Two educational leaders suggested that because there was no official requirement to pay the educational leader extra remuneration they felt less motivated to perform the role. Frances (teacher) noted 'I mean, I would give the job a lot more home time if I was paid for it, but I have to draw a line somewhere'. Elanora (teacher) expressed a similar opinion and described her experience when discussing the option of extra payment with her employer:

> And I opened the question. I said well, if I'm in a leadership role do I
>
> get any sort of leadership pay? And it was pretty much like, no. You're
>
> at that level, that is what you get…And so that's a bit frustrating, putting
>
> in so much work. And it's just…wrong.

Two educational leaders reported that the educational leader role lacked recognition in the wider community. Sylvia (director) noted:

> I'm glad that the position's there to recognise that we do need someone
>
> that leads curriculum, that we do need someone that's looking at what's
>
> going on, but it's not been given the level of importance where it should
>
> be.

Elanora (teacher) also expressed her desire for more recognition for educational leaders, suggesting that improved recognition would enable educational leaders to improve the standing of the early childhood profession in the wider community. She commented, 'I think, you know, if that role had more status, I think we could be advocates for that…you know outside of the service'.

4.3.2.3 Educational leaders' supports: Informal and personal.

The educational leaders all nominated the personal relationships that they have with other early childhood professionals as their most effective support in the educational leader role. Sylvia (Director) described this support saying 'My support is a coffee with the girls I went to uni with, we all keep in contact. So, you know, we go out for a social afternoon and it always ends up talking a little bit about work'. Kirsten (director) also discussed how much she valued sharing her educational leader work with her friends who worked in early childhood education though she emphasised the informal nature of this support saying, 'But it's a natural conversation; it's more just, you know, we're doing this at work and...'

Six educational leaders spoke about the difficulties they had locating and/or maintaining formal educational leader discussion groups. Lorraine (director) did not know of any groups in her area and linked this to what she felt was the lack of official support for the educational leader role. She argued 'As I said, they just set it up without any real structure in place and any support networks in place. There's no support networks [here] for educational

leaders'. Five others had tried to be part of local networks, but found that the groups did not maintain momentum for long. Sylvia (director) suggested that preschools in her area found it difficult to come together, commenting, 'We are hopeless at networking in this area…I don't know what it is, I, kind of feel as though there's a bit of …a bit of distance, that everyone wants to do their own thing'. Magda (director) was part of an Educational Leadership Group with other local preschools but said 'It kind of fell apart. I think because mainly because of time or different services or like people being a bit wary about not sharing as much knowledge because you are still in competition I guess'. This feeling of competition instead of support from networks was echoed by Kirsten (director) who said 'I don't go because I feel like it's just like who's better? I've gone once and they've all been directors in their roles for like over 15 years and so, yes, I didn't find it productive'.

In contrast two of the eight educational leaders found significant support in local networks that they were part of. Frances (teacher) was part of a local network of educational leaders who met once a term. She stated 'I think one of the best things is networking. I love making connections with other educators and other preschools, I think that's really helpful'. Similarly, Nora (teacher) who worked for a large not for profit organisation, was a member of an educational leader network organised by her employer. The network had regular meetings, forums and training for the educational leaders in the organisation. Nora noted that these meetings gave her opportunities to share her experiences, she said 'I love that [name of employer] has really embraced the role and the support by having the forums, the networks we've got. You know, I've email contact with quite a few where we share what we're doing and our ideas…'

4.4. Phase Two Summary

Findings from the Phase Two data suggest that educational leaders who participated in the interviews saw their role in leading the development of the educational program by inspiring others to think differently about their pedagogy and make changes to their practice. Echoing the findings from Phase One, interview participants used the sharing of current research and literature, casual conversations and collaborating with others to do this. As a whole, they appeared to make a conscious effort to lead as part of the team, seeing everyone as part of the leadership process, ensuring that their actions were examples of good practice and approaching change slowly.

As with Phase One participants, the educational leaders who were interviewed were challenged by a lack of time to perform their role, this was particularly evident in the conversation of directors. All these educational leaders expressed a desire for more information for themselves and for the sector regarding how to be an educational leader. Although not wanting a prescriptive list, participants argued that more information on what an educational leader could do would give the position authority and recognition making it easier, fairer and more attractive. Participants found support in their relationships with others outside their service, some through groups of other educational leaders but, mostly, through informal personal relationships with other early childhood professionals.

4.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study. Results from the Phase One online survey found that participants were experienced, mature, educated, with long tenure and did not have many of the organisational structures that are normally in place for a role (for example job description, allocated time, budget or remuneration). The results from Phase Two linked

with many of the Phase One findings. Interview participants used inclusive leadership practices and the sharing of research to lead changes in pedagogy and practice. A lack of time and clarity about the role were challenging for them. A discussion of these findings is presented in the following chapter.

Chapter Five. Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the practices of educational leaders in NSW preschools and to explore what supports their practices. Results from the study suggest that educational leaders value seeing growth in others, that they lead through a variety of practices, that there are differences in the ways experiences and practices of director and teacher educational leaders and that get support through informal relationships, formalised training and their own research. This chapter examines the findings of both phases of the study in relation to: the research questions, previous literature and the arrangements of practice architecture.

5.1.   Who are the Educational Leaders?

As this study covered only a sample of NSW preschool educational leaders, it does not claim to provide a complete picture of the demographic features of this cohort. It does, however, following Sims et al. (2017), investigate and describe the participants of the study in order to add to the sector's limited knowledge of the educational leader role.

The demographic results revealed that participants were all female, ranging in age and qualification (60% were aged over 45), many had university qualifications or equivalent (93%) and were experienced in the sector (mean = 20 years). Comparison of these features with the National ECEC Workforce census shows that participants in this study were older, more qualified and more experienced than the national ECEC workforce. According to the census in 2013, 97% of the ECEC workforce were female, 30% were aged over 45, 15% held at least a university qualification or equivalent and 32% had worked longer than 10 years in ECEC (The Social Research Centre, 2014).

Other studies however suggest that both the preschool workforce and the educational leader cohort are different from the national averages. The Social Research Centre (2014)

reports that in Australian preschools there is a general demographic trend towards an older, more qualified but predominantly female workforce. The ECEC workforce census reports that in 2013, the national preschool workforce was 97% female, 48% were aged over 45 and 38% held a university qualification or equivalent (The Social Research Centre, 2014). Length of experience for preschool workers was not reported in the census. Similarly, findings from the study by Sims et al. (2017) suggest that as a cohort, educational leaders are more highly qualified and experienced than educational leaders in general. The educational leaders surveyed in Sims et al.'s mixed service national study were 98% female, 82% held at least a degree qualification and the majority had worked in the sector for over 10 years (age is not mentioned in this article.) It would appear therefore that while the findings of this study reflect the general trends of the preschool and educational leader workforce to be older, more experienced and qualified than the national average, the demographic features of the participants in the current study were an even more mature and experienced group.

5.2.   Sayings of Educational Leaders

All practices have their own shared language (sayings) that represents taken for granted assumptions about particular practices (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008). Examination of these sayings and the cultural-discursive arrangements that are created by them can provide insight into the practices of the role (Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008). In this study, this resulted in analysis of what educational leaders stated about their role.

The findings of this study suggest the educational leader participants sayings placed value on the relational aspects of their role and the success of others. Almost half of the participants (47%) used language that showed they were most rewarded by the growth of others, for example 'I love it when educators join the dots together and reflect on the benefits

to themselves as a professional' (Survey Participant 76). They saw the value of having good communication (40%) and being a skilled relationship builder (37%). Interview participants discussed their preference for using methods of leading that made them part of the team (including leading by example, collaborating and approaching change slowly) rather than more directive leadership strategies. These sayings suggest that educational leaders in this study spoke about their role using a discourse that privileged successful relationships and the success of others. These findings are consistent with those of Sims et al. (2015), Henderson (2016) and Sims et al. (2017) who also found a focus on relationships in the educational leadership work of participants.

Shared discourse of the educational leader as a person to whom relationships and the success of others are important, creates cultural-discursive arrangements that both enable and constrain their practices (Salamon et al., 2016). ACECQA (no date) documents describe the educational leader role as "influential" and "collegial", one that "affirms" and "inspires" as well as "challenges" (p.1). If the requirement of the role is to lead others in this relational way and educational leaders also value relational aspects of the role then the cultural-discursive language identified in this study will help to enable their practices. On the other hand, there was also a small number of participants who found the relational aspects of the educational leader role constraining. Some participants reported that they found nothing rewarding about the role (6%) and '*Impact on relationships*' was reported as a challenge by 9%, more of whom were teacher educational leaders than director educational leaders. A focus on the importance of successful relationships and the happiness of others appears therefore to constrain the work of those for whom relationships are not positive.

5.3.   Practices of Educational Leaders

Examination of practices in practice architecture not only describes the ways in which human activities are performed but also provides analysis of the role of human interactions and actions in making and changing societal systems (Nicolini, 2012).   The findings of this current study explored the physical and economic set-ups (the material-economic arrangements) of the educational leader role in order to understand how practices of the role are shaped.

The findings of this study largely concur with the findings of Fleet et al in regards to the presence, or lack thereof, of educational leaders with a job description (42% in Fleet et. and 56% in this study), extra remuneration (approximately 10% in both) and budget provisions (less than 10% in both). The fact that there is limited difference between these two sets of data suggests that in NSW preschools at least, the organisational elements around this role have been slow to evolve. The provision of a job description, extra remuneration and budget provisions for educational leaders has been described by Fleet et al. (2015) as *role efficacy.* Role efficacy is the "extent to which one feels, and is, effective in a given role" (Bamel, Budhwar, Stokes, & Happy, 2017, p. 219). By naming these organisational elements as the efficacy of the educational leader role, Fleet et al. appear to suggest that these elements are important influences on the feelings of and effectiveness of the educational leader's role.

The findings of this study also suggest that regular time away from other duties to work on educational leader responsibilities should be considered as a requirement for the role efficacy of educational leaders. The impact of not enough time is illustrated in the prominence of results that show educational leaders are challenged by time. Both in the open-ended question in the survey of 'what you find challenging' as well as the interview data confirmed that most educational leaders were challenged by a lack of time. This finding suggests that it is difficult to perform an extra role in the busy preschool context without the allocation of time away from other duties.

Time quarantined for educational leader work was received by less than two-thirds of participants and there was considerable variety in the amount of time received. This study also found that director educational leaders are challenged by a lack of time and suggests this may be because they are less likely to receive time away from their other role for educational leader work. These results do not appear to suggest that all teacher educational leaders have enough time to perform their role but, rather, they seem to concur with findings of Fleet et al. (2015) who note that director educational leaders in particular juggle many responsibilities and can have difficulty finding space to prioritise the educational leader role.

5.4.   Doings of Educational Leaders

The doings of a practice are the *modes of action* or the way the practice is performed (Salamon et al., 2016). The doings of the NSW preschool educational leaders in this study can be seen in survey and interview findings that explore the roles and methods of enactment of the participants. Examining these doings and the associated material-economic arrangements, that shape a practice, can provide insight into how educational leaders are leading the development and implementation of the educational program (Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2015).

Interestingly, educational leaders in this study rated all of the provided roles as important in their leadership practice and a majority of participants also indicated that they performed close to all of the 12 practice enactment doings that were offered (excluding *spend time in other classrooms* and the *other* option). This would appear to suggest that educational leaders believe that the modes of action (doings) of their role are wide-ranging and various. These findings concur with those of Fleet et al and are also in line with official information on the role which highlights the general nature of the role specifications (Livingstone, 2014).

Broad enactment of the roles and actions of educational leaders create material-economic arrangements that can enable them in their role. Given that the educational leader role is mandated across the national ECEC sector, in a range of services that vary at least by type, size and organisational structure with a variously qualified and experienced workforce, flexibility is required. Furthermore, in Australian ECEC the educational program is considered to be "all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development" (Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009, p. 9). As a result, there should also be variety in the aspects of pedagogy and practice that are led by an educational leader. For preschool educational leaders, broad roles therefore not only allow educational leaders to adapt their practice to the material and economic set-ups of their staff and preschool but also to the different aspects of the educational program where their leadership may be required at any given time.

On the other hand, the findings of this study also show that having a broad role can create constraints on material and economic arrangements. The low number of participants who had a job description, budget, remuneration or time to help with their educational leader role are part of these material and economic arrangements. It would appear, however, that in some cases having flexibility in how the educational leader role is enacted and the subsequent material and economic arrangements that have prefigured practice, has resulted in set-ups that constrain the way the role is performed. This is reflected in the comments of nearly one fifth of participants who identified *unsure of what to do* as a challenge of the role and the interview findings which overwhelming highlighted a lack of guidance and recognition as a frustration for participants. Other research echoes these results: both Rouse and Spradbury (2015) and Loo and Agbenyaga (2015) suggested that a lack of clarity around the role reduced its efficacy for the educational leaders in their studies.

5.5.   Supports of Educational Leaders

The findings from the survey reveal that participants accessed support for their role in a variety of ways, selecting on average more than half the supports offered. High numbers of survey participants reported that they used researching and professional development (both online and face to face) to support their practice. Seen in conjunction with other results from the survey that show educational leaders can be unsure of how to perform their role, this may be explained as educational leaders trying to access support though improving their knowledge. Interestingly, findings from the interviews do not mention these two methods of support; rather the educational leaders interviewed focused more on personal supports for their decision making and experiences. It is possible that this is a result of limitations in the survey which did not offer informal social connections as an option or that the interviewer's questioning led participants to consider social supports rather than knowledge supports.

5.6.   Relatings of Educational Leaders

In the ECEC sector, the roles and relationships between early childhood educators and their colleagues, children and families are fundamental features of the socio-political arrangements that prefigure their practice (Salamon et al., 2016). Findings from this study suggest that educational leaders create socio-political arrangements that enable their practice by encouraging others to have a sense of agency and involvement in their own professional growth.   Almost all participants reported that they enacted their role through casual conversations and the sharing of research and resources. A possible explanation for the frequency of these subtle and knowledge based ways of leading is that educational leaders avoid directive and authoritative leadership strategies and instead seek to create what

Ronnerman et al. (2015) refer to as "spaces for new ways of thinking" (p.75). This would be consistent with the findings of Ronnerman et al. who reported that leaders in their study lead the development of colleagues' professional knowledge by creating collective and collaborative professional discussions. On the other hand, it is also possible that these strategies are used by educational leaders because they are time and resource poor. Research can be shared quickly and easily through online and paper-based methods and casual conversations can take place while other roles are being performed.

As this study found that educational leaders placed importance on successful relationships, it is also relevant to consider the relatings and socio-political arrangements that develop from this. Sims et al. (2015) who had very similar findings argued that the focus of educational leadership is mentoring and supporting staff development and that leaders use their relationships with other staff as a tool for these and the eventual improvement in quality. Sims et al. (2015) also propose, however, that in ECEC, constraining socio-political arrangements may arise from leaders focusing their efforts on creating and maintaining good relationships at the expense of using the mentoring and guiding strategies relationships are meant to assist. The findings of the current study did not provide data to progress understandings on this matter, and further research is needed to examine and fully understand the significance of a focus on good relationships on the improvement of quality practice.

5.7.   Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the findings of the study with the aim of adding to understandings of the practices and supports used by educational leaders in NSW preschools as they lead the development and implementation of the educational program.

Chapter Six.   Conclusion

This thesis investigated the role of the educational leader in NSW preschools in order to contribute to understandings of the role by exploring the practices and supports used by educational leaders. This study can provide an impetus for reflection on the educational leader role and changes that could allow educational leaders to effectively lead the development and implementation of quality educational programs in ECEC services. Key findings are summarised and their significance and implications for practice are discussed in this chapter.

6.1.   Key findings, Implications for Policy and Practice and Suggestions for Further Research

The findings are briefly reiterated below, with implications for policy practice and suggestions for further research.

6.1.1.   Educational leaders are experienced and qualified.

This study confirms findings by Sims et al. (2017) that educational leaders are older, more qualified and more experienced than the workforce they lead. Additionally, the findings of this study also suggest that for some experienced teacher participants who have chosen not to move into the more administrative focused role of director, the educational leader role provides an opportunity for an alternative ECEC career path.

6.1.1.1 Implications for policy and practice and suggestions for further research

The study's findings suggest that there is potential for employers and policy makers to develop formalised systems that recognise the knowledge and experience of educational leaders and therefore create structures that endorse the importance of the educational leader role. This formal recognition could provide educational leaders with a qualification or

membership to support their appointment and leadership and increase the status of the role in their service and the community. This could be established through compulsory short training that clarifies the role and develops leadership understandings or a professional title through early childhood teacher accreditation or membership of a professional organisation.

Further research will be required to investigate if teachers who have previously avoided more administrative leadership roles are considering the educational leader role as an alternate career path. If this is the case, employers and policy makers could create career pathways for the educational leader role and minimise the loss of knowledge and experience that occurs when experienced people leave the ECEC sector. This could include the consideration of full time educational leaders as master teachers who lead professional knowledge about the educational program across a number of preschools.

6.1.2.   Educational leaders focus on improving the professional knowledge of other educators.

There were a wide variety of sayings, doings and relatings used by educational leaders in this study, confirming the findings of Fleet et al. (2015) that educational leaders perform their roles in many ways. More broadly however, the findings also reveal practices for educational leaders that focus on improving the professional knowledge of other educators rather than by directing their pedagogy. Participants in this study had sayings that focused on relationships, doings that focused on improving knowledge and relatings that focused on informal ways of leading. This finding provides an opportunity therefore to conceptualise the educational leader role not as leading by directing but by encouraging new ways of thinking.

6.1.2.1 Implications for policy and practice and suggestions for further research.

The focus on fostering relationships as part of leading in the educational leader role requires more research to determine if it also results in a focus on the relational leadership strategies of mentoring and leading by example. Up to this point this has not been established in this study or past research and may require increased professional development on mentoring for educational leaders. Furthermore, if as this study suggests, the role of educational leader is a relational one, subsequent research is also required to determine how other educators experience having the very personal subject of one's pedagogy and practice led by another. This will improve understandings not only of the experiences of others in the service but also help to determine practices that are most beneficial for leading.

6.1.3.   Educational leaders have differences in practices and arrangements based on title

This study found that the experiences of teacher educational leaders and director educational leaders were different. Analysis revealed significant differences in some but not all of the aspects that were measured. For example, directors were more likely to became educational leaders as an expectation of their position, be rewarded by seeing others grow, collaborate with an unofficial educational leader, identify all roles as important, be challenged by time and use online social media as a support than teachers. While teachers were more likely to become educational leaders after being asked by their supervisor, to collaborate with a leadership team, be remunerated with extra time, receive specific educational leader time and use mentoring as a support.

These differences are a new finding that has not been identified in the previous research reviewed for this study (see Chapter 2). Although it would seem logical that there were differences in the experiences of director and teacher educational leaders, given each position would have differing experiences of enacting leadership. These findings also suggest that

features of the role are not necessarily associated with leadership or formalised authority but are also linked to the conditions of other role(s) that the practitioner holds, including time away from the role, remuneration, the impact of time, goals and preferred supports.

6.1.3.1 Implications for policy and practice and suggestions for further research.

Further research is therefore required to determine how other roles of educational leaders impact on their experiences and practices in the educational leader role. Better understandings of this aspect of the role would allow professional development to be more targeted to practitioner needs and the creation of role specific ongoing support resources.

6.1.4. Educational leaders seek increased clarification of their role and working conditions.

The findings of this study show that many educational leaders felt unsupported and unsure of themselves because of a lack of formalised employment structures regarding the educational leader role. This study revealed little change from the findings of Fleet et al. (2015) regarding the sector's poor provision of extra remuneration, job descriptions or budgets for educational leaders. Not having specific time for educational leaders to be released from their other responsibilities was also viewed as problematic by educational leaders. Many educational leaders also reported that limited official information about the educational leader role resulted in them feeling unsure of their practices and confused about the goals of the role. This finding affirms previous research by Grarock and Morrissey (2013), Loo and Agbenyaga (2015) and Rouse and Spradbury (2015). Several educational leaders in this study however, expressed a desire to avoid prescriptive role descriptions and requirements but rather favoured increased access to general directions and information.

6.1.4.1 Implications for policy and practice and suggestions for further research.

Clearer information about the educational leader role from policy and regulatory bodies is needed to improve knowledge and provisions for the role. However, it is important to note that practitioners also appear to recognise the benefits to practice from more open and general views of the role. More research is required to understand exactly what detail might be useful to enable educational leaders to feel more confident in their role while not constraining the way they practice it in different contexts. Given that some of the difficulties in the role have emerged from a lack of employment structures some of this information should be specifically aimed at managers and employers of educational leaders.

6.2.   Strengths and Importance to the Sector

The strengths of this study are its contribution to the existing research base on the educational leader role. It has addressed an identified gap, providing new insights on educational leaders in NSW preschool services. It has added to the limited knowledge available on how educational leaders perform their role in preschools and provided new information on the differences in the role for director and teacher educational leaders. Findings from this study should aid educational leaders, managers and employers to advance understandings of the practices and supports of educational leaders and ensure that adequate provisions are made to enable them to fulfil their role. This study has also widened the use of practice architecture as a theoretical framework for researchers in ECEC.

The educational leader role is a significant and potentially powerful role in NSW preschools. This study has shown that many educational leaders use practices which focus on leading from within the team and developing professional knowledge. Educational leaders in NSW preschools, however, appear to still lack many of the organisational elements that they

feel are necessary for them to perform the role effectively. The responsibility of the sector, therefore is to ensure that the role of educational leader is championed and supported and that practices (sayings, doings, relatings) of educational leaders develop because they are what is best for children, families and educators, not because they are what fits within the provisions that are currently provided (cultural-discursive arrangements, material-economic arrangements, social-political arrangements).

Reference List

Alameen, L., Male, T., & Palaiologou, I. (2015). Exploring pedagogical leadership in early years education in Saudi Arabia. *School Leadership & Management, 35*(2), 121-139. doi:10.1080/13632434.2014.992773

Aubrey, C., Godfrey, R., & Harris, A. (2012). How do they manage? An investigation of early childhood leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 41*(1), 5-29. doi:10.1177/1741143212462702

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority. (2013). *Guide to the National Quality Standard*. Sydney, NSW: Australian Childrens Education and Care Qualty Authority.

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority. (No date). *The role of the educational leader*. Retrieved from http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/Information sheets/Portal - The role of the educational leader - information sheet PDF version.pdf

Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations. (2009). *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Retrieved from Canberra, ACT: https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/belonging_being_and_becoming _the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf

Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations. (2010a). *Educators belonging, being & becoming : Educators' guide to the early years learning framework for Australia CD Rom*. Retrieved from Canberra, Australian Capital Territory:

Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations. (2010b). *Educators belonging, being and becoming: Educators' guide to the Early Years Learning Framework*. Retrieved from Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/educators_guide_to_the_early_ye ars_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf

Bamel, U., Budhwar, P., Stokes, P., & Happy, P. (2017). Dimensions of role efficacy and managerial effectiveness: Evidence from India. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance, 4*(3), 218-237.

Bass, B., & Bass, R. (2008). *The Bass handbook of leadership: Theory, research and managerial applications* (4th ed.). New York: Free Press.

Bøe, M., & Hognestad, K. (2017). Directing and facilitating distributed pedagogical leadership: Best practices in early childhood education. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 20*(2), 133-148. doi:10.1080/13603124.2015.1059488

Brown, T., Barclay, F., Brown, T., & Gallacher, D. (2012). Debate: How is the educational leader operating at your service? *Rattler, 102*(Jun), 28-29.

Carroll-Lind, J., Smorti, S., Ord, K., & Robinson, L. (2016). Building pedagogical leadership knowledge in early childhood education. *Australiasian Journal of Early Childhood, 41*(4), 28-35.

Cheeseman, S. (2012a). The Educational Leader. *Early Childhood Australian PLP, 33*.

Cheeseman, S. (2012b). Talking about practice: The role of the educational leader. *Early Childhood Australian PLP*.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2 ed.). Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (Vol. 6). New York: Routledge.

Colmer, K., Waniganayake, M., & Field, L. (2014). Leading professional learning in early childhood centres: Who are the educational leaders? *Australiasian Journal of Early Childhood, 39*(4), 103-113.

Council of Australian Governments. (2009). *Investing in the early years - A national early childhood development strategy. An invitative of the Council of Australian Governements*. Retrieved from Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: http://www.startingblocks.gov.au/media/1104/national_ecd_strategy.pdf

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches* (3 ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Dowling, A., & O'Malley, K. (2009). *Preschool education in Australia*. Retrieved from http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary _Library/pubs/BN/0708/PreschoolEdAustralia

Edwards-Groves, C., & Grootenboer, P. (2015). Praxis and the theory of practice architectures: Resources for re-envisioning English education. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, 38*(3), 150-161.

Fleet, A., Soper, R., Semann, A., & Madden, L. (2015). The role of the educational leader: Perceptions and expectations in a period of change. *Australiasian Journal of Early Childhood, 40*(3), 29-37.

Flottman, R., & Page, J. (2012). Getting early childhood onto the reform agenda: An Australian case study. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy, 6*(1), 17-33.

Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. (2014). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (10 ed.). Upper Saddle River: Pearson.

Gill, R. (2011). *Theory and practice of leadership* (2 ed.). London: Sage.

Goodyear, V., Casey, A., & Kirk, D. (2017). Practice architectures and sustainable curriculum renewal. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 49*(2), 235-254.

Granheim, U., Lindgren, B., & Lundman, B. (2017). Methodological challenges in qualitative content analysis: A discussion paper. *Nurse Education Today, 56*, 29-34.

Grarock, M., & Morrissey, A. (2013). Teachers' perceptions of their abilities to be educational leaders in Victorian childcare settings. *Australiasian Journal of Early Childhood, 38*(2), 4-12.

Grootenboer, P., Edwards-Groves, C., & Ronnerman, K. (2015). Leading practice development: Voices from the middle. *Professional Development in Education, 41*(3), 508-526.

Hardy, I. (2010). Academic architectures: Academic perceptions of teaching conditions in an Australian university. *Studies in Higher Education, 35*(4), 391-404.

Harrington, M. (2014). Universal access to early childhood education: A quick guide. *Parliamentary Library Research Paper Series 2013-2024*. Retrieved from Parliament of Australia, Parliamentary Library Website website: https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary _Library/pubs/rp/rp1314/QG/ChildhoodEducatAccess

Heikka, J., & Waniganayake, M. (2011). Pedagogical leadership from a distributed perspective within the context of early childhood education. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 14*(4), 499-512. doi:10.1080/13603124.2011.577909

Heiman, G. (2014). *Basic statistics for the behavioural sciences* (7 ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Henderson, L. (2016). 'Someone had to have faith in them as professionals': An evaluation of an action research project to develop educational leadership across the early years. *Educational Action Research, 25*(3), 387-401. doi:10.1080/09650792.2016.1173566

Henning Loeb, I. (2016). Zooming in on the partnership of a successful teaching team: Examining cooperation, action and recognition. *Educational Action Research, 24*(3), 387-403.

Hujala, E., Waniganayake, M., & Rodd, J. (2013). Cross-national contexts of early childhood leadership. In E. Hujala, M. Waniganayake, & J. Rodd (Eds.), *Researching leadership in early childhood education* (pp. 13-30). Tampere: Tampere University Press.

IBM Corp. (2016). IBM SPSS statistics for Mac (Version 24.0). Armonk, New York: IBM Corp.

Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. (2014). *Educational research : Quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches* (5th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Kagan, S., & Hallmark, L. (2001). Cultivating leadership in early care and education. *Childcare Information Exchange, 140*, 7-11.

Katz, L. (1997). Pedagocial leadership. In S. Kagan & B. Bowman (Eds.), *Leadership in early care and education* (pp. 3-8). Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Kemmis, S., & Grootenboer, P. (2008). Situating praxis in practice. In S. Kemmis & T. Smith (Eds.), *Enabling Praxis: Challenges for Education* (pp. 37-62). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Krathwohl, D. (2009). *Methods of educational and social science research* (3 ed.). Long Grove, IL: Wave Land Press.

Krieg, S., Davis, K., & Smith, K. A. (2014). Exploring the dance of early childhood educational leadership. *Australiasian Journal of Early Childhood, 39*(1), 73-80.

Livingstone, R. (2014). What does it mean to be the educational leader in your service? *Preschool Matters, 33*(3), 18-19.

Loo, J. K. Y., & Agbenyaga, J. (2015). A critical analysis of the Australian ECEC policy reform: An opportunity for transforming educators into pedagogy. *Australiasian Journal of Early Childhood, 40*(2), 127-131.

Lopez, V., Lawson, F., Bennett, M., & Semann, A. (2014). Exploring the role of the educational leaders: Our journey. *Every Child, 20*(2), 4-5.

Lynch, S. M. (2013). *Using statistics in social research: A concise approach*. New York: Springer Science and Business Media.

Mahon, K. (2016). Negotiating democratic relations in a doctoral project examining university conditions and pedagogical praxis. *Educational Action Research, 25*(1), 71-87.

Mahon, K., Kemmis, S., Fancisco, S., & Lloyd, A. (2017). Introduction: Practice theory and the theory of practice architectures. In K. Mahon, S. Francisco, & S. Kemmis (Eds.), *Exploring education and professional practice: Through the lens of practice architectures* (pp. 1-30). Singapore: Springer.

Male, T., & Palaiologou, I. (2015). Pedagogical leadership in the 21st century. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 43*(2), 214-231. doi:10.1177/1741143213494889

McDowall Clark, R., & Murray, J. (2012). *Reconceptualising leadership in the early years*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Mujis, D., Aubrey, C., Harris, A., & Briggs, M. (2004). How do they manage? A review of the research on leadership in early childhood. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, 2*(2), 157-169.

Murray, J., & Clark, R. M. (2013). Reframing leadership as a participative pedagogy: The working theories of early years professionals. *Early Years, 33*(3), 289-301. doi:10.1080/09575146.2013.781135

National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, & Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee. (2015). *National statement on ethical conduct in human research*. Retrieved from Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/e72

Nicholson, J., & Maniates, H. (2016). Recognizing postmodern intersectional identities in leadership for early childhood. *Early Years, 36*(1), 66-80. doi:10.1080/09575146.2015.1080667

Nicolini, D. (2012). *Practice theory, work and organisation: An introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Norweigan Ministry for Education and Research. (2011). *Framework plan for the content and tasks of kindergartens*. Retrieved from https://www.udir.no/Upload/barnehage/Rammeplan/Framework_Plan_for_the_Content_and_Tasks_of_Kindergartens_2011_rammeplan_engelsk.pdf?epslanguage=no

Nuttall, J., Thomas, L., & Wood, E. (2014). Travelling policy reforms reconfiguring the work of early childhood educators in Australia. *Globalisation, Societies and Education, 12*(3), 358-372. doi:10.1080/14767724.2014.916199

O'Connor, M., Gray, S., Tarasuik, J., O'Connor, E., Kvalsvig, A., Incledon, E., & Goldfeld, S. (2016). Preschool attendance trends in Australia: Evidence from two sequential population cohorts. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 35*, 31-39. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2015.11.004

Pereira, D., Afonso, A., & Medeiros, F. (2014). Overview of Friedman's test and post hoc analysis. *Communications in Statistics - Simulation and Computation, 44*(10), 2636-2653.

Ponce, O., & Pagán-Maldonado, N. (2015). Mixed methods research in education: Capturing the complexity of the profession. *International Journal of Eduational Excellence, 1*(1), 111-135.

QSR International. (2015). NVivo qualitative data analysis software for Mac (Version 11): QSR International Pty Ltd.

Roberts-Holmes, G. (2013). The English Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) and the 'split' Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 21*(3), 339-352. doi:10.1080/1350293x.2012.704304

Rodd, J. (2013). *Leadership in early childhood: The pathway to professionalism*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin.

Ronnerman, K., Edwards-Groves, C., & Grootenboer, P. (2015). Opening up communicative spaces for discussion 'quality practices' in early childhood education through middle leadership. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Education Policy, 2015*(3), 67-76.

Rouse, E., & Spradbury, G. (2015). The role of the educational leader in long day care – how do they perceive their role? *Early Child Development and Care, 186*(3), 497-508. doi:10.1080/03004430.2015.1036419

Salamon, A., Sumsion, J., Press, F., & Harrison, L. (2016). Implicit theories and naïve beliefs: Using the theory of practice architectures to deconstruct the practices of early childhood educators. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, 14*(4), 431-443. doi:10.1177/1476718x14563857

Sims, M., Forrest, R., Semann, A., & Slattery, C. (2014). Conceptions of early childhood leadership: Driving new professionalism? *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 18*(2), 149-166. doi:10.1080/13603124.2014.962101

Sims, M., Mulhearn, G., Grieshaber, S., & Sumsion, J. (2015). *Australian national ECEC reforms with a focus on the national quality framework and the national quality standards*. Retrieved from Munich: http://www.fruehe-chancen.de/fileadmin/PDF/Archiv/Expertise_Australien_DJI_final.pdf

Sims, M., Waniganayake, M., & Hadley, F. (2017). Educational leadership: An evolving role in Australian early childhood settings. *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership, XX*(X), 1-20.

Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Manni, L. (2007). *Effective leadership in the early years sector : The ELEYS study*. London: Institute of Education, University of London.

Siraj-Blatchford, I., Sylva, K., Taggart, B., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., & Elliot, K. (2004). *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education Project: Findings from pre-school to end of key stage 1*. Retrieved from Nottingham, United Kingdom: http://eprints.ioe.ac.uk/5304/

Stamopoulos, E. (2012). Reframing early childhood leadership. *Australiasian Journal of Early Childhood, 37*(2), 42-48.

Tayler, C. (2016). Reforming Australian early childhood education and care provision (2009 – 2015). *Australiasian Journal of Early Childhood, 41*(2), 27-31.

The Social Research Centre. (2014). *2013 National early childhood education and care workforce census*. Retrieved from North Melbourne, Victoria: https://docs.education.gov.au/system/.../nwc_national_report_final_0.pdf

Thornton, K., Wansbrough, D., Clarkin-Phillips, J., Aiiken, H., & Tamati, A. (2009). *Conceptualising leadership in early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Occasional paper published by the New Zealand Teachers Council*. Retrieved from New Zealand: http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/5102

Tuckman, B., & Harper, B. (2012). *Conducting educational research* (6 ed.). Lanham, Maryland: Rownan and Littlefield.

Turner, J. (2014). *Using statistics in small-scale language education research : Focus on non-parametric data*. New York: Tayler and Francis.

Waniganayake, M., Cheeseman, S., Fenech, M., Hadley, F., & Shepherd, W. (2012). *Leadership: Contexts and complexities in early childhood education*. South Melbourne, Vic: Oxford University Press.

Wilkinson, J., & Kemmis, S. (2015). Practice Theory: Viewing leadership as leading. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 47*(4), 342-358. doi:10.1080/00131857.2014.976928

Appendices

Appendix A

Macquarie University Ethics Approval

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor
(Research)

Research Office
Research Hub, Building C5C East
Macquarie University
NSW 2109 Australia
T: +61 (2) 9850 4459
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/
ABN 90 952 801 237

MACQUARIE University
SYDNEY·AUSTRALIA

20 July 2017

Dear Dr Hadley

Reference No: 5201700644

Title: *Educational Leaders in New South Wales Preschools - How are they leading the development and implementation of the program in their settings?*

Thank you for submitting the above application for ethical and scientific review. Your application was considered by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC (Human Sciences & Humanities)).

I am pleased to advise that ethical and scientific approval has been granted for this project to be conducted by:

* Macquarie University

This research meets the requirements set out in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007 – Updated May 2015) (the *National Statement*).

Standard Conditions of Approval:

1. Continuing compliance with the requirements of the *National Statement,* which is available at the following website:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/book/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research

2. This approval is valid for five (5) years, subject to the submission of annual reports. Please submit your reports on the anniversary of the approval for this protocol.

3. All adverse events, including events which might affect the continued ethical and scientific acceptability of the project, must be reported to the HREC within 72 hours.

4. Proposed changes to the protocol and associated documents must be submitted to the Committee for approval before implementation.

It is the responsibility of the Chief investigator to retain a copy of all documentation related to this project and to forward a copy of this approval letter to all personnel listed on the project.

Should you have any queries regarding your project, please contact the Ethics Secretariat on 9850 4194 or by email ethics.secretariat@mq.edu.au

The HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedures are available from the Research Office website at:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics

The HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) wishes you every success in your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Karolyn White
Director, Research Ethics & Integrity,
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee (Human Sciences and Humanities)

This HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007) and the *CPMP/ICH Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice*.

Details of this approval are as follows:

Approval Date: 20 July 2017

The following documentation has been reviewed and approved by the HREC (Human Sciences & Humanities):

Documents reviewed	Version no.	Date
Macquarie University Ethics Application Form		Received 24/05/2017
Response addressing the issues raised by the HREC		Received 09/07/2017 & 19/07/2017
Phase 1 Email Invitation	1	24/05/2017
Phase 1 Social Media Advertisement	1	24/05/2017
Phase 1 Participant Information Form	1	24/05/2017
	1	24/05/2017
Phase 1 Educational Leader Survey	1	24/05/2017
Phase 2 email	1	20/07/2017
Phase 2 Participant Information and Consent Form	1	19/07/2017
Phase 2 Semi Structured Interview Prompts	1	09/07/2017

*If the document has no version date listed one will be created for you. Please ensure the footer of these documents are updated to include this version date to ensure ongoing version control.

Appendix B

NSW Department of Education SERAP Ethics Approval

Education
Public Schools

Ms Kate Barnes   DOC17/817286
7 Vale Road   **SERAP 2017431**
THORNLEIGH NSW 2120

Dear Ms Barnes

I refer to your application to conduct a research project in NSW government schools entitled *Educational Leaders in New South Wales Preschool*. I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved.

You may contact principals of the nominated schools to seek their participation. You may also contact the data steward to seek their participation. The data steward for your requested departmental data is: Jamie Gabriel, Manager Data and Insight, Early Childhood Education, telephone 02 9244 5585, email: jamie.gabriel@det.nsw.edu.au

You should include a copy of this letter with the documents you send to data steward.

This approval will remain valid until 02-Aug-2018.

As this research does not involve face-to-face contact with children, no researchers or research assistants have been screened to interact with or observe children.

I draw your attention to the following requirements for all researchers in NSW government schools:
- Data stewards have the right to withdraw the department from the study at any time.
- The privacy of participants is to be protected as per the NSW Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.
- School principals have the right to withdraw the school from the study at any time. The approval of the principal for the specific method of gathering information must also be sought.
- The privacy of the school and the students is to be protected.
- The participation of teachers and students must be voluntary and must be at the school's convenience.
- Any proposal to publish the outcomes of the study should be discussed with the research approvals officer before publication proceeds.
- All conditions attached to the approval must be complied with.

When your study is completed please email your report to: serap@det.nsw.edu.au
You may also be asked to present on the findings of your research.

I wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Robert Stevens
Manager, Research
2 August 2017

School Policy and Information Management
NSW Department of Education
Level 1, 1 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst NSW 2010 – Locked Bag 53, Darlinghurst NSW 1300
Telephone: 02 9244 5060 – Email: serap@det.nsw.edu.au

Appendix C

Online Survey
Phase 1 Educational Leader Survey

Preschool Educational Leaders

Educational Leaders in New South Wales Preschools

Welcome Educational Leaders.

Q1 Thank you for your interest in this project.   The aim of this study is to investigate the practices of Educational Leaders in New South Wales Preschools and to explore the factors you identify as supporting you in your Educational Leader role.   This survey contains questions about specific aspects of your Educational Leader role, your opinions about the Educational Leader role in general and some demographic information. It will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. Participation is both voluntary and anonymous and only the investigators will have access to the data collected by this survey. If you decide to participate you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence, just exit the survey.

This study is being conducted to meet the requirements for the degree of Masters of Research (Early Childhood) under the supervision of Dr Fay Hadley, phone 9850 9832, email fay.hadley@mq.edu.au and Dr Sandra Cheeseman, phone 9850 9835, email sandra.cheeseman@mq.edu.au of the Department of Educational Studies. The results will be published in a thesis, journal articles and conference presentations. If you would like to receive a summary of the findings please complete your details at the end of the survey.

All participants in this survey will go into a draw to win one of two $50 Visa Debit cards so please make sure you leave your details for this at the end of the survey too. And finally please pass this survey link on to other preschool Educational Leaders. There is very little research on the Educational Leader role and none that focuses on preschools so it is important to get as many participants as possible to get your voices heard. If you are ready to start the survey now please click on the link below. Your consent to participate in the study will be implied when you do this.

Many thanks

Kate Barnes

Q2 Do you work at a preschool in New South Wales (An early childhood service that is closed during public school holidays)
   o Yes (1)
   o No (2)
Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: End of Survey.

Q3 Are you the nominated educational leader of your preschool?
   o Yes (1)
   o No (2)
Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: End of Survey.

Q4 Thank you very much for your interest in the study. You are not required to answer any further questions.

Q5 How old are you?
- o 20 - 24 (2)
- o 25 - 34 (3)
- o 35 - 44 (4)
- o 45 - 54 (5)
- o 55 - 64 (6)
- o 65 or older

Q6 What is your gender
- o Male (1)
- o Female (2)
- o Third gender (3)
- o I prefer not to identify my gender (4)

Q7 What are the highest early childhood qualifications do you hold?
- o Certificate III or IV (1)
- o Diploma (2)
- o Bachelor Degree - 3 years (or equivalent) (3)
- o Bachelor Degree - 4 years (or equivalent) (4)
- o Graduate Diploma (5)
- o Masters (6)
- o Other (7)

Q8 How long have you worked in early childhood education? (Please give your answer in years)

Q9 How long have you worked at your current preschool? (Please give your answer in years)

Q10 What position do you hold at your preschool?
- o Director (non-teaching) (1)
- o Director (teaching) (2)
- o Early Childhood Teacher (3)
- o Early Childhood Educator (4)
- o Other (please specify) (5) _____

Q11 How were you appointed to the role of educational leader?
- o I volunteered (1)
- o I was asked to by my supervisor (2)
- o I was asked to by other staff (3)
- o It was assumed as part of my position (4)
- o Other (please explain) (5) _____

Q12 How long have you been the nominated educational leader at your preschool?(Please give answers in years and months)

Q13 Are you remunerated for your work as educational leader?
- o No (1)
- o Yes, I receive extra wages for being the educational leader (2)
- o Yes, I receive payment at my normal teaching rate for working extra hours as educational leader (3)
- o Other (please explain) (4) _____

Q14 Do you have a job description for the role of educational leader?
- o No (1)
- o Yes (2)
- o Other (Please explain) (3) _____

Q15 Do you have regular time away from your other duties for your educational leader role?
- o No (1)
- o Yes (please detail how much, eg 1 hour per week) (2) _____

Q16 Do you have a budget specifically for educational leader activities/resources?
- o No (1)
- o Yes (2)

Q17 Do you share some aspects of the educational leader role with other colleagues?
- o No (1)
- o Yes (please explain) (2) _____

Q18 Please rate these possible roles of the educational leader in your preschool in order of importance.

	Extremely important (1)	Very important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Slightly important (4)	Not at all important (5)
Leading other staff in the writing of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) (1)					
Ensuring staff compliance with the National Quality Standards (NQS) and National Law and Regulations (2)					
Mentoring other staff with their teaching decisions (3)					
Mentoring other staff with other issues (4)					
Leading staff in critical reflection of the preschool program (5)					
Leading the development of staff knowledge about the preschool program (6)					
Mentoring other staff with their documentation (7)					
Sharing the preschool's educational direction with families and other community members (8)					
Other (please explain) (9)					

Q19 Please indicate which of the following you do when performing your role as educational leader.
- o Run meetings with other staff (1)
- o Casual talks while staff are working in their role (2)
- o Develop/arrange training (3)
- o Spend time in other classrooms (4)
- o Meet formally with individual staff (5)
- o Prepare written information eg posters, emails, newsletters (6)
- o Review and/or writing policies (7)
- o Share current research and resources (8)
- o Review performance of other staff (9)
- o Contribute to the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) (10)
- o Research (11)
- o Other (please explain) (12) _____

Q20 Which of these do you find the most effective? Why?

Q21 What supports you in your role as educational leader?(Please chose all that are applicable)
- o Online professional development and learning (1)
- o Mentoring and/or guidance from supervisor or another (2)
- o Face to face professional development and learning (3)
- o Meeting with other educational leaders (4)
- o Educational leader online social networks (5)
- o Meeting with the leadership team of the preschool (6)
- o Researching current research/literature/teaching ideas (7)
- o Taking on further tertiary qualifications (8)
- o Involvement of other team members (9)
- o Other (please explain) (10) _____

Q22 How important do you think the educational leader role is in preschools?
- o Extremely important (1)
- o Very important (2)
- o Moderately important (3)
- o Slightly important (4)
- o Not at all important (5)

Q23 Please list the three most important qualities an educational leader needs?
- o Quality 1 (1)
- o Quality 2 (2)
- o Quality 3 (3)

Q24 What do you find most rewarding about being an educational leader?

Q25 What do you find most challenging about being an educational leader?

Q26 Are you interested in participating further in this study? Would you consider sharing more about your educational leader role with the researcher in Phase 2 of the study.? It would involve:

- Two sessions of observation and audio recording of your Educational Leader practices:
- In your preschool during a normal working day (approximately 6-8 hours)
- At a meeting, training or mentoring session of your choosing (approximately 2 hours);
- One interview with the researcher about your Educational Leader practices (approximately 30-45 minutes).
- The sharing of your Educational Leader job description and any other documents you think are relevant.

All participants in this phase will receive a $100 Visa gift card for their time.
o Yes (1)
o No (2)

Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: Would you would like to receive a sum....

Q27 Thank you very much. Please complete your details below and we will send you more information.
o Name (1)
o Email (2)
o Preschool (3)
o Position (4)

Q28 Would you would like to receive a summary of the findings of the New South Wales Preschool Educational Leader study when it is completed?
o No I do not want to receive the findings summary (1)
o Yes please send them to my email below (2) _____

Q29 Thank you prize draw. To thank you for your time and involvement in this study please complete your details below and go into the draw for one of two $50 Myer gift cards. All information collected for this draw will remain entirely separate from your survey responses.
o Name (1)
o Address (2)
o Email (3)

Appendix D

Phase 2 participant information and consent form

Department of Human Sciences

Faculty of Education Studies

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY   NSW   2109

Phone: +61 (02) 9850 9835

Email: fayhadley@ mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name & Title: Dr Fay Hadley, Senior Lecturer

Participant Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: Educational Leaders in New South Wales preschools – How are they leading the development and implementation of the program in their services?

You are invited to participate in a study of Preschool Educational Leaders. The purpose of the study is to explore the practices of NSW Preschool Educational Leaders and understand what factors these Educational Leaders identify as supporting them in their role.

The study is being conducted to meet the requirements for the degree of Masters of Research (Early Childhood) under the supervision of Dr Fay Hadley, phone 9850 9832, email fay.hadley@mq.edu.au and Dr Sandra Cheeseman, phone 9850 9835, email sandra.cheeseman@mq.edu.au of the Department of Human Sciences.

Participation in this phase of the study involves:
- One interview with the researcher about Educational Leader practices (approximately 30-45 minutes).
- The sharing of the Educational Leader job description and any other documents that the participant feels are relevant.

You will receive a $40 Visa gift card to thank you for your involvement.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results and only the researcher, her supervisors and a transcribing service will have access to the data. As an early childhood teacher, the researcher is a mandatory reporter of children and young people at risk of harm and so is legally obligated to report behaviour or events that damage the wellbeing of children (this includes breaches to the National Laws and Regulations).

The results of this study will be published in a thesis, journal articles and conference presentations. A summary of the results of the data will also be sent to you at the completion of the study.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

Should your involvement in this study result in any distress please contact
- Mission Australia Helpline: 1300 886 999
- CatholicCare Relationship Counselling: 02 9283 4899
- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- Relationships Australia: 02 9418 8800 or 1300 364 277

I, *(participant's name)* have read *(or, where appropriate, have had read to me)* and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:_____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____Date:_____

Investigator's Name:_____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature:_____ ____Date:_____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Appendix E

Invitation to participate email Phase 1

Department of Human Sciences

Faculty of Education Studies

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY   NSW   2109

Phone: +61 (02) 9850 9835
Email: fayhadley@ mq.edu.au

MACQUARIE University
SYDNEY·AUSTRALIA

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name & Title: Dr Fay Hadley, Senior Lecturer

Participant Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: Educational Leaders in New South Wales preschools – How are they leading the development and implementation of the program in their services?

You are invited to participate in a study of Preschool Educational Leaders. The purpose of the study is to explore the practices of NSW Preschool Educational Leaders and understand what factors these Educational Leaders identify as supporting them in their role.

The study is being conducted to meet the requirements for the degree of Masters of Research (Early Childhood) under the supervision of Dr Fay Hadley, phone 9850 9832, email fay.hadley@mq.edu.au and Dr Sandra Cheeseman, phone 9850 9835, email sandra.cheeseman@mq.edu.au of the Department of Human Sciences.

Participation in this phase of the study involves:
• One interview with the researcher about Educational Leader practices (approximately 30-45 minutes).
• The sharing of the Educational Leader job description and any other documents that the participant feels are relevant.

You will receive a $40 Visa gift card to thank you for your involvement.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results and only the researcher, her supervisors and a transcribing service will have access to the data. As an early childhood teacher, the researcher is a mandatory reporter of children and young people at risk of harm and so is legally obligated to report behaviour or events that damage the wellbeing of children (this includes breaches to the National Laws and Regulations).

The results of this study will be published in a thesis, journal articles and conference presentations. A summary of the results of the data will also be sent to you at the completion of the study.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

Should your involvement in this study result in any distress please contact

- Mission Australia Helpline: 1300 886 999
- CatholicCare Relationship Counselling: 02 9283 4899
- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- Relationships Australia: 02 9418 8800 or 1300 364 277

I,   *(participant's name)*   have read *(or, where appropriate, have had read to me)* and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:_____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____Date:_____

Investigator's Name:_____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature:_____ ____Date:_____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Appendix F

Social network advertisement

Are you the Educational Leader of a New South Wales Preschool?

Yes?
Then you are invited to participate in a study that aims to understand the practices and supports of preschool Educational Leaders.

What is involved?
Those who are interested are asked to complete an online survey about their own Educational Leader Role and their views on the role in general. Everyone who completes the survey will go in to the draw to win one of two $50 Visa gift cards when the survey closes at the end of August.

Want to do more?
Ten preschool Educational Leaders are also invited to share more about their role in an interview These people will all receive a $40 Visa gift card for their time. If you are interested in taking part in this please leave your details in the survey.

How to complete the survey?
Just click on the survey link below
https://mqedu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4Vg6zZYSJFgoE29

Want more information?
Participant information is available at the survey link or if you have any questions please contact kate.barnes@students.mq.edu.au.

Appendix G

Phase 2 interview questions
Preschool Educational Leader Study Phase 2 Semi Structured Interview Prompts

1. Can you tell me about your pathway to becoming the Educational Leader of this preschool? (Prompts may include age, qualifications experience, years in ECEC sector, years at this preschool, years as Educational Leader, how chosen)

2. How does your Educational Leader role fit in the organisational structure of the preschool? (prompts may include: working with director, other responsibilities as Educational Leader but not necessarily part of the role eg. Fire warden, first aid officer?)

3. Are there any extra things you get as Educational Leader? (Prompts may include: remuneration, extra hours work, extra hours away from the classroom, training)

4. Can you describe what you do in your role as Educational Leader? (Prompts may include: training, meetings, informal chats, mentoring, sharing resources)

5. How did you know what to do as Educational Leader?

6. Can you tell me something you are most proud of from your role as Educational Leader?

7. Where do you find support in your role as Educational Leader? (Director, staff, training, reading, networking, social media)

8. Do you know any other Educational Leaders? (prompts what do they do that is different from what you do?)

9. What is the most rewarding thing about being the Educational Leader?

10. What is the hardest thing about being the Educational Leader?

11. Do you think the Educational Leader role is important for preschools? (prompts may include for children, for service quality, for staff development, for professional advocacy) Why/why not?

12. Would you change anything about the Educational Leader role? Why/why not?

Appendix H

Appointment to educational leader position according to qualification and length in the sector

		What are the highest early childhood qualifications you hold?					
		Diploma	Bachelor Degree - 3 years (or equivalent)	Bachelor Degree - 4 years (or equivalent)	Graduate Diploma	Masters	Total
How were you appointed to the role of educational leader?	I volunteered	2	5	6	0	1	14
	I was asked to by my supervisor	4	12	30	3	1	50
	I was asked to by other staff	0	1	3	0	1	5
	It was assumed as part of my position	3	25	28	5	5	66
	Other (please explain)	0	4	3	0	1	8
	I was asked to by my employer	1	2	2	0	0	5
	Total	10	49	72	8	9	148

		How long have you worked in early childhood education? (Please give your answer in years)								Total
		1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21-15 years	26-30 years	31-35 years	more than 35 years	
How were you appointed to the role of educational leader? - Selected Choice	I volunteered	0	1	2	3	1	4	2	1	14
	I was asked to by my supervisor	5	11	11	6	8	3	4	1	49
	I was asked to by other staff	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	5
	It was assumed as part of my position	3	8	14	9	7	12	10	1	64
	Other (please explain)	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	8
	I was asked to by my employer	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	5
	Total	8	20	30	22	18	22	20	5	145

Appendix I

Extra remuneration for educational leader role according to qualifications and length in the sector

		What are the highest early childhood qualifications you hold?					
		Diploma	Bachelor Degree - 3 years (or equivalent)	Bachelor Degree - 4 years (or equivalent)	Graduate Diploma	Masters	Total
Are you remunerated for your work as educational leader?	No	7	42	54	3	8	114
	Yes, I receive extra wages for being the educational leader	0	4	6	4	1	15
	Yes, I receive payment at my normal teaching rate for working extra hours as educational leader	2	3	12	1	0	18
	Total	9	49	72	8	9	147

		How long have you worked in early childhood education? (Please give your answer in years)								
		1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	15-20 years	21-25 years	26-30 years	31-35 years	More than 35 years	Total
Are you remunerated for your work as educational leader? - Selected Choice	No	6	13	24	20	14	18	14	4	113
	Yes, I receive extra wages for being the educational leader	0	5	2	1	0	2	3	0	13
	Yes, I receive payment at my normal teaching rate for working extra hours as educational leader	2	2	4	1	4	1	3	1	18
	Total	8	20	30	22	18	22	20	5	144

Appendix J

Educational leaders who have a job description according to qualifications and length of time in the sector and position

		What are the highest early childhood qualifications you hold?					
		Diploma	Bachelor Degree - 3 years (or equivalent)	Bachelor Degree - 4 years (or equivalent)	Graduate Diploma	Masters	Total
Do you have a job description for the role of educational leader? - Selected Choice	No	4	24	27	5	3	63
	Yes	5	24	45	3	6	83
	Other	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Total	9	49	72	8	9	147

		How long have you worked in early childhood education? (Please give your answer in years)								
		1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21-25 years	26-30 years	31-35 years	More than 35 years	Total
Do you have a job description specifically for educational leader activities/resources?	No	2	7	15	9	10	8	7	3	61
	Yes	5	12	15	13	8	14	13	2	82
	Other	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Total	7	20	30	22	18	22	20	5	144

		What position do you hold at your preschool?		
		Director	Non-Director	Total
Do you have a job specifically for educational leader activities/resources?	No	38	25	63
	Yes	38	44	82
	Other	0	1	1
	Total	76	70	146

Appendix K

Educational leaders who have a budget according to qualifications, time in the sector and position

		What are the highest early childhood qualifications you hold?					
		Diploma	Bachelor Degree - 3 years (or equivalent)	Bachelor Degree - 4 years (or equivalent)	Graduate Diploma	Masters	Total
Do you have a budget specifically for educational leader activities/resources?	No	10	44	67	8	9	138
	Yes	0	5	5	0	0	10
	Total	10	49	72	8	9	148

		How long have you worked in early childhood education? (Please give your answer in years)								
		1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21-25 years	26-30 years	31-35 years	More than 35 years	Total
Do you have a budget specifically for educational leader activities/resources?	No	7	17	29	20	18	21	19	5	136
	Yes	1	3	1	2	0	1	1	0	9
	Total	8	20	30	22	18	22	20	5	145

		What position do you hold at your preschool?		
		Director	Non-Director	Total
Do you have a budget specifically for educational leader activities/resources?	No	70	67	137
	Yes	6	4	10
	Total	76	71	147

Appendix L

Time away from other duties according to qualifications and length of time in the sector

		What are the highest early childhood qualifications you hold?					
		Diploma	Bachelor Degree - 3 years (or equivalent)	Bachelor Degree - 4 years (or equivalent)	Graduate Diploma	Masters	Total
How much regular time away from your other duties do you have?	No time	4	21	31	3	6	65
	1 hour per week	3	9	13	0	0	25
	1.5 hours per week	1	1	2	0	1	5
	2 hours per week	0	4	8	1	1	14
	3 hours per week	2	2	6	1	0	11
	4 hours per week	0	2	3	0	0	5
	5-7 hours per week	0	0	2	0	1	3
	One day per week	0	2	1	2	0	5
	Included in Director's release time	0	6	6	1	0	13
	Full time	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Total	10	48	72	8	9	147

		How long have you worked in early childhood education? (Please give your answer in years)								
		1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21-25 years	26-30 years	31-35 years	More than 35 years	Total
How much regular time away from your other duties do you have?	No time	4	8	14	9	7	12	9	0	63
	1 hour per week	1	2	5	4	5	2	3	3	25
	1.5 hours per week	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	5
	2 hours per week	0	3	3	2	2	2	2	0	14
	3 hours per week	2	3	3	1	0	2	0	0	11
	4 hours per week	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	4
	5-7 hours per week	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
	One day per week	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	5
	Inclueded in Director's release time	0	0	1	1	3	2	4	2	13
	Full time	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Total	8	19	30	22	18	22	20	5	144

Appendix M

Educational leaders who collaborate in the role according to qualification and length of time in the sector

		What are the highest early childhood qualifications you hold?					
		Diploma	Bachelor Degree - 3 years (or equivalent)	Bachelor Degree - 4 years (or equivalent)	Graduate Diploma	Masters	Total
Do you share some aspects of the educational leader role with other colleagues?	Yes, work closely with Director/Leadership team	2	7	7	1	1	18
	Yes, share role with an unofficial educational leader colleague/s	0	5	9	2	2	18
	Yes, have a collaborative approach with all staff	5	14	13	2	1	35
	Yes, no elaboration given	0	1	1	0	0	2
	No	3	22	42	3	5	75
	Total	10	49	72	8	9	148

		How long have you worked in early childhood education? (Please give your answer in years)								
		1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21-25 years	26-30 years	31-35 years	More than 35 years	Total
Do you share some aspects of the educational leader role with other colleagues?	Yes, work closely with Director/Leadership team	1	4	3	4	0	4	2	0	18
	Yes, share role with an unofficial educational leader colleague/s	0	2	3	4	3	1	3	1	17
	Yes, have a collaborative approach with all staff	3	5	4	4	4	9	5	1	35
	Yes, no elaboration given	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	No	4	7	20	10	11	8	10	3	73
	Total	8	19	30	22	18	22	20	5	145

Appendix N

Enactment of the educational leader role according to qualifications and length of time in the sector

		What are the highest early childhood qualifications you hold?					
		Diploma	Bachelor Degree - 3 years (or equivalent)	Bachelor Degree - 4 years (or equivalent)	Graduate Diploma	Masters	Total
Which of these do you find the most effective for achieving your goals of an educational leader? Why?	Run meetings	0	2	10	2	0	18
	Casual talks	4	15	25	3	2	49
	Develop training	0	2	10	0	0	12
	Spend time in other classrooms	0	2	3	0	1	6
	Meet formally with educators	0	5	13	0	2	20
	Prepare written info	0	2	0	0	0	2
	Review/write policies	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Share research and resources	2	10	14	3	2	31
	Contribute to QIP	0	1	6	1	0	8
	Conduct research	1	1	1	0	0	3
	Other	1	1	4	1	0	6
	All	0	7	7	1	2	17
	No time to do any	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Total	8	54	93	11	10	176

		How long have you worked in early childhood education? (Please give your answer in years)								
		1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21-25 years	26-30 years	31-35 years	More than 35 years	Total
Which of these do you find the most effective for achieving your goals of an educational leader? Why?	Run meetings	2	1	3	3	1	2	2	0	18
	Casual talks	4	8	12	4	5	8	6	2	49
	Develop training	1	2	2	1	0	2	3	1	12
	Spend time in other classrooms	0	2	1	0	0	1	2	0	6
	Meet formally with educators	1	3	4	3	3	4	1	1	20
	Prepare written info	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
	Review/write policies	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Share research and resources	1	5	6	2	7	2	5	2	30
	Contribute to QIP	1	0	2	0	2	1	1	0	7
	Conduct research	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	3
	Other	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	7
	All	0	1	5	3	2	3	2	1	17
	No time to do any	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Total	12	24	38	21	20	28	23	7	142

Appendix O

Challenges of the educational leader role according to qualifications and length of time in the sector

| | | What are the highest early childhood qualifications you hold? | | | | | |
		Diploma	Bachelor Degree - 3 years (or equivalent)	Bachelor Degree - 4 years (or equivalent)	Graduate Diploma	Masters	Total
What do you find most challenging about being an educational leader?	Lack of time	3	27	41	7	3	81
	Feel Isolated	0	2	1	1	0	4
	Low staff interest in actions	3	2	1	0	0	6
	Unsure of what is expected/unclear role	0	5	12	0	2	18
	Professional skills/knowing answers	1	3	2	1	0	7
	Leading experienced/part time team	1	2	2	0	1	6
	Lack of Pay recognition	0	3	3	0	1	7
	Conflict with other staff	0	3	2	0	0	5
	Leading others to change	2	8	19	0	3	32
	Lack of authority	0	2	1	1	1	5
	Nothing	0	0	0	0	1	1
	How to record work	0	3	2	0	0	5
	Total	10	60	86	10	12	178

		How long have you worked in early childhood education? (Please give your answer in years)								
		1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21-25 years	26-30 years	31-35 years	More than 35 years	Total
What do you find most challenging about being an educational leader?	Lack of time	1	10	17	11	10	14	14	2	82
	Feel Isolated	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	5
	Low staff interest in actions	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	7
	Unsure of what is expected/unclear role	1	2	3	3	5	4	1	0	24
	Professional skills/knowing answers	0	1	0	4	0	1	1	0	10
	Leading experienced/part time team	0	1	2	2	0	0	1	0	9
	Lack of Pay recognition	1	1	0	2	1	1	1	0	7
	Conflict with other staff	0	0	2	0	2	1	0	0	4
	Leading others to change	2	5	7	5	4	2	6	1	8
	Lack of authority	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	7
	Nothing	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	How to record work	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	3
	Total	7	23	38	28	24	25	26	5	176

Appendix P

Supports for educational leaders according to qualification and length of time in the sector

		What are the highest early childhood qualifications you hold?					
		Diploma	Bachelor 3 years (or equivalent)	Bachelor 4 years (or equivalent)	Graduate Diploma	Masters	Total
What supports you in your role as educational leader?	Online professional development and learning	4	39	52	7	6	108
	Mentoring and/or guidance from a supervisor or another	4	19	32	5	3	63
	Involvement of other team members	4	35	34	7	5	85
	Researching current research/literature/teaching ideas	5	38	59	8	8	118
	Meeting with the leadership team of the preschool	1	16	27	4	3	51
	Taking on further tertiary qualifications	3	11	15	3	2	34
	Meeting with other educational leaders	5	22	37	8	5	77
	Face to face personal development	4	35	52	8	5	104
	Educational leader online social networks	2	13	28	2	1	46
	Other	0	3	2	0	0	5
	Total	32	231	338	52	38	691

		How long have you worked in early childhood education? (Please give your answer in years)							
		1-5 years	5-10 years	11-15 years	20-25 years	21-15 years	26-30 years	31-35 years	+35 years	Total
What supports you in your role as educational leader?	Online professional development and learning	4	14	24	16	14	16	15	4	107
	Mentoring and/or guidance from a supervisor or another	3	14	17	8	6	5	8	1	62
	Involvement of other team members	2	9	20	14	10	14	12	4	85
	Researching current research/literature/teaching ideas	4	15	25	18	14	17	17	5	115
	Meeting with the leadership team of the preschool	2	8	11	9	2	10	5	3	50
	Taking on further tertiary qualifications	2	7	12	4	2	3	3	1	34
	Meeting with other educational leaders	3	10	19	13	10	8	10	3	76
	Face to face personal development	3	13	21	17	15	16	15	3	103
	Educational leader online social networks	2	10	11	8	5	5	4	1	46
	Other	1	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	5
	Total	26	100	260	109	78	95	90	21	683